

Grace Lutheran Church @ Wichita Kansas 20 of July 2014 Mt. 13:24

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Jesus was a master parable teller. Last week we heard the Master tell of the liberal sower. The majority of the seed was either smashed, snatched, scorched or matted flat. Only some of the seed made it to good ground and bore fruit. Not a successful parable by American standards. Today's Holy Gospel is an extension of last week's parable. What happens to the good seed? Is a good crop produced, automatically?

We Kansans know the difficulties of raising a good crop of wheat. There can be too much water or too little. There can be late frosts or early heat. Weeds grow up. Bugs infest. There is an endless array of troubles.

Jesus tells this parable of the good seed sown in good ground.....with one big problem: weeds. Good seed is sown, but weeds appear. The question is asked, "How did this happen?" An enemy is identified. Another question follows, "Shall we gather up the crop?" "No," says the Master, "That is not your job."

The lesson is simple. God sows good seed. The evil one sows the bad seed. To man's eye's wheat can look like weeds, and weeds can look like wheat.

In the Church, this means that man is not the final judge. The wheat and the tares grow together until the Day of Harvest.

Yes, hypocrites will be mixed with believers. Man cannot get rid of hypocrites. Man cannot always tell when someone is lying, but he can tell when someone is openly breaking the Ten Commandments.....when, for instance, someone is not living in the one flesh union of one man with one woman; when someone professes Jesus to be a good man but NOT the Holy Lord; when someone drives 60 miles-an-hour on a city street marked 40. Correct sin? Yes. Call for repentance? Yes. Watch out for your own life that you do not fall? Yes. But do not, do not act as the Final Judge of souls.

St. Paul and the Church at Corinth knew when a certain man had sinned. A man in this congregation had his mother as his wife. Evil. Pull out this weed, advises Paul. You can see it. Jesus too corrects. He rebuked Martha when she sinned. He corrects Martha in her own house. He tells Martha to stop her busy-ness of food preparations and sit and listen to the Word of God.

You and I cannot rid the sin in our own lives, let alone someone elses. We lie to ourselves. We are hypocrites! We analyze ourselves: My sin is not so bad, we think. Liar.

- *I lip the words, "I love you" to my father and mother, but they will never know what I really think of them and the way they raised me.*
- *Nobody else saw the lust in my heart for that beautiful model on that Victoria Secret show last night.*

- *Who will even know that my desire to get a college education is not to better serve mankind, but to have a fat bank account.*

No one has invented a Hypocrite Meter. We do not give lie detector tests in the church. We hear the confession of the lips and look for fruits. Just like Paul did. Don't try to rid the Church of hypocrites. It's impossible. Remove the log from your own eye before you attempt to help your neighbor with his speck. You, repent today, and God will separate the wheat from the tares at the end of time. Men can be fooled. God cannot. For to us mere mortals, wheat and tares may appear to be the same.

So, keep your eyes on the coming Day of Harvest by keeping your eyes fixed on Jesus and His teachings regarding the Day of Salvation. Now is the Day of Salvation. Today. Every day. Tomorrow, if God allows a tomorrow to come.

- Every day is a day of salvation because every day is a day living in the salvation won for you, earned for you by Christ.
- Every day is a day of repentance and faith from our Holy Baptisms.
- Every day is a day of drowning the sinful old man and letting the fruitful, new man bud in faith and love.
- Every day is a day we find ourselves in the tangled mess of our own sin which is always straightened by the rightness and righteousness of the Gospel.

- Every day I confess with my tongue what the good seed, the Word, has produced in my heart, "I am a sinner of high degree. I deserve death. I deserve hell, instead, I am given salvation, I am given healing, I am given life by the death and resurrection of the Incarnate, Coming-Again Savior.

We know all too well that the day of harvest is at hand, when our Lord Jesus will come to judge the living and the dead; when all hidden things will be revealed; when the wheat and tares will be separated; when all creation will be delivered from the bondage of corruption to the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Instead of being consumed with questions about the end of time---when, where, how---be consumed with this: THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND. REPENT. BELIEVE. PRODUCE FRUITS WORTHY OF REPENTANCE AND FAITH.

Jesus is no hypocrite. He does not pretend to have mercy and love for us. He has real love. It was exhibited on the cross for you. Jesus died for you. Shedding true blood. Dying a real death. In that death He stomped upon the serpent's head. In those 3 days before the resurrection, Jesus even went to hell. He declared victory. The Word made Flesh not only overcame Satan, but sin and death as well. On the Last Day all of this will be seen openly, though now it remains hidden to every eye, except the eye of faith.

Similarly at this altar, only the eyes of faith see the true Body and Blood of Jesus. Only the ears of faith receive the

forgiveness of sins. Only the faithful desire this food because only the faithful hunger for the true bread that all men need.

Christ is no hypocrite. He is the good Seed. He dwells in you richly so that you are a good tree. And one day, on the Last Day, you will shine forth as the sun in His Kingdom. IJN.

Amen.