

From the Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster

Sunday, July 23rd, 2023, Pentecost 8

Genesis 28:10-19a Psalm 139:1-11, 22-23 Romans 8:12-25 Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Today the parable of the wheat and the weeds. This is the story of the householder and the slaves planting for him wheat and someone else plants weeds.

There may be more, but I can think of three ways understanding this parable.

Jesus explains there are two types of people, the children of God and the children of the evil one. There at the end of the age one group will go to one place and the other to another. This is definitely a warning about the priorities in our lives and to make decisions and choices which move us more likely to the better place.

Last week I thought we are in at various times different type of ground for the seeds, this week we are both wheat and weeds. The two cannot be separated until the end of the age. The idea is to move from being weeds to wheat, but the reality is in this lifetime we don't totally leave the weeds behind. So, the movement from weeds to wheat is not necessarily linear and sometimes we take a step forward and at least a step back and not to get caught up in the illusion of thinking that we're better than others. Isn't that what Jesus is warning of when he says take the log out of your own eye before worrying about the speck in your neighbors' eye. *Matthew 7:3-5*

And we may be frustrated that we cannot seem to take the log out of our eye. If we think for a moment the metaphor of our spiritual journey is a movement upward. The image that comes to mind is more of a spiral moving upward. And as we come to the same side of the spiral or the circle, we come face to face with a similar sin or shortcoming. So, it may take various times of spiralling upwards to totally deal with the log in our eye.

Or as Rachel Maddow, a MSNBC contributor has said, history doesn't necessarily repeat itself, but it rhymes. So, we may not be dealing with exactly the same sin or weakness, but it's similar enough.

The third and newest way for me to understand this parable is that the householder is a rich man with slaves. And the fruits of the labour seem to be wheat but the reality there are weeds interspersed in between and a sense of hollowness. We've all heard the stories big shot lawyers, bankers and such feeling disillusioned with their lives and the goals and value they have set for themselves and have turned away from that life. There is also the example of Saint Francis of Assisi who turned away from

his family wealth and took a vow of poverty to start the Franciscan monastic community.

That may be an extreme example, but when do each of us realize that those types of priorities and goals don't bring us value and purpose and after awhile the need for a change of focus and the question of when does it happen?

So, it's not just for the rich but for all of us what are the priorities of life? In small and big ways, we can keep asking ourselves the question is it true wheat or weeds, is it a benefit or only destructive and or our own ego?

Regardless of which understanding of the parable we take, we come to the same point. Are you living your life as or more as a child of God or a child of the evil one? And the reality is, the consequences of those choices don't come quickly, and we may only have to face them at some later date. Jesus is encouraging us to make the choice is towards being a child of God now and not wait.

Amen

May Jesus, The Good Shepherd
guide you safely
through the green pastures
and through the dark valleys.
And as the Resurrection
and the Life
raise you up to
newness of life.