

Thought for Sunday 19th July

Matthew 13:24-30 The Parable of the Weeds

24 Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like(A) 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.'"(B)



Matthew 13:36-43 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(A) of the weeds in the field." 37 He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man.(B) 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,(C) 39 and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest(D) is the end of the age,(E) and the harvesters are angels.(F) 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(G) will send out his angels,(H) 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.(I) 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun(J) in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

A very few minutes on social media (or any media really!) will be more than enough to see we are never going to all agree about everything. In fact, we may disagree so strenuously, we lose friends or start arguments over it. Now more than ever people are coming out of the woodwork with some pretty extreme views in every direction!

Most of these differences of opinion pass by readily enough without too much problem, but sometimes we are faced with opinions that are utterly abhorrent to us. This can be especially frustrating if those opinions are viewed in the guise of being from another 'Christian'! We see them tarnishing our beliefs and our Lord and we shout from the rooftops "not in my name!" and we mutter under our breath "why can't they just get struck by lightning or something God?"

But let me ask you a question – when was the last time you felt so passionately about your faith when it wasn't under attack? There is something about disagreeing with people that cements in us our own opinion and strengthens our belief.

Now, obviously, I'm perfect, so this isn't a problem for me – I always know I'm right, but for the mere mortals amongst you, it can sometimes be a problem to know which side of the line to stand, especially on issues where there isn't a straight answer, and for me, that lies at the heart of Jesus' parable.

He's not prepared to risk even one of his children just to rid the world of those who oppose him.

We must grow up amongst the weeds. But because we may have to live with them, doesn't mean we have to be like them. It doesn't mean we stop searching for Jesus - in every disagreement, in every new line of thought, in every situation we must ask ourselves afresh "where is Jesus?" And if we aren't sure, we follow his command "love one another as you love yourself". Calling out evil doesn't mean we abandon compassion, and this reading reminds us once again, the decision is not ours to make. At the end of the day, God will sort the harvest from the weeds.

Rachel Swatton