

Sharing the Good News

from the pen of the Mission Interpreter



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Harvest Time

Autumn is usually equated with harvest season in the northern hemisphere, the gathering in with thanksgiving for abundance. Jesus shared a story about a harvest where the crops were infiltrated with weeds. He compares the kingdom of God to a farmer who sows good seed in his field, but while everyone is sleeping, the evil one creeps in and sows weeds. No one recognizes this at first, but before long the fact becomes clear that weeds and wheat are growing together, sharing the same ground and nutrients in the soil. Workers want to pull the weeds, but the farmer intervenes explaining that pulling weeds may very well uproot the wheat, as well. The different kinds of plants will be separated at harvest.

At his disciples' urging, Jesus explains the parable. Jesus himself is the farmer, and the field is the world. Wheat represents the children of God; the weeds are "children of the evil one." Jesus, however, isn't giving a command about how to engage evil in the world, *i.e.*, do nothing. *The point is to continue to grow even when evil is all around us.* God is, after all, in the transformation business, and that's why weeds and wheat are allowed to grow together. We need not remain silent in the face of evil, but we do need to recognize that God changes weeds into wheat all the time. Perhaps the weeds aren't the problem, and the issue is that our perspectives can be blurred by our preconceptions and egos. *God is the judge of what's good and what's bad.*

Not very long ago, women's suffrage was seen as an evil outrage, and the movement was condemned by good, God-fearing people. Not very long ago, Black people were bought and sold like cattle—even by some of our country's founding fathers, and even after they were freed, they were denied privileges afforded to others. Not too long ago, children with special needs were categorically institutionalized or worse even by their parents and medical professionals sworn to do no harm. Not very long ago, members of the LBGTQIA+ community had zero legal protection for their civil rights. Self-proclaimed "good people" get things wrong all the time. Good people, who certainly consider themselves to be the wheat of the world, can make terrible mistakes in the name of God. Our generous, extravagant God invites us to be a voice of love against a cacophony of hate.

God's call in our lives is real, and Jesus chooses to have us grow in and among the weeds—so much so that we can't tell where the weeds end and the wheat begins. We are expected to live among those whom our society would rather ignore, forget, or condemn. What if each of us were a field composed of both wheat and weeds (which we are)? Only God can determine what lives or dies in us. But be encouraged: God routinely turns weeds into wheat!

As we continue to grow we will produce a harvest. Nothing can stop God—not the evil outside or the evil within us. Jesus calls and invites us all to live as wheat and to allow God to refine our lives so that weedy things about us may be transformed. He transformed Paul on the way to Damascus; he transformed his disciples by teaching them and claiming them as friends. Jesus even transformed a little boy's lunch into a feast for thousands. Jesus transformed the entire world through his life, death and resurrection. And the Spirit transforms us by his/her presence in, with, and among humanity.

The field is ripe for the harvest. With God's transformative power, we'll be a bumper crop! **And that's Good News!**

Adapted from "Harvest Ground" by Angela Khabeb

