



48A PENTECOST 7A - LITURGY

A world of wheat and weeds

Abstract

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.

Matthew 13:24–26 (NIV)

A world of wheat and weeds

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48A Pentecost 7A - Liturgy

A world of wheat and weeds

Sunday, July 19, 2020 | After Pentecost | Proper 11 | Year A

Old Testament & Psalm, Option I

Old Testament Genesis 28:10–19a

Psalm Psalm 139:1–12, 23–24

or

Old Testament & Psalm, Option II

Old Testament Wisdom of Solomon 12:13, 16–19 or Isaiah 44:6–8

Psalm Psalm 86:11–17

New Testament Romans 8:12–25

Gospel Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43¹

<p>Pre-Service Jesus Jesus (Take Me As I Am) [feat. Wendy O'Connell] - Vineyard Worship</p>
<p>Greeting</p> <p>May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ The Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all</p>
<p>We Gather</p> <p>'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.'</p> <p>We are the people of the kingdom. Come now to worship the Son of Man. Come seeking new understanding of all that he has done for us, and of all that we are called to do for the building of the kingdom.</p> <p><i>Let us pray</i> Lord, we gather,</p>

¹ [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

and we pause to think about your world:
such a beautiful place.

We want everything to be perfect,
but we accept it is far from that.
So, bring us together to learn from you
how to be your presence in the world,
how to create a right environment
and be fruitful for you in all we do.
Keep us always watchful and prayerful.
Amen.

Hymn/song

TIS #111 (AHB #28) – "PRAISE TO THE LORD THE ALMIGHTY"

Welcome

Let us pray

Lord, sometimes we are just so impatient,
wanting to get on with our lives,
wanting everything better.
But we know, our ways are not your ways.
We come to you [this morning]
rejoicing in the knowledge that you
can transform our lives
and the lives of those around us –
starting exactly where we are.
Thank you, Lord.
Amen.

Readings

Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43 (NIV)

²⁴ Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵ But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶ When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

²⁷ "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?'

²⁸ " 'An enemy did this,' he replied.

"The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'

²⁹ " 'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰ 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.' "

³⁶ 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."

³⁷ He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ 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, ³⁹ and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

⁴⁰ "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ 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. ⁴² They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there

will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear. ²

respond

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Hymn/song/video

P&W 224 – “Open our eyes Lord”

We say Sorry

Lord, I confess to you

that I’m not very patient with the weeds in my life.

I try to yank them out,

without thinking of any harm that may cause,

to me or others.

Sometimes,

I’m so frightened that those tangles will overcome me

that I try to ignore them, pretending they’re not there.

Please forgive me, Lord,

and help me to trust you to show me your way.

Amen.

Hymn/Song

Blessed Be Your Name – Matt Redman - The Worship Songs of Matt Redman, Vol. 1

Response

Last week those of us who watched my service talked about planting seeds.

Jesus explains to the crowd about seeds falling on various types of ground

and how the fertility of the ground affects the harvest.

This week we’re talking about pulling weeds.

The two seem to go together.

Every gardener knows that planting seeds is the easy part of having a successful garden

It is much more time consuming to weed that same garden.

And it’s hard complicated work.

I’ve heard, “To distinguish flowers from weeds,

simply pull up everything.

What grows back is weeds.”

Some of you can relate to one unknown homemaker who wrote:

I don’t do windows because . . .

I love birds and don’t want one to run into a clean window and get hurt.

² [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

I don't disturb cobwebs because . . .

I want every creature to have a home of their own.

I don't Spring Clean because . . .

I love all the seasons and don't want the other seasons to get jealous.

I don't iron because . . .

I choose to believe them when they say "Permanent Press."

And finally:

I don't pull weeds in the garden because . . .

I don't want to get in God's way,
He is an excellent gardener!

I doubt that anyone likes pulling weeds,

And in today's reading we learn

This includes God.

On its surface,

there is not much to be said about this parable except
make sure you're not a weed,
mainly because one day the weeds will be weeded out.

The weeds are all those "who do evil." We're told

Oops.

That's a little disconcerting.

Where does God draw the line?

Murderers? Rapists? Adulterers? Thieves?

Does fibbing on your tax returns count?

How about gossiping, there is incidental gossiping for the better good of course?

How about the sins of omission?

What about those who ignore their neighbours who are in need?

How about those who give only a pittance to God
after God has been so generous to them?

Where is God's line drawn?

Could it be that Paul was right when he said in Romans 3:23,

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God?"

Myself, I expect he was.

So what is our hope then?

Does the blood of Christ cover all our sins?

I don't know about you,

but a fiery furnace doesn't appeal to me,

and if that day comes when God's angels begin pulling weeds

I'm not sure I want God being in any doubt that I'm no weed...

There was an interesting report in the news a while back

where agriculture students competed

in being able to identify weeds and to prescribe the right chemical to kill them.

The aim was to get students to be able to recognize weeds when they are tiny,

because when [weeds] get big enough that anybody can recognize them,

it's too late to do anything about them." (1){repeat}

That's an important thought
 How many parents have been too late recognizing the weeds growing
 in the life of their children
 weeds like depression, love gone wrong, drugs or just running with the wrong crowd?
 For that matter, how many adults have recognized too late
 that vices like alcohol or tobacco or gambling or some other addiction
 has them in its grasp.
 Or, even more likely,
 negative attitudes, bitterness, resentment, bigotry.

