

A world of wheat and weeds

Notes on the Bible readings

- Jesus tells a parable about a field of wheat that also contains weeds – and specifically, a weed that looks much like the wheat. The servants ask their master if they should pull up the weeds, but the master says the two must grow together. Until both are fully grown it is hard to identify the weeds from the wheat. Pulling up the one will almost certainly damage the other.

- These passages all have something to say about the power of God and God's action in the world. But they also all testify to the ongoing presence of evil and suffering. Jesus preaches that the kingdom is near, and Paul says that believers are now children of God, but both describe situations where the kingdom of God coexists with other incompatible elements that still cause 'stumbling'.

- The master's response in the passage is helpful, as it reassures the reader that he knows what is going on and has a solution to bring about a healthy and full harvest. It is a fact of our existence that good exists alongside evil and ongoing temptations, until the end of time. But this reading reminds us that we are not in charge, and that we are called to live together.

Questions for reflection

- ▶ What do you see in this image?
- ▶ Where do you see 'weeds' and 'wheat' growing together in the world?
- ▶ How might God be calling you to cope with the tensions this causes?



A prayer for others

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 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.

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. In war or peace, we all belong to you.

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 belong to you and need your love.
Amen.*

A personal prayer

*The field is the world.
Lord, I live in a tiny patch of your world
but it is still my field to serve you.
I pray that I will give my time and gifts
to you and yours in whatever way I can.
Your kingdom come, O Lord.
Amen.*

Wheat around the world

If you have access to the internet, look up stories on Tearfund's website (www.tearfund.org) outlining how God is at work in local churches throughout the world. Could anything you've read inspire you or your local church? Could you take any specific action?

Live your faith

Offer to do some weeding in a friend's/elderly neighbour's/the church's garden (NB within current social distancing guidelines). Make each weed you pull up part of your prayer that God will help you embrace the wheat in your life, and reject weeds.