

7th Sunday after Pentecost Matthew 13:24-30, 36-44.

HYMNS: 407, 164, 564, 338, 293, 511.

INTROIT: Psalm 119 :57-64.

P You are my Portion, O LORD.

C **I have promised to keep Your Words.**

P I have sought Your favour with all my heart.

C **Be gracious to me according to Your Word!**

P I have been considering my ways,

C **and turned my feet back to Your Testimonies.**

P I have been hurrying, and I have not been delaying,

C **to keep Your Commandments.**

P Although the ropes of wicked people have been wrapped around me,

C **I have not forgotten Your Instruction.**

P At midnight I shall rise to give thanks to

C **You because of Your righteous Decisions.**

P I am a companion of all who fear You,

C **and of those who keep Your Directions.**

All **The earth, O LORD, is full of Your mercy. Teach me Your Prescriptions!**

COLLECT: O God, so rule and govern our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that, ever mindful of Your final judgement, we maybe stirred up to holiness of living here and dwell with You in perfect joy hereafter; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

Readings

Old Testament: Isaiah 44:6-8.

Epistle: Romans 8:18-27.

Gospel: Matthew 13:24-30,36-43.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **Amen.**

The text for our sermon for this morning is written in the book of Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 which was our gospel reading before.

24 He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. **25** However, while people were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. **26** When the wheat came up and formed grains, then the weeds also showed up. **27** The owner’s slaves came to him and asked him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where have the weeds come from?’

28 ‘He told them, “An enemy has done this.”

‘The slaves asked him, “Do you want us to go and pull them out?”

29 ‘He said, “No. If you pull out the weeds, you may pull up the wheat with them. **30** Let both grow together until the harvest! When the grain is cut, I shall tell the reapers, ‘Gather the weeds first, and tie them in bundles to be burnt, but bring the wheat into my barn!’””

34 Jesus told all these things to the crowds in parables. He did not tell them anything without a parable, **35** so that what had been said through the prophet might be fulfilled: “I shall open My mouth in parables. I shall utter things that have been hidden since the foundation of the world.”

36 When Jesus had dismissed the crowds, He went into the house. His disciples came to Him and said, "Explain the parable of the weeds in the field to us!"

37 He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. **38** The field is the world. The good seeds are the people who belong to the kingdom. The weeds are the people who belong to the Evil One. **39** The enemy who sowed them is the Devil. The harvest is the end of the age and the reapers are the angels. **40** Therefore, as the weeds are gathered and burnt with fire, it will be like that at the end of the age. **41** The Son of Man will send His angels, they will gather out of His kingdom all the things that cause sin and the people who continue to do evil, **42** and they will throw them into the fiery furnace. There people will weep and grind their teeth. **43** Then righteous people will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let the one who has ears listen!

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,
Peace be with you.

Last week, we heard the parable of the sower who sowed seeds on four types of soil. The four types of soil represented four types of hearts. There was the hard path that represented the hard heart that didn't hear the Word of God at all. There was the rocky soil that represented the heart that heard the Word of God, but rejected the opportunity to study the Word of God more deeply. There was the weedy soil that represented the heart that heard the Word of God, but allowed the things of this world to become more important than studying God's Word. Finally, there was the good soil where the Word of God put its roots deep into the heart.

In today's Gospel Jesus tells another story dealing with seeds. This time, there are two sowers and two different seeds.

The agricultural back ground of the story is sinister. The evil seed was probably a plant called darnel. Now from what I've been able to find out, darnel looks and grows just like wheat. It takes a very skilful farmer to notice the difference. The only problem is that the seeds of the darnel are worthless. If you depended on the wheat to feed your family and you harvested a crop of darnel instead, it would be a disaster. And you wouldn't know about it until the plants produced seed.

This is a scheme of long-range diabolical hatred. This is Eco terrorism at its worst. The enemy would have to divert some of his own resources to harvesting the worthless seeds of the darnel during the previous season. Then he would have to set aside storage for the darnel until the following planting season. Even then, the enemy would have to wait for the end of the growing season before the effect of the bad seed began to take its toll. The enemy might have to wait two years or more for his plan to take effect. This is cowardly, dishonourable, cruel, and an extreme expression of hatred ... characteristics that accurately describe our enemy the devil.

Again, this is one of those parables where Jesus Himself provides the explanation: "**The field is the world. The good seeds are the people who belong to the kingdom. The weeds are the people who belong to the Evil One. 39 The enemy who sowed them is the Devil.**"

The sower is the same as the previous parable, the Son of Man. The seed in the previous parable put its roots down deep into the good soil and produced a yield. In today's parable, we see that the yield is sons of the kingdom. The good Word of God puts its roots down deep into the heart of man and produces Christians.

The exact opposite happens with the bad seed. It puts its roots into the heart and produces sons of the evil one ... the hypocrites and doubters that plague Christianity throughout the world.

This explains one of the puzzling behaviours of human beings. People will often strongly disagree with the teachings of an organization, but still want to be a member of the organization. They could join an organization with which they agree, but they don't. Instead, they will often join an organization with which they disagree and try to change it. It doesn't make sense.

Pick any Biblical teaching that causes controversy. For instance the Bible teaches that Jesus is the one and only way of salvation ... that no one can contribute in any way to all or part of their salvation. The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit works through the external Word and not through internal feelings. The Bible teaches that marriage is between one man and one woman. It teaches that men and women should not have a physical relationship unless they are married. The bible teaches that you shouldn't have a relationship with a person of the same sex. The Bible teaches that all life is sacred ... even the life that is not yet born and the life that suffers near the end of its days. The Bible teaches that men are to serve in the office of the holy ministry and that both men and women are to receive that service with joy. The Bible teaches that it is dangerous to give the Lord's Supper to people who refuse to repent of their sin, who refuse to forgive others, or who cannot examine themselves, or recognize the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine.

