

July 19, 2020

Christ Church, Dallas

Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43

Weeds Among Us

Sometimes we can't tell the weeds among us. Just like the weeds in Jesus' parable this morning, the weeds or "tares" so closely resembled the wheat that they could not be distinguished one from the other. Appearances can be deceiving and they are not always a successful way to determine good from evil.

The wheat and weeds in Jesus' story could not be separated when both were growing. They could only be separated after the threshing when they could be seen to be different by their color. Since these weeds were bitter and poisonous it could be dangerous to mistake the weed for the wheat.

To this day in India one of the most evil threats which a man can make to his enemy is "I will sow bad seed in your field."

It has been said that this may be one of the most practical of Jesus' parables.

It teaches us that there is always a hostile power in the world looking to destroy the good seed. It is our experience that both good and bad influences act upon our lives. The lesson being that we should always be on guard.

It teaches us that it is hard to distinguish between those who are in the Kingdom and those who are not. Some people may appear to be good and are in fact bad.

Others may appear to be bad and yet may be good. We are often too quick to classify people and label them without knowing all the facts.

It teaches us not to be so quick with our judgments. Judgment in the case of the wheat and weeds had to wait until the harvest came. So it is in life. A person in the end will not be judged by any single act or stage in their life, but by their whole life. A person may make a great mistake, and then redeem himself and by the Grace of God atone himself by making the rest of his life an honorable thing. And a man may live a perfect and honorable life and then in the end wreck it all by a sudden collapse into sin. No one who sees only a part of a thing can judge the whole; and no one who knows only part of a life can judge the whole man.

This parable teaches us that judgment comes in the end. Judgment is not hasty but it does come. It may seem to us that in this life a sinner seems to escape the consequences, but there is a life to come. The only person with the right to judge is God. It is God alone who can discern the good and the bad; it is God alone who sees all of a person and all of their life. It is God alone who can judge.

The weeds will always be mixed up with the Divine. We cannot expect a pure world – but in the long run, the good news is that the weeds are not going to win.

If we are to understand the Kingdom we must realize our limitations, be patient and await God's time.

In the words of Alexander Solzenhenitsyn "The universal dividing line between good and evil runs not between countries, not between nations, not between parties, not between classes, not between good and bad people – It divides the heart of every human being." He is saying that there is weediness inside us, not just out there.

So ultimately, this parable is two things – it is a warning not to judge people at all, and it is a warning that in the end there comes the judgment of God.

Don't be quick to judge others, but check your own motives. Although the good sometimes looks feeble next to the evil, the sorrow and pain of the world, be patient, wait for the surprise of the final harvest.

Fix your gaze on Jesus. Attend to the nutrition of the seed rather than pandering to, or being distracted by evil.

Know as we discovered in the sower story last week that the harvest will be greater than we can imagine, some 30, 60 or 100 fold.

Amen.