

10 Pentecost A—July 20, 2008
Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43
The Rev. David R. Wilt

Last week we went away, or at least some went away, probably wondering if they were seed that had been sown on the good ground or the weedy ground or rocky ground. Now this week we struggle with a different reality. Perfectly good seed, planted in perfectly good soil, and then, in the middle of the night when every one was asleep and not paying attention, an evil one comes and sowed weeds among the wheat. So, that when the wheat came up and began to grow, much to the surprise of the workers there were weeds also.

So that we wont experience this same naïve reaction, let us understand the situation of the world that we live in. There are different environments that effect the way people grow; rocky soil, thorny soil, weedy ground and good ground. There are "have nots", there are "have littles", there "have somes" and there are "have muches" in this world. We live in a vast chasm between abstract poverty, on the one hand and opulent wealth on the other hand: (95 million for a house-unbelievable, 95 million for a house you might tear down, almost insanely unbelievable.)

And no matter how much effort you might make to surround yourself with only good seed it is impossible. If you don't believe me, go to any lawn and garden store. Pick

up any bag of grass seed and read the label. Somewhere on that label you will see a break down of what percentage is seed and what percentage is weed. That is the world we live in. It is inevitable. It is in a word a world of conflict in conflict.

All but a few of the Bishops in the Anglican Communion are meeting now at Lambeth--invitees of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Much of their discussion in the next two weeks may very well be on determining how to get the weeds out of the wheat. Some of their discussion will focus on the issue that perhaps what some call weeds is not really weeds at all, but merely a hybrid form of wheat. But, at the end of the day, when all these Bishops get on planes and go to their respective regions and Dioceses, I can promise you one thing, wheat and weeds will be growing together.

Individual churches have these discussions all the time but it only leads to a deeper misunderstanding as to who really are the wheats and who really are the weeds. And, that leads to name calling. And, that leads to schism within the body of Christ.

And, in all of this wrestling with the issue, in all of the haranguing that goes on, until even those who really could care less about wheat or weeds, but are simply looking for a relationship with Jesus Christ, throw their hands up and walk away.

And, in all of this wrestling with the issue, who ends up being hurt? Anyone who cannot find Christ in the midst of the battle. Those suffering crisis or loss in their lives. Those seeking to share Christ's love with others. Children who are taught not so much that "Jesus loves me", but because of what some people are saying, "Maybe Jesus doesn't love me"

And, in all of this wrestling with the issue, somewhere along the line, and who knows just where that may be, what is completely forgotten in the din of the argument is the most important thing: What does Jesus say about this wheat and weeds dilemma?

Don't risk for a second destroying even the first stalk of wheat trying to destroy the weeds. For the wheat is precious and the weeds will not choke it out. But at the end of the age God will decide. God will decide!

Part of our own problem becomes that we are impatient with God and seeks to read the mind of God. That is a dangerous thing to do for our own spiritual wellbeing.

I have a recurring nightmare sometime that I have died, and I am standing before God and God says to me, "David, what in the world were you thinking! What were you smoking or drinking to cause you to interpret my scripture that way?"

Well at that point in time I am down to two options.

I can argue. I can put together my best theological defense and plead my case to this highest court defending my position. In which case, I will have committed the only unpardonable sin in the Bible. I will have blasphemed the Holy Spirit—The living will of God. By my argument that God is somehow wrong and I am somehow right I have shown defiant irreverence to the creator and maker of Humanity. And, without saying where I will end up, suffice it to say that at that point I can probably hear the gates to the heavenly kingdom slamming shut.

My second option would be to simply say, "I'm sorry I misunderstood. I was only trying to serve you." My sorrow, my repentance are the key to the heavenly kingdom.

In this world entwined with wheat and weeds we as the Body of Christ serve a very important role. We are the vehicle through which those sown in the rock can find hope. We are the vehicle through which those who have done evil can repent and return to the Lord. We are the vehicle through which the love of Christ can overcome despair and dis-ease. But we cannot do it by judging but only through pointing the way to the risen Christ.

As a friend of mine once said when we were in a discussion of all of the weighty issues going on in the world and in the church, "I thank God everyday that I am in sales and not quality control."

A good thought for each of us to wake up to every day.