Many of these teachings disturb people in our culture. In fact, there are plenty of denominations today who find these teachings so offensive that they simply ignore what the Bible has to say and do what they want to do anyway. After all, it's a free country. If they want to disobey God's Word, no one will stop them. BUT, the day will come when they must answer to God.

But here's the point I want to make today. If someone disagrees with the Bible in some way, they can find plenty of denominations to join, but they don't. Many, many of these people insist on joining faithful denominations. Then they scheme and struggle in an effort to get that faithful denomination to fall away from the clear teaching of the Bible. They are not satisfied when they break the Word of God, but they want everyone else to break the Word of God with them. Then, even though they are the most divisive people in the congregation, they accuse the faithful of being divisive. Sooner or later people begin asking, "Why don't these people join a denomination with which they agree? Why do they have to cause all these tears, grief's, and divisions when all we want to do is remain faithful to God's Word?" Jesus has the answer in today's parable. The devil intentionally sows his bad seed in the field of the Son of Man.

It's a very sad truth that Jesus teaches in today's Gospel. He teaches that even the most faithful congregation will have unbelievers in it. According to Jesus, some in the congregation are not Christians. You see the devil will sow his lies in every congregation. Some are darnel instead of wheat. Some are Christians and some are faking it.

Of course there are times that all of us have acted like darnel. We often try to get what we want without checking the Bible to see what God wants. We often complain that we don't feel heard, when, in fact, it's us that do not listen to God in His Word. Instead of loving God above all things, we love ourselves. Instead of loving our neighbour, we seek to exploit our neighbour. When God's Word specifically teaches something that we don't like, we try to find a work-around, that will let us do what we want instead of what God wants.

That part of us that acts like darnel should terrify us, it's something we're all guilty of whether we know it or not. Jesus teaching in today's Gospel is clear. He said, "**The harvest is the end of the age and the reapers are the angels. ⁴⁰ Therefore, as the weeds are gathered and burnt with fire, it will be like that at the end of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send His angels, they will gather out of His kingdom all the things that cause sin and the people who continue to do evil, ⁴² and they will throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**" Jesus very clearly teaches that

hypocrites in congregations will suffer an eternal fate that is like a fiery furnace ... a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Fortunately for us, our Saviour Himself became the good seed for us. He became the ultimate grain of wheat for us. On the first Palm Sunday, He said, "**Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Truly, truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but, if it dies, it produces much grain."** [John 12:23,24.] When Jesus took our human flesh upon Himself, He became a seed just like us. Only He never acted like a weed. That is, He never sinned. Nevertheless, He took the punishment of that treachery upon Himself for our sake. He was crucified and then buried just like a seed. While He hung on the cross, He suffered the fiery furnace. He endured the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. He endured it all so that the darnel and other weeds of this world could be converted into wheat.

When the servants wanted to pull the weeds from the field, the owner said, "**No. If you pull out the weeds, you may pull up the wheat with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest!...** This is the Lord waiting ... giving time for the Holy Spirit to work through the proclamation of the good seed of God's Word and convert the weeds ... the sons of the evil one ... into wheat ... the sons of the kingdom for "**God, our Saviour, ⁴ who wants all people to be saved and to come to know the truth."** [1 Timothy 2:3,4.]

When He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes to us weeds plants, and offers to convert us into wheat. He offers the forgiveness of sins to us through His Word. The Holy Spirit calls us by the Gospel, and we become wheat. By the power of God we become righteous, and Jesus said, "**Then righteous people will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let the one who has ears listen!"** Amen.

3rd Hymn: 564,

Prayer of the Church 7th Sunday after Pentecost

P Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Brief silence

P Lord, continue to raise up witnesses in this and every place to faithfully proclaim Your Word. Let Your Church continue to be the good soil that produces wheat for Your harvest. Bless all our pastors and church workers as they sow in the fields that You have given them. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Redeemer and Lord of hosts, the future is in Your hands, and only You know what is to come. Remove from us fear of the unknown and the trepidation that uncertainty brings. Keep us mindful that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed in us. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Lord of all, bless our nation and its citizens. Give us good leadership, satisfying work, loving families, and a quiet and peaceable life that glorifies Your name. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P The whole earth is Yours, O Lord, and You have charged us with its care. Make us good stewards of Your creation until that time when You set it free from its bondage to decay and give it to us anew in the kingdom of Your Son. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P God of all compassion, look over the sick and all who suffer from any malady of mind or body. [*We intercede this morning particularly for* _____ .] Give them

patience and endurance in their trials and, if it be Your will, return them to health. Be especially with those who live in nursing homes and care facilities. Give them an unfailing faith in You and a lively hope for the redemption that You promise. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P You have given us Communion as a gift, guarantee and pledge. May all who partake of the Sacrament receive the body and blood of Christ in faith. May it nourish and strengthen them in devotion to You and in service to others, and keep them safe during their earthly sojourn. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P We join our prayer with the unending prayers of those who have gone before us and are now with You. Together the Church in heaven and the Church on earth await the time when the righteous will shine like the sun in Your Kingdom, O Father, for You live and reign with Your Son and Spirit, ever one God, world without end. **Amen.**

4th Hymn: 338,