

Devotion: June 25, 2020

Matthew 13:24-30 (NIV)

²⁴ Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵ But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶ When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

²⁷ “The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’

²⁸ “‘An enemy did this,’ he replied.

“The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’

²⁹ “‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’”

³⁶ Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.”

³⁷ He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

⁴⁰ “As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ 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. ⁴² They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

Recently at the parsonage, a new set of drain pipes were installed in the front lawn. Which meant they had to dig up a perfectly good green lawn. I know the workers on this project worked hard and tried their best to make things look right again, but they didn’t get it quite right. It seems, that after the digging and scraping and the filling, which was all precisely done, they finished the job by tossing around something that looked like grass seed, and left.

And you know what happened?

Nothing!

The brown seed still sits in the mud, or is eaten by the birds, or is trampled under, and what is left is weeds

Sounds like a Jesus parable.

Because we all know that there are honest-to-goodness, downright worthless weeds out there, in our lawns and in our lives - growing within the ranks of our congregations, our city governments, our local schools, our elected public officials. They get elected or appointed or promoted by pretending to be good seeds anxious to contribute to the welfare of others. But they soon reveal their true weed-like nature, selfishly producing nothing but weeds.

Remarkably, Jesus doesn't offer a grand plan for getting rid of the weeds that plague the field of wheat. There's no protocol for waging war on weeds. There are no rules of engagement about marching into a field of wheat to root out the weeds.

In fact, Jesus says that we should go about our business. Our job is to be wheat, not weeds. We're not called to be the farmer. Rooting up weeds is not part of our job description.

We need to be the wheat:

We need to grow in the row in which we were planted.

We need to grow tall and strong and crowd out the weeds.

We need to let our influence shade out or deprive the weeds of sunlight and water they need to survive.

We cannot be a stalk of wheat in a field by yourself. We need to grow with others in a community of wheat.

No stalk of wheat worries about a weed nearby; the farmer's going to take care of that weed.

God has a plan. We can trust the plan.

Jesus does not intend the body of Christ to be a hothouse flower. It is to live in the world, among the weeds, learning how to survive in the presence of their negative impact and energy. Pulling the weeds is not the church's business. Growing wheat, growing bread for the world, growing souls is the task of each Christian and each church.

Let us pray;

O, Lord, we come to you as a people so desperately in need of your unfailing love. Break up our souls' unplowed ground, for it is time to seek the face of your Son, Jesus, until he comes and showers righteousness upon all who love and obey him. We pray that we would no longer become victims of the enemy's lies, nor eat the fruit of deception, having depended on our own strength. In sowing repentance, we lay claim upon your covenant that we would indeed reap the fruit of unfailing love. For your blessings, O Lord, are showered upon all people who in loyalty

proclaim the name of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.
(based on Hosea 10:12-13)