

Sunday July 19, 2020 - 7th Sunday After Pentecost - Yr A

(Genesis 28:10-19a; Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24; Matthew 13:24-30)

If you didn't know better, you'd say that this parable and the one we heard last week about the "Sower of Seeds" are very similar. In reality though, they are two very different parables. The parable about the "Sower of Seeds" from last week is a parable about God throwing seed, almost indiscriminately, and the soil in which the seeds are planted. In other words, the Word of God is planted in us – what we do with it (to some extent) is up to us, but mostly it is up to God. This parable today is about the householder, not the seeds or the soil.

This parable is called "the wheat and the tares" or the "wheat and the weeds". This is a great parable, though not as well-known as others. Like all parables it teaches us something about God and God's way. This parable teaches us to have the patience of the householder, that is: "if we have ears to hear the message!" As Jesus says: that we must listen to what is **really** being said.

For many of us it is hard to have the patience of the householder. In fact, we would rather take over FOR the householder and do the job ourselves. This is exactly what the parable is telling us **not** to do.

Jesus says: "a householder planted some wheat one day." The parable continues: "the evil one came along and planted some weeds in...with the wheat." The servants, wanting to take over for the householder, ask the householder if they should remove the weeds from among the wheat. The householder tells the servants to leave it alone, for now, for the weeds and the wheat will be separated at time of the harvest.

That seems reasonable to us...Or is it? Are we not prone to think like the servants – as though we know better than the householder! After all, we know what the weeds will do to the crop? We are so sure of ourselves that we would never pull up the wheat instead of the weeds! Aren't we wondering about the logic of the householder, leaving the weeds in with the wheat! Yes, it is tempting to be like the servants and want to take over **for** the householder.

Jesus knows what we are thinking, thus the reason for the parable. He knows that it is tempting for us to "take over" for the householder. However, Jesus knows of the damage that can be done to the young, tender wheat. He knows that the young

bearded darnel plant (the weed in this case) is not easily distinguished from the young bearded wheat. They look the same. Jesus knows that the roots intertwine themselves and that both are young and vulnerable. He knows that the only thing to do is to be patience and wait for the harvest.

That's hard for us to do – to wait and let God do God's job! We, like the servants, want to take over for God. We want to sort out the wheat from the weeds. Admit it – we are like that! We think we know which is which and who is who. We KNOW that WE can judge one from the other! **We** can do this for God. We know how to judge those who are different from us, those who are more powerful and therefore "should" be judged more harshly. We know those who have little power, and maybe need a bit more of a break. Yet some of us judge those on the streets MORE harshly! We even know in our city and country who to blame for our misfortunes! We KNOW how to blame the weeds. And we know just who the weeds are! We can recognise them, tell them apart from us. Their roots are not intertwined with ours! Or so we think!

Thankfully, Jesus reminds us in this parable that nothing is this simple. We don't really know the weeds from the wheat, Jesus says. We cannot point fingers at others! We should never assume God's prerogative. It is up to God to judge, not us! God will decide, when the harvest comes in, between the weeds and the wheat.

We are to learn from the householder today. The householder is patient, waiting until she or he is quite certain which is which / who is who. The servants are the impatient ones who "know-it-all." A theologian by the name of Stanley Jones says: "[the servants] made a few very crucial mistakes. First, they assumed that their goal, a fine field of pure wheat, was within **their** grasp! Second, they supposed that the harvest depended on **their** efforts and strength, that the wheat couldn't grow without their assistance. It is tempting to think that it is all up to us isn't it? Third, (*and the most serious*) they questioned the householder's goodness and purpose. The servants say to the householder: *'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where then did these weeds come from?'* In essence, they want the householder to account for **his** actions.

Instead Jesus says that we are to become like the householder. We are to be patient and wait for the growth to happen. We are never to judge. We are not to presume that **we** know the weeds from the wheat. The parable teaches us to let God be God.

Let God bring in the kingdom in God's own way. Of course, we can help bring in the kingdom by doing all the loving things that Jesus teaches us. But we are not to judge who is who. We are not to become God!

In fact, this is (or at least should be) a bit of a relief for us. Don't we have enough to worry about, with which to concern ourselves, or to be busy with, without taking over God's job? It is not up to me, or you, to do all the work to bring in the kingdom. And it is certainly not up to us to judge others along the way. Can we learn from this parable?

Jesus tells us that the kingdom of God is like a householder who planted wheat one day. The planting is up to God (whether throwing seeds indiscriminately or patiently waiting for the harvest). While the plants are growing, we are not to concern ourselves with doing God's job. Whether there is wheat or weeds at the time of the harvest is not our concern. Whether seeds fall on rocky ground or good soil is NOT our concern. What matters for us is "*hear the word of God*" ("*let those who have ears listen*") and try each day to live according to the Word of God. And God's Word is both taught to us by Jesus, even as he lived it. We only have to worry about ourselves, no one else. So thanks be to God for this word of inspiration and hope. Amen.