

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43
Pentecost 9; August 2, 2020

Do you ever feel frustrated as you see evil in this world? Every day we see the reality of Jesus' parable. God's Word promises you that Jesus is sitting on his throne ruling all things for your good. He promises you that he will never leave you or forsake you. Ever! But that's not the reality that you see going on in your life right now. If we are on the winning team, then why does it feel like we are losing? Ever had those fears? Ever heard someone express those fears to you? How do you answer those questions? You know what God's Word says, but sometimes it's hard to trust it, isn't it? The parable that Jesus gives this morning is the answer to calm all your fears and frustrations.

If we have ever had those feelings, then maybe we have experienced what it feels like to have the weeds living around the wheat. We probably have all felt like the servants who came to the farmer and said: **'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'** These servants were frustrated. They just wanted to go out into the field and pull out those weeds and throw them away. Their solution to the problem of the weeds was simple. Let's just get rid of them. Jesus gave them an answer to their question. Perhaps, it wasn't the answer that they were expecting, but this parable gives an answer to the question: *What are we to do with the weeds that are among the wheat?* Jesus' answer: **"'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest.'**

The parable is pretty straight forward to understand. This parable is fairly easy to understand...especially since Jesus gives his explanation of the parable to His disciples. **"The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."**

The Sower is Jesus. He is sowing his Christian Church in the field of this world. But Satan enters this world to wreak havoc on God's people. These weeds are unbelievers, enemies of Christians, atheists and heathens, persecutors and oppressors. The believers and unbelievers live together in the field of the world until the harvest is gathered by the angels at the end of time on Judgment Day. **"Do you want us to go and pull them up?"** As we look at Jesus' answer to their question, there are a couple of things that we need to remember.

We need to remember that it is Jesus who planted wheat seed into the world. We don't do the planting. Jesus does it all. We didn't become wheat because we did the planting. We didn't become believers because we had done all the right things. We can't do all the right things. Jesus makes us his wheat. He sends the Holy Spirit into the hearts of people to bring us to faith. He gives us the certainty of a sure hope of heaven. Because our good and gracious God has done it all, we are forgiven. We are his wheat.

We also need to remember that ever since Satan was cast out of heaven, he has made it his top priority to destroy God's good work. Someone once said: *Where God builds a Church, Satan builds a chapel.* He has an army of weeds whose number one task is to destroy the wheat. Ever since the Fall into Sin in the Garden of Eden, there has been this battle between the wheat and the weeds going on in this world.

Another thing to remember: It is not our job to get rid of evil in this world. Plenty of people have tried. People have failed. People have tried to change by creating laws to force people to change. I wonder how many people have done what the servants wanted to do. As those weeds may have been pulled out, I wonder how much wheat has been uprooted in the process. We are not the judges. We are not in this world to get rid of souls, to get rid of the wheat. We are here to help the wheat grow. We are here to save souls by using the Word of God. That doesn't mean that we throw out all the truths that are found in the Bible. We teach those truths. We administer the Sacraments. But the end result is that we leave the judging, the separating of the weed and the wheat to God. It's the job of the angels who are directed by God.

God's Judgement is always perfectly fair and right. Our sense of Judgment is clouded by sin. Look at the lengths that God went through to save this world. Jesus came to this world. He suffered all the wrath of the Judgment of God on the cross. He did it all for us. That same God loves you and me with all his heart. God will do everything he can do to bring people to believe in him. Think of how many times that Jesus reached out to Judas in love. Jesus knew he was going to betray him, but that didn't stop Jesus from reaching out in love to Judas. Jesus could have easily walked out of Peter's life after he denied him, but he didn't. Reaching out in love, he said to Peter: *Go and feed my sheep.* We have a God who doesn't give up on people. Instead he says: **"Let both grow together until the harvest."**

When we look at this parable, it is easy for us to focus on the weeds. The reality is this parable is more about the good wheat that was sown than the seed planted by the enemy. Jesus planted good seed in you. This farmer didn't give up on his field. Jesus will not give up on you. He took care of that field. He shed his blood for that field. He has rescued that field. That is what Jesus has done for you. He has changed your heart. He has brought you to trust in him.

How do you get rid of all the fear and frustrations that we feel in this world? Put those fears and frustrations on Jesus. Take comfort in Jesus' promise: **"Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear. "**