

Hope Among the Weeds

Readings

Romans 8.12-25

Matthew 13.24-30, 36-43

The Parable of the Weeds

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.’”

The Parable of the Weeds Explained

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.

The heart of the message

Jesus tells a story about wheat and weeds growing together in the same field.

The servants want to pull the weeds out immediately, but the farmer tells them to wait because they may damage the wheat as well.

The farmer is not indifferent to the weeds. He loves the wheat too much to allow impatient servants to tear it up.

Jesus is not asking us to pretend that evil does not matter. Harmful behaviour must sometimes be challenged, truth must be spoken and vulnerable people must be protected.

But Jesus warns us against assuming that we can always see clearly enough to pass final judgement on another person.

The command is not to call the weeds wheat.

It is to trust the farmer with the harvest.

A question to carry with you

What kind of person am I becoming while I live among the weeds?

We can become so preoccupied with identifying what is wrong in other people that we neglect what God wants to grow in us.

Our calling is not to spend our lives deciding who is wheat and who is weed.

Our calling is to remain rooted in Christ and keep growing towards the light.

Strong back, soft front

Brené Brown uses the phrase:

“Strong back, soft front.”

A strong back means courage, conviction and a willingness to stand against what is harmful.

A soft front means remaining open to grace, refusing cynicism and remembering that God is still at work in people.

Jesus calls us to be:

Strong enough to face the truth.

Soft enough to love.

Living hopefully

Romans 8 tells us that creation is groaning and that we are groaning too.

Christian hope does not pretend everything is fine.

Hope says:

The weeds are real.

The pain is real.

The groaning is real.

But none of them will have the final word.

The field still belongs to God.

The good seed is still growing.

The harvest is still coming.

Practices for the week ahead

Make space for God to form you through:

- Prayer
- Reading Scripture
- Worship

- Forgiveness
- Telling the truth with love
- Listening before judging
- Asking the Holy Spirit to grow his fruit in you

Questions for reflection

1. Where are you most aware of “weeds” at the moment - in the world, the Church, your relationships or your own heart?
2. Are you tempted to judge, label or dismiss someone too quickly?
3. What might it mean to trust God with the final harvest?
4. Where do you need a stronger back - more courage or conviction?
5. Where do you need a softer front - more mercy, patience or openness?
6. What is God seeking to grow in you during this season?

A prayer

Lord Jesus,
help me to remain rooted in you
when life feels tangled and uncertain.

Give me courage to face what is wrong,
wisdom to know when to speak,
and grace to resist judging others too quickly.

By your Holy Spirit,
grow in me love, joy, peace, patience,
kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
gentleness and self-control.

Teach me to trust you with the field,
the weeds and the harvest.

Help me to keep growing towards the light
and to live with hope.

Amen.

The weeds do not get the final word. God does.