

Reflection on Matthew 13.24-30, 36-43 by Rev'd Peter Shaw

The Sower and the Weeds

Last week we looked at the parable of the Sower - the sower - being God, the good seed being the Word of God and the potential for a harvest from the soil; us. It has been suggested that it should be called the parable of the soils because it talked about the ability of us the soil - us - to have the potential for a good bountiful crop from God's word! The sower was hoping to get a good crop from each grain - at least thirty times as much, possibly sixty, preferably a hundred! Jesus was emphasising that each person - however unlikely they might appear - is given a chance to respond to the Word of God.

The Word of God has the same potential within each of us to enable us to grow and mature and to be vital Christians in this world. It is only in our response to the Word that we come to be compared with the pathway, the rocky ground, the thorny patch, the good soil.

Jesus didn't try to give the whole picture in each story he told. Each story was aimed at conveying one main point. In the parable of the sower the key question has to do with our readiness to respond to the Word. Sowing and harvest can go terribly wrong if the soil is not properly prepared.

Today's parable reminds us that there is another reason why things go wrong. There is an Enemy! We have to be careful to accept responsibility for our response to the Word of God. Don't use the Enemy as an easy way out when things don't go as they should. Whatever has happened "behind the scenes," whatever may explain the reason for a response; pathway, rocky or thorny, each of us is still responsible for our own lives - don't blame the Devil! In other words, while we are thinking about the parable of the weeds, keep the parable of the sower in mind.

All those Weeds!

There are, in fact, some important differences in this parable. It follows the parable of the sower, but makes some different points. From Jesus' explanation, we learn that "The man who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man (Jesus); the field is the world; the good seed are the people who belong to the Kingdom; the weeds are the people who belong to the Evil One; and the enemy who sowed the weeds is the Devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvest workers are angels" (vv.37-39).

So, who or what are the weeds?

We are all familiar with the term “bad egg” to describe people whom we may meet or know of who are an apparent bad influence, or have bad or even evil intentions towards the rest of us, particularly when we are trying to do good, and perhaps then even more so. These people are the “weeds” and we come into contact with them, interact with them in all walks of life, including in church communities!

We need to reflect on the fact that “weeds” aren’t always other people – they can sometimes be us; we can act in a way or manner through sin, that is contrary to God’s will and indeed what he wants for us – to spend this life spreading the Good News of His love for all creation and ultimately spending eternity in His loving presence.

Yes, we need to be aware of the presence of “weeds” both in our own actions and those of other people

So What does This Say about Us?

What do we do about the problem of the “weeds.”

In counteracting this problem in whoever it might be, we must put our trust in Jesus as our Saviour and Lord and prayerfully take our place regularly among his people, both inside and outside our church communities.

We must commit ourselves to those activities that will enable us to grow in God’s love and build up our spiritual lives - read the Bible, be part of a home group, form a prayer cell, read some Christian biography but most importantly pray. Prepare the ground of our souls– our soil – so that we can respond to God like the good soil in the parable of the sower.

Above all, we must pray for the people we come across who are acting as “weeds” in our lives and not treat them with hostility, as we might be inclined to do; we should pray that they will come to realise the damage their actions are causing to God’s message of Love on this earth and repent and amend their ways and we must always be ready to help them in this.

If we do all this, then we are indeed helping to keep the weeds at bay in God’s glorious wheat field!

Amen