

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 – God Is Merciful

Last week we heard the Word called a seed God that plants. This week we look around and wonder where all the weeds came from? Indeed, where do we lay the blame for things that go wrong? In the Gospel for today, the disciples turned to their master. **“Did you not sow good seed?”** Is it God’s fault?

It comes as no surprise to Jesus that His people blame Him and His Word when the pews are not full, when the Church appears weak before the world, when there are conflicts and disagreements among the faithful, when COVID-19 is the preeminent topic of the day and, especially when we as Christians try to do right only to find trouble at home, at work, and in our neighborhood. Not a few pastors have turned to Jesus and wondered, “Why are there weeds in my church and in my life?”

The short answer is this. God is merciful. There is only one explanation when we survey the weeds all around us. That is a hard explanation but it is the truth. God is merciful. Unlike the Muslim god, the Lord does not work by threat nor does He give His people authority to judge in His name. We are not given the chance nor the choice to eradicate evil in the Lord’s name. This remains the Lord’s dominion and He will not be rushed. We want to focus on the weeds, God wants us to focus on the seed.

Remember when the Lord sent Jonah to convert, not to judge; to call the erring to repentance and not to write them off? In the same way Jesus extends forgiveness from the cross to the most unlikely of people – the very people who put Him on the cross. Ours is a God of mercy, of radical and unreasonable mercy, but wonderful and forgiving mercy in which we sinners find relief and hope. The Lord’s mercy is not selective but full and complete, not merely for the moment but for eternity. God is merciful. You and I are tempted to quickly judge the weeds and to tear them out wherever we find them. But God is merciful. All things await their own time, God’s own time. All we have in the meantime is His mercy. And as ever, faith wrestles daily with the question, “Is His mercy enough?”

We live in the tension of already but not yet. God’s time is not our own. But the patience of God is His kindness. And His kindness is what we have when life is surrounded by weeds. When it seems nothing is going as it should, God’s mercy never wavers. God holds the reaper angels back not because He is weak or foolish – but because He is merciful. Until His Word is proclaimed as He wills it and all the elect have been gathered from the ends of the earth. Do not doubt His mercy.

Only when the time is right will God pluck up the weeds and throw them into the fiery furnace of their eternal destruction. Only when God’s mercy has accomplished His purpose will the day of salvation find its sun setting and the dawn of judgement begin. Until then, God acts in mercy and in kindness.

We presume God is weak because He is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. We ache for a vindictive God who will tolerate no more. But God’s mercy is His strength. He sent Jesus not to condemn the world but that world might be saved through Him. God is merciful and patient and we are neither. That is why we are here. God forgives even our arrogant judgements, our pride, our fake righteousness, and our anger too easily aroused. God is merciful.

God does not need your help but He asks for Your trust. Leave the weeds. Believe His Word. Repent of your sins. You are not the savior of the world. God is. Love Him and love your neighbor. That is enough. The Lord has borne your sin and died your death and given you His life. God does not need our advice nor our consent – only our trust. He will save us from our sins, deliver the new and everlasting life to us, and reshape our hearts in His love. There is nothing wrong with the seed. But for now the wheat and the weeds live together. Not because God is weak. But because God is merciful.