

Sunday Sermon August, 6, 2017

Sermon Text: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Sermon Theme: The Weeds and Wheat 1. Live as Wheat 2. The Lord will take care 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 root up 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.’ ”

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 sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons 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 fiery 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. He who has ears, let him hear.*

Picking weeds is something that everyone has had to do at least once in their life. You have to weed if you are a gardener or love flowers. If you want to have a beautiful lawn, you will have to weed the crabgrass and the other prickly weeds out of it. Even if you only have rocks in your yard, you might get a notice or letter from your HOA that says that you need to pull the weeds that are growing up between those rocks.

For most people weeds are not welcome sights. We usually want to get rid of them. That involves pulling them.

Jesus told many parables that had to do with agriculture. Last week we looked at the parable of the Sower and the Seed. This week we have another parable that deals with a very similar agricultural theme. While the parables deal with similar subject matter, Jesus is teaching two very different things. This morning we look at the parable of the Weeds and the Wheat. In this parable, Jesus uses the picture of pulling weeds to teach us a lesson about our life and the eternal judgment. Jesus points out we are to live as wheat in this world and he will take care of the weeds.

Jesus parables usually seem so easy to understand, but there is usually a lot that is in them. This seemingly simple parable begins with a picture that is clear to understand. The sower sows his field with good seeds that will grow and produce a wonderful harvest. However, while he is sleeping, an enemy comes and sows a different kind of seed. When this seed first sprouts it looks very similar to the wheat sprouts, but it is really a weed that will take the valuable nutrients and water from the wheat and steal it for themselves.

It is only later, when wheat and the weeds begin to blossom and form heads on them that the servants discover that the weeds have been sown among the wheat. Their first reaction is much like ours. They wanted to pull those weeds as quickly as they could.

They ask their master if this is what they should do, but the master tells them not to pull the weeds. He tells them to allow the weeds and the wheat to grow side-by-side until the harvest time, then he will deal with the invasive weeds.

That doesn’t seem to be a very good answer. We know that weeds aren’t good for anything and only cause problems. Why would Jesus say to leave them?

If Jesus were talking to a farmer about how to have the best crop, he might have told him to pull the weeds. But Jesus is talking about much more than seeds and fields and crops. Jesus is talking about souls: souls of those who believe and don’t believe. He is showing great love for both kinds of souls. He is showing love that those souls that are in unbelief (the weeds) may have that Word shared with them over and over again.

He is giving them time to repent of their unbelief. He is also showing love to those who are believers (the wheat), that they are not harmed accidentally.

It may sound like Jesus is telling us to live and let live. But that is not what he is saying. He is describing what our life looks like every day on this earth. We see a world that is filled with evil. We see sin running rampant all around us. We feel those temptations ourselves and sometimes our reaction is the same as the servants. We want to get rid of those sins and those unbelievers and make them go away. We want to pull those weeds immediately.

Jesus tells us to live as wheat, as his Witnesses in this world, and not Weeders.

Jesus tells his servants, he tells us, not to pull the weeds. Jesus doesn't want use the Law in the way that the Pharisees did. He does not want us to seek out sin and unbelievers and to make sure they are punished, nor does want us to brand people as sinners who are unworthy of God's love and forgiveness.

But even though we are not supposed to, we still try to draw a line between us and them. Have you ever thought, the problem is not with me, it is with those people out there? It is those unbelievers and sinners, who are attacking me with their temptations. It is those people who are making life hard for people like me who have faith. It is those people who are the sinners, not people like me

When this happens, we are acting like the Pharisees. They liked weeding out the sinners. They passed judgment on others and allowed no room for forgiveness or mercy. Maybe we have said or thought that someone who is caught in a sinful lifestyle is going straight to hell because God wouldn't forgive them. Maybe we picket those who sinfully choose abortion. Maybe we figure that the world would be better if all those who steal things, all those drug dealers, all those prostitutes, all those homosexuals would just be gone. If we could just pull them up like weeds and get rid of them, then everything would be okay.

Jesus tells us to be Witnesses and not Weeders. Instead of being like the Pharisees, committing hate-filled acts, or hate-filled words, Jesus tells his wheat to live side-by-side with the weeds. He tells us what our life should look like as we live that way. He tells us to let our light shine, he tells us to spread the Word to all nations and peoples, and he tells us to speak the truth in love, using the opportunities we have to share the Gospel with others. Instead of hating or fearing others who are caught in sin and unbelief, he tells us to love them and to speak the truth in love to them that they might repent.

These are actions that we can and should take with all people, no matter what their religious background might be. Jesus tells us to look for opportunities to share the Gospel of Jesus with all others.

Jesus didn't just use the generic word weed when he told this parable. He specifically named this as the darnel weed. This weed looks exactly like the wheat plant, except when it blooms the darnel weed's seeds are black instead of the golden seeds on a wheat plant.

We might think that we are so different from those weeds, those sinners, that live near us in this world. We want to think that we are better than them, our sins are different, they aren't as bad as those other people.

Jesus says that sin is sin. We may not choose abortion, but there are times when we get angry and frustrated with our children and don't treat them with the proper love and caring we should. We may not vandalize or steal other people's things, but we covet them the same. We may not act like drug dealers, but we are still greedy and selfish and want what is best for ourselves, we may not sell our bodies like prostitutes or join in sexual sin like homosexuals or people who live together outside of marriage, but the sexual sins that live inside of us are no easier to overcome than the ones that are done in the open. All sin, those done in the open or those done in the most secret places of our heart, all damn us to hell.

If we were to weed out those who sin and destroy it, we should point the finger at ourselves first and announce the same judgment of hell on us and our sins.

But, there is one thing that makes us and our sins different from the unbeliever and their sins. It is not the amount of sins, it is not the kind of sins, it is not the degree of the sins, it is not the punishment for the sins. The one thing that makes us and our sins different from the unbeliever is that our sins have been forgiven by Jesus. The forgiveness Jesus won on the cross becomes ours through the faith which the Holy Spirit works inside of us.

Because of this forgiveness Jesus asks us to thank him by living as wheat, living our thankfulness for our forgiveness in this world. He wants us to use the Law in the proper way, not to beat good thoughts and works into other people, but as a guideline for our own life which guides our decisions and the way that we live

in a godly manner to make godly decisions, that others might see our life of faith and thanks and want to live that way too.

Jesus wants us to live as wheat among the weeds, but he says there will come a time when he will take care of the weeding. When the harvest comes, when judgment day comes, Jesus will send his harvesters out and they will separate the weeds and the wheat. The wheat will be taken in, while the weeds will be burned.

Jesus is the only one who can separate the weeds and the wheat. He is the only one who can see into a person's heart and see if there is saving faith. It is only Jesus who can and does offer forgiveness of sins to those who repent. It is Jesus who can and does forgive the sins of the aborter, the selfish, the greedy, the sexually impure, the coveter and the liar. It is Jesus who announces forgiveness to all who believe and refuses to forgive those who refuse to repent.

Jesus will make no mistakes in his final judgment. As we read in Joel, the Lord will sit on his throne and will perfectly judge. For those who are the weeds, those who are caught in unbelief and sin, there will be much fear because they will be tossed on the burn pile of hell. For those who are wheat, those in whom the Holy Spirit has worked faith, there is no fear, for their God will be their refuge.

Not much good comes from weeds. Our first response is often to pull them. The same can be said for the weeds of sin all around us. Nothing good comes from sin and unbelief that is all around us. Our first response might be to stamp out the sin we see in others in whatever way we can. But Jesus tells us not to. He tells us to live as wheat, sharing his Word in love with others. He will take care of the weeds.