

19th July 2026

Readings Matthew 13:24-30;36-43

The Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds.

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What a challenging parable we have before us. It is placed directly after the parable of the sower which Jon spoke on last week. It seems that while the parable of the sower emphasises soil type. Today's parable looks at types of seed. Jon said Jesus started with the word "Listen" and our reading ends with "whoever has ears, let them hear". Jesus clearly wanted people to take notice.

Once Jesus had left the crowds his disciples asked him the meaning of the parable.

He explains the farmer who sows good seed is Jesus himself. The field is the world and the good seed producing wheat represents people who choose to follow Jesus. The weeds represent people who have chosen the way of evil or as one writer calls them "subjects of the devil". Jesus tells us it's the devil who is the enemy.

This parable gives us the opportunity to think more about the nature of God and the battle of good and evil. The devil comes and spoils the farmer's field of wheat by sowing weeds while everyone is sleeping- in other words the enemy comes at night, in darkness, catching people while they are unaware. This sounds very characteristic of the devil. (1Peter 5:8 says "Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour") In this case the enemy deliberately comes at night to disrupt God's good plan. Sneaky, devious! Ever noticed how many words connected with evil start with D , disease, destroy, deceit, disrupt, death etc. So many Bible verses tell us to stay alert because the enemy is always on the lookout for ways to mess up God's plan for redemption and fruitfulness.

To start with no one noticed what the enemy had done. Evil is devious. As the seeds start to grow the presence of the weeds became obvious. Isn't it interesting that the workers accuse the farmer "Sir, didn't you plant good seed?" I wonder how often we try to blame God and call Him to account for

something that is the enemy's doing? We ask " Lord, why did you let this happen?"

If we go back to the very beginning of the Bible we see a pattern emerging. All is darkness and chaos until God speaks and creates order, day and night, land and sea, plants, animals and human beings. God creates and sees that it is very good. (Gen1:31)

But the crafty serpent, who is the devil in disguise, deceives Adam and Eve. "Did God really say?" He persuaded them to doubt the goodness of God and believe that God was withholding something better from them.(Juicy apples can be a metaphor for so much more!) You see the enemy will always try to disguise his lies as if they are good ideas.

In the Gospels Jesus tells the rich young man "No one is good except for God alone". I think this means that God is total goodness, infinite goodness and any goodness in us is part of us being made in the image of God. (Gen 1:27)

The devil seeks to steal, corrupt, lie, deceive, kill, and destroy. See John 10:10. Evil forces cannot bear the true goodness, beauty, love, truth, mercy and compassion of our God. But Jesus has come that we may have life and have it to the full. In our parable the mercy of God is demonstrated in that the farmer allows the weeds to grow along side the wheat until harvest time. God watches and waits with great patience. Both the wheat and the weeds enjoy the goodness of sunshine and rain that enable growth.

Don't we sometimes wonder why God doesn't zap the people who we consider have done terrible things? The Bible tells us there will be judgment. There are people who have chosen to follow the devil and live wicked lives. They continuously say no to God. I think these are those who the harvesters will separate and send to hell. If as we've said all love, goodness and beauty is found in God perhaps people who deliberately and permanently say no to God have chosen to live in a type of hell already.

We need to remember that we are post Easter people. We live in the era after, the greatest, most life changing events in history, the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This means we have absolute assurance that the devil is a defeated foe even though the battle is real and evil still makes its presence felt in our world. We need to keep in mind that the power of God is hugely greater than that of his enemies. Our good God is victorious and always will be. But our Heavenly Father gives us freedom of choice. The enemy can still tempt us but we won't succumb if we keep focusing on Jesus and standing on His promises for our lives.

Jesus shared this parable before He suffered on the cross for our sins. It seems to me the metaphor of people being either wheat or weeds falls short of our personal experience of what the majority of people are like. As Jon said last week we are complex creatures. It's probably more complex than the wheat seeds representing totally good people and the weeds totally bad.

Jon has referred to Rev Terry as St Ratty of Ascot (cf The Wind in the Willows) but I know him. I live with him. Much as he is a wonderful man, who I love being married to, he isn't perfect. Is any human? The Bible tells us “ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”. (Rom3:23). Thank the Lord, we believe in the God of second chances. By God's grace our weed like tendencies can be forgiven and transformed into wheat like potential whatever our past maybe.