

Grace Lutheran Community, 30 July 2023:

Ninth Sunday After Pentecost

The sermon text for today is based on

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

My older sister once said while teaching a Sunday school class God gave us two ears and one mouth, so it's better to listen than to speak. I thought that was pretty profound as I was in the class. But she made a good point to a group of enthusiastic young people.

Jesus tells us this today. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

But friends what is that you hear when you hear this parable?

It seems straight forward doesn't it?

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.

How are you ears going? Or rather I may ask you how your heart is going? In Hebrew thinking the things that we hear go straight to the heart. So as we hear the word of God it goes to our heart, planted there to take root by faith. That faith is a gift of God to us. The seed of God’s word is watered and nurtured by God’s spirit in our union with our loving God by His word.

So whoever has ears let them hear. Let us hear in our hearts this parable and grow in Christ.

This parable is not one of an ‘us and them’. Wouldn’t it be easy if we could easily distinguish between the wheat and the weeds.

What if we said all Lutheran people are the good seed and then other believers are too then those who do not believe are the weeds. So in our us and them mentality we have no need to labour in the God’s

field where the harvest is ready. Because it is simple. Those who are weeds are doomed and all we have to do is wait and Jesus will come to judge the living and the dead and then deal with all the weeds in an eternal fire and well us Lutherans as wheat will have eternal life.

Wow, so then we can go and live the way we want and not worry about those who are obviously weeds.

Well it doesn't work that way. We are easily drawn into this easy thinking in life. We are in they are out.

Now by faith we are in but faith in God drives us forward in a life of serving. Serving others yes even the people we might think are weeds. It is only by God's grace and our faith in Him that we are not weeds but have His spirit in us to bear fruit, wheat to bear 100, 60 or 30 times more than what was sown.

God loves the world so much, He sent Jesus to suffer and die for us so we are not weeds growing in darkness, but we are transformed and recreated to produce fruit and seed that feeds others.

We live in a world that is broken. A world where we see sin at work sometimes more than God's love at work, yet it is Jesus who continues to sow love, peace, forgiveness and hope into all the world. By grace those who walk in darkness and follow the way of the world, the devil and the flesh are also like you and I offered forgiveness of sins, life and salvation through Jesus Christ. By faith we are saved by grace in Jesus just as those who we might label weeds are also saved when they come to believe by hearing and saving word of Jesus and seeing that love in action through you.

Rejoice then that in the world of wheat and weeds Jesus continues to love both equally offering forgiveness, and eternal life to all who believe.

Go then into God's field and labour in His strength to serve both who we perceive as wheat and weeds in God love.

Amen