

Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43

He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, "Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn."

Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear."

Sermon

Weed and wheat

Where does weed come from...? In the parable, the *sowing* of the seed of weed is attributed to the enemy. But how can the existence of the seed from which weed grows, be explained? Who knows....? Nobody. It's one of life's mysteries.

This parable is not about wondering about the origin of weed. It is about the dealing with the presence of weed. It tells us how the farmer's men *would have dealt* with it, if they would have it their way. But their way is not their master's way. The Master addresses the existence of weed with thoughtfulness, care and patience because the fact is that good and evil are intertwined. Tolerance can be rooted in laziness. Nobleness can be rooted in haughtiness. Love can be rooted in the desire to possess.

My thoughts go back to a sermon I once heard in which the preacher named two possible motives; negative motives behind a relationship: "I love me, therefore I love you" and/or "I love love, and you've got to do it". Both motives carry within them 'love'; but that does not make the motives good.

We are not to judge; that is one thing to be learned from the parable. Yes, that's all very well, but there is good and evil; purity and impurity; honesty and dishonesty... That is so indeed. Yet, moving in the Spirit of God through Christ, we are not allowed

to deprive each other from chances to change. Since we, through Christ, are called to receive the blessing and extend it, we are responsible for sowing the seed of God's Kingdom. And just as our Creator gives us room and time to change, we must give room and time to each other. It is in the light of this Word; God's Word to us, that we must let the words register with us:

So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. (Matthew 13:28-29)

The Gospel writer Matthew knows what he is saying. He has seen with his own eyes how God's perfect grain on the field of the earth had been pulled out by those who were convinced that He was weed. Pulled out and put on the cross. That shows that the process of purification is better to be left to God. It's better not done by people.

The purification is not going to happen until the harvest; the end of time, when the Lord returns. Paul says it like this,

It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God. (1 Corinthians 4:4–5)

God does not allow for pre-selection.

Both good and bad live in us and only He sees and distinguishes accurately.

We are not to purify each other, instead we are to let God train us to see with and through Him. But He is only able to do that if we make our eyes; our "seeing", available to Him. Then we can learn to see people as God sees them.

And we can know how God sees people for we know, through the Gospels, how Jesus while He was travelling, on many occasions had stopped crowds of people who were following Him. He stopped them for the sake of one person whom He noticed.

Remember the story of Zacchaeus.¹ The tax collector who took more money from people than he should take. Therefore, he was hated and shunned in his community. Then the day came that Jesus was going to come to town. Zacchaeus was desperate to see Him and, being a little man, climbed into a tree where he hid himself. From there he had a wonderful view. He assumed he would not be noticed by Jesus. He thought he could hide himself from Him. However, Jesus knew and saw in Zacchaeus what people failed to see: his longing; his desire to see the Son of God.

Seeing and knowing this, Jesus stopped at the tree where Zacchaeus was hiding. He called out Zacchaeus' name and invited Himself into Zacchaeus' house.

¹ Luke 19:1-10

It shows that God is a personal God. He knows each individual He created and hopes that they want to know Him.

Nobody knows what was said in Zacchaeus' house. What is known is that Zacchaeus wanted to know God and met Him in Jesus. He heard and received God's word through His Son and with that, Zacchaeus was able to see with "new eyes", as he said,

"Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." (Luke 19:8)

Zacchaeus' story is one of the many which shows that for each of God's children, who wants to know Him, there is a future that reflects the light of the righteousness of their Creator through Christ, so that when He returns,

... the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. (Matthew 13:43)