



Pastor Gwen's Message

Parable of the
Wheat and Weeds

Sunday July 19, 2020

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **AMEN**

Well, here we go again, Jesus tells another parable about gardening. If you recall, last week we talked about the parable of the sower, where seed was sown in 4 different types of soil. It told how the plant that grew out of the seed, was exactly what the soil would bear. And I talked about how at different times in our life we could relate to being the sower, the seed or the soil.

Well, we have the second of three agricultural parables today. And it is all about weeds and wheat. Neither of which of course, appeal to me. On dictionary.com defines weeds as any undesirable or troublesome plant, especially one that grows profusely where it is not wanted. Wheat on the other hand, except to those of us who have Celiac disease, is a very life sustaining grain, used in Jesus' day, milled to make flour for bread.

This wheat versus weed parable is another one that will tell us more about the kingdom of heaven. And when I say kingdom of heaven, what is meant is that we today are living in God's kingdom. Yes, we are still living in this world, but because Christ has redeemed us by his work on the cross and through his resurrection, we live under the reign of God. And it is a great dichotomy between life in the kingdom of God versus the life the world has to offer. Wheat versus weed.

The meaning of this parable is pretty straightforward. In fact, once again Jesus tells us his explanation in verse 36-43. The field is the world. We don't have 4 soils like last week, just one today, the world. One garden with two types of plants grown from two different seeds. Good seeds are children of the

kingdom, and the bad seeds are the children of the evil one. Wheat verses weed. And in this parable there are two sowers; Jesus who sows the good seed and the devil that sows the bad seed.

One thing I always wondered about this parable is why the farm hands could not have gone out and pulled all the weeds. So I did a little digging. The darnel weed that Jesus spoke of was very prevalent in his day. In fact the officials had made laws against people who used this weed seed to get back at their neighbors by scattering it in their fields. The darnel weed in its infancy looked very much like wheat. It was nearly impossible at most stages of growth to tell weed from wheat. And by the time that it was distinguishable, the roots of the weeds and wheat were so intertwined that it would have been impossible to separate them without damaging the wheat. There was only one time that they could be separated and that was after harvest.

Our parable tells us that Jesus knew all of this and He explained that when the time was right he would send his angels to take the weeds out of the wheat and throw them into the fire to be destroyed.

And so our lesson then is simple. We, the children of God, the good seeds will live along side the weeds planted by the evil one until Christ returns to judge the living and the dead. As I thought about this, I wondered if in reality we could possibly change some of the weeds into wheat. And isn't that what we are called to do when Jesus gives us the great commission. To "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you." So maybe just maybe Jesus is here giving us words to live by. We are among the weeds and they need to hear the good news of Jesus, so that they might not be thrown into the fire.

We all know that you and I cannot change weeds into wheat, but I suspect that the Holy Spirit has the power to do just that. So if we are the sower from last week, we can plant seeds in the hearts of others, who do not yet know Christ and then let the Spirit do his work.

And in the meantime, we are to live among the weeds. And folks sometimes that is not easy. With all the unrest in our world today, I know how tempting it is to just stick our heads in the sand and pretend the world will fix itself magically someday. Just like weeds we feel the prickly and invasive evil all

around us. Just turn on the TV at night and see how long you can remain positive after watching a few minutes.

Evil in the world is a reality. Those weeds can be domineering. They want to invade all the space in our gardens and in us. Evil is continuously trying to overtake our lives. Some of the things evil is saying to us are exactly the opposite of what we should do:

*Don't pray because you might offend someone.
Come fishing on Sunday morning instead of going to church.
You don't have to wear a mask; your neighbor will be OK.
Disregarding black lives won't hurt anyone.
You can do it everyone else is.*

All these things along with the stress of work and home try to invade every corner of our lives. How can we figure out what is right and what is wrong? How do we live with the weeds in our lives? The Romans reading this morning has the answer. Paul tells us, "that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us." Verse 18. The glory of God has been revealed to us in the person of Jesus Christ. He came to earth for us, to deliver us from our weeds. He died a horrible death on the cross, was buried and then rose again to give us a live everlasting, forgiveness and also an abundant life on earth. And nothing can compare to those promises. How glorious they are.

So for the mean time we must live among the weeds. And look to the Word of God as our refuge and strength. We cannot change the world around us any more than a plant can water itself. God the Good Gardener created a perfect world for Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. But sin, evil, weeds entered in. But Christ came into the world so he could take away the sting of the evil weeds on us. He is well aware that the weeds can kill us but he cannot pluck them out now because he does not want to take the chance of hurting us. And so He walks with us through this life.

Our final hope comes knowing that the Good Gardener will return. He will harvest His world with us in it. Yes, there will be judgment. You know, as a church, we don't particularly like to talk about Judgment. Who does? But this parable is all about judgment.

First of all, I thank God that I do not have to judge anyone. What a job that would be! God was smart when He did not leave me in charge of judgment

because I really don't understand people who say they love kale, people who spend their money on drugs instead of feeding their children or people who want to defund police departments to save lives. Hugh!

Do any of you remember the film "A River Runs Through It"? The narrator was quoting his father when he said, "I only know two things for certain in this life. First, there is a God, and second, I'm not him." I agree wholeheartedly. Unfairly, we do make some assumptions about people, but only God will judge us fairly. And so, it is in God's most capable hands, eternal judgement. He knows who the weeds are. He knows who is the wheat. God does hate sin but loves the sinner. We are accountable for our sins but forgiven on that cross at Calvary. He will judge based on the choices we make. And as Christians we choose to follow Jesus to the best of our ability. Love our neighbor as ourselves and we can never go wrong.

You see, the good wheat will be brought home. We wait patiently and confidently for the Lord to gather us into his harvest. He will keep His promises to the wheat and destroy the weeds. He will bring us into His new garden in His kingdom forever. And we will never be among the weeds again.
AMEN