In this COVID-19 world we find ourselves in
 We have had to be flexible, adapt and live with dramatic change.
 And many are not coping.

Further change is going to happen,
 Can you imagine our post COVID world?
 May we pray that the church is strong enough to lead the way
 Continuing to shine a light into the dark lives of people again and again.

Whether it is the church or the individual
 weeds spoil lives and ultimately can destroy them.
 Hearts are still being broken.
 Relationships are being torn.
 People are still lonely
 And here's the sad thing.
 The people whose lives are being choked by these weeds are not bad people.
 They are good people who simply weren't vigilant about pulling the weeds.

There was a newspaper story about a 61year old grandmother
 who was on the first day of her new job as a school bus driver.
 She took some wrong turns with the bus and made some poor decisions
 and she got so lost that she wound up in the next state.
 Because she had picked up ten kids on her route,
 an all-points bulletin was issued for her on charges of kidnapping,
 and, since she had crossed the state line, the F.B.I. was called in.
 After finally locating the lady and interrogating her,
 the police and F.B.I. agents concluded that she had made some wrong turns
 and had simply lost her way. They finally released her. (2)

A few wrong turns. It happens in life. It happens to good people.
 A few bad judgments and suddenly
 you are lost, entangled, or trapped in the weeds.
 Sometimes much is at stake.
 A marriage. Your health. The safety of others.
 Pulling weeds is an important part of a successful life.

If we need to know there are weeds, we also need to know what to do about them
 we need to see: **GOD IS OUR SAVIOR.**
 If I have anything I can teach you as a preacher it is that **God IS LOVE.**
 So if you read into any part of the Bible
 that God sounds like He is eager to destroy us when we do wrong

that God is a vengeful judge,
you miss an important truth.

The last thing God wants to do is destroy us.

God makes us mindful of the weeds growing in our lives
so that God can help deliver us from them.

In the doctrine some churches there is a recording angel
who writes down all the bad things you and I do
so that God can one day mete out our punishment.
It is a very disturbing and very wrong doctrine.

God has no desire to destroy us.

God is our Saviour.

God offers us forgiveness and the opportunity to start over.

God's only desire is to free us from the mess we've made of our lives.

God is the gardener who wants to pull the weeds from our life.
not our lives from his garden '

It is not God's will that any of His children should suffer.

God wants to help.

Regardless of what a mess our lives are in right now,

God can yet turn that mess into a masterpiece.

THIS IS THE MEANING OF THE CROSS:

**GOD WANTS TO SAVE US FROM THE POWER OF SIN IN THIS WORLD
AS WELL AS THE WORLD TO COME.**

Remember,

God is our Saviour.

God is our Redeemer.

God is the Master Gardener of our lives.

Let God put the garden of your life back in perfect order again.

Hymn/song

Pentecost Prayer – Robin Mann & Dorothy Mann – Let's sing it again

Prayers for all people

Place a bowl of seeds where everyone can see it.

Spend time looking at the seeds, then pray:

Lord God,

thank you that you have planted your good seed in my life.

Thank you for the presence of your Holy Spirit

to guide me through all trials,

giving me hope and patience, in every situation.

The field is the world.

Lord, we live in a tiny patch of your world

but it is still our field to serve you.

We pray that we can give our time and gifts to you and yours

in whatever way we can.

Your kingdom come, O Lord.

Lord God, we pray for our world and its people.
 So many different cultures, colours, languages
 – but we are all your children, all special in our own right.
 Whatever our gender, race, colour or creed, we all belong to you.
We all need your love.

We pray that we might learn to live in harmony with each other,
 to recognise that even someone halfway around the world
 is still our neighbour in your sight.
 Far or near, we all belong to you.
We all need your love.

With today's technology we have access to news from afar,
 almost before it happens.
 Help us not to become blasé about the situations we see,
 but to pray and care faithfully for all concerned
 and not to be focussed on the latest graphic news item
 remembering those who are still living through past crises.
 In war, peace, poverty, disease or grieving, we all belong to you.
We all need your love.

We pray for those near and dear to us: protect them, wrap them
 in your loving arms, and in sorrow and in joy, be with them.
 Near or far, we all belong to you.
We all need your love.
Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
 Your kingdom come, your will be done
 on earth as in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread.
 Forgive us our sins
 as we forgive those who sin against us.
 Save us from the time of trial,
 and deliver us from evil.
 For the kingdom, the power,
 and the glory are yours,
 now and forever. AMEN³

Hymn/song

Sent forth by God's Blessing

³ English Language Liturgical Consultation, 1988

We are sent out

Lord, thank you that we have been able
to spend time with you today.

We have felt ourselves grow stronger
as we have been blessed with your presence.

Send us out to spread your love,
in your precious name.

Amen.

May the Lord bless us
and keep us

May His face shine upon us
and be gracious to us

May he lift up His countenance upon us
and give us peace

Benediction

Jesus Jesus (Take Me As I Am) [feat. Wendy O'Connell] - Vineyard Worship

