

THE PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND THE WEEDS

Romans 8:12-25

Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “*Abba*, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

Matthew 13:24-30 & 36-43

Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. 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?’ “‘An enemy did this,’ he replied. “The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’

“‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. 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.”

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.”

He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. 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, 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 blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

Bible reflection

‘The disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?”’ Apparently, parables were very important storytelling devices for Jesus, for he spoke in them quite frequently in the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. A good way to demonstrate the usefulness of parables is to portray a modern parable that illustrates Jesus’ work of salvation.

I want to share with you a modern-day parable that provides a simple understanding of why Jesus came to earth. The story is about a religious sceptic who worked as a farmer.

One winter night the man heard an irregular thumping sound against the kitchen door. He went to a window and watched as tiny, shivering sparrows, attracted to the evident warmth inside, beat in vain against the glass.

Touched, the farmer bundled up and trudged through fresh snow to open the barn door for the struggling birds. He turned on the lights and tossed some hay in a corner. But the sparrows, which had scattered in all directions when he emerged from the house, hid in the darkness afraid. The man tried various tactics to get them into the barn. He laid down a trail of crumbs to direct them. He tried circling behind the birds to drive them toward the barn. Nothing worked. He, a huge, alien creature, had terrified them; the birds couldn’t comprehend that he actually desired to help.

The farmer withdrew to his house and watched the doomed sparrows through a window. As he stared, a thought hit him: "If only I could become a bird, one of them, just for a moment. Then I wouldn't frighten them. I could show them the way to warmth and safety." At the same moment, another thought dawned on him. He had grasped the reason Jesus was born.

This story truly grabs your attention and makes Jesus' work on earth easily understood. Jesus sought to simplify the message of salvation and the message of the kingdom of heaven using parables.

In the parable of the wheat and the weeds, Jesus is teaching us why there is good and evil in our world, and what will happen at the end. God has a field, defined here as the entire world. There is a divine meaning and purpose being worked out here. God is guiding history and mankind to an end that will fulfil His purpose.

The parable provides understanding as to why there is evil . God plants good seed that becomes His children of the Kingdom. Satan, the wicked one, plants those who are his offspring.

Because the weeds and wheat look alike while they are growing, it's virtually impossible to determine by sight which is which until the heads appear. That is why God tells His servants to let them both grow to harvest, when the difference will become apparent. Of course, "The Lord knows who are His" (2 Timothy 2:19).'

God says there is a coming time of judgment that will deal with lawlessness and unrighteousness. The key is that it is God's judgment, not man's. That is a wonderful and comforting truth, because God judges in perfect righteousness and in His time. We must not judge others.

"'No,' he said. 'When you gather up the weeds, you might also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At harvest time I'll tell the reapers: Gather the weeds first and tie them in bundles to burn them, but store the wheat in my barn.'"

Wisely, the master of the household counselled his zealous workers to allow the wheat and the weeds to grow together until the time of the harvest. Although it will be difficult for people to tell the difference between good wheat and false weeds, at harvest time those distinctions will become apparent. In the end, the righteous will be harvested and gathered in, while the weeds will be burned.

Wheat, which Jesus uses to symbolize His true children, has always been a vital, life-giving substance, possessing both nutrition and healing properties. During most of human history, it has most commonly been used for bread, and it has long been called "the staff of life."

The high value and health properties of wheat are opposite to the common and harmful properties of the weed, darnel, yet in Jesus's parable the owner of the field allows both to grow together. One reason is because wheat and darnel are exact in their appearances during growth. Both plants are lush green and can be distinguished only when they mature and produce fruit. Wheat berries are large and golden, while darnel berries are small and grey. Thus, if the farmer attempted to uproot the weeds before maturity, he would wreak havoc on his wheat.

Jesus goes on to describe those who will be able to call upon His name on the Day of Judgment. It will be those who hear His words and put them into practice, the ones who obediently do the will of the Father in heaven. True believers are the good trees that produce good fruit (Galatians 5:22-23), the true sheep who look to Christ, depend on Him, commit themselves to Him, trust in Him, and believe on Him for righteousness, salvation, and eternal life. These are the ones who will enter into the kingdom of heaven.

In the reading from Romans, Paul tells us that 'our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed'. We live in a world where there is good and evil, so there will be times when we suffer. However, God will judge each of us at the right time, we must not judge others.

Are you ready for the harvest? None of us are perfect, but Jesus died to save us from eternal death and separation from God. All that we have to do is believe in him.

Merciful God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as pass our understanding: pour into our hearts such love toward you that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire: through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

May God pour out his blessings upon you and keep you safe.

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