

The Seventh Sunday after Pentecost (2017)

Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43 24[Jesus] put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field,

25but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away.

26So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. 27And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ 28He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ 29But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. 30Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”

36Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” 37He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38The field is the world, and the good seed is the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, 39and the enemy who sowed

them is the devil. The harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels. 40Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. 41The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, 42and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord, with all your graces now outpoured on each believer's mind and heart; your fervent love to them impart. Lord, by the brightness of your light, in holy faith your Church unite, from ev'ry land and ev'ry tongue! This to your praise, O Lord, Our God, be sung. Hallelujah!
Hallelujah!

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

So, US looks like THEMS, and THEMS looks likes US; until the End! Let all the children of God pray: Lord, have mercy on US!

When the Risen Crucified King sent out His Eleven to make disciples, students, through the gifts of Holy Baptism and the teaching of His Gospel, He put an End, until The End, to GOD looking for OUR orientation toward HIM! Now—New—the Holy Spirit breathes out the Good News through that Word of the Eleven, that GOD is now and forever—because of Christ’s suffering and glorious Ascension—GOD... is now **UTTERLY RE-ORIENTED** toward ME, your poor pastor! And if me, then you; and if US, then even THEM!

You can call the ‘weeds’ the parable speaks of—Wikipedia tells me—“typically known as **darnel, poison darnel, darnel ryegrass** or **cockle.**” Or, to the delight of brother Charlie this morning: *Lolium temulentum*.

Jesus—Who **DELIGHTS** to call Himself ‘the Son of Man’, one of us, a child of Adam through and through!—calls the weeds ‘the sons of the evil one,’ sown by ‘his enemy’ while his men were sleeping. The Bible and Wikipedia agree that this cockle and good wheat look just the same, until harvest time. You **CAN** eat the darnel, I read. But for taste and nutrition and health and yield, wheat’s the thing!

But they grow up together, until the angels come for us, AND for them! Part of the cross to which Jesus calls us; that hypocrites people the Church of God, religion, what men can see and boast of and judge, along with the righteous, who shine now and will forever, like the sun, in the Kingdom of their Father. It is for the GOOD of the children of the kingdom that the weeds are left in place, until the End.

Come, Holy Light, Guide Divine! Now cause the Word of Life to shine! Teach us to know our God aright and call Him FATHER with delight! From ev'ry error keep us free! Let none but Christ our Master be! That we in living faith abide; in Him our Lord, with all our might confide! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

My dear ones, I waste your time getting stuck in the weeds this morning—that's for Art!—piddling around with crops and such. For even when the Lord EXPLAINS His parable to His disciples, US or THEM call still get it all wrong!

This is the same Lord Jesus Who declared that ‘heaven and earth will pass away’ BEFORE the tiniest demand and threat of Law passes away. If we have ears to hear, then we hear our God clearly that we are NOT oriented toward HIM, nor toward our neighbor, as we were created to be. US, THEM, everyone, is NOT righteous, in the judgment of the Law.

But in just the same spot He teaches His OWN that OUR righteousness, OUR right-standing under heaven MUST surpass that of the best people heaven has ever seen! You want people who are ORIENTED toward God, heaven, Moses, the Ten Commandments?! Circumcised and healthy, clean and industrious; no need to walk around with Bible in hand, for they had it memorized, word-for-word, letter-by-letter, and recited all the livelong day! The Pharisees who lived by Moses and the scribes who were experts in Moses. And unless we surpass THEIR orientation, we CANNOT enter the kingdom of heaven.

Think of that! People whose diet was so strict, they never put a piece of cheese on a burger, nor attended a crawfish boil, shrimp boil; is it possible?!

And the animals they never dared TOUCH, much less EAT! The animal that gives us bacon, AND the animal that gives us hams, AND the animal that gives us cracklins, AND the animal that gives us pork ribs! How many animals is THAT?!

We can smile at it. They were in deadly earnest. And when the Son of Man ran up against them, they rejected Him, as they rejected John the Baptizer. For THEM needed something SO MUCH MORE—than the call for all men to repent even of their repenting, even of their new-found orientation toward heaven! They needed so much more that the Word of this Man Whom they could help shuffle off to the cross.

This Man sees the End already, and tells us of it:

Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

THAT’S the Word that gets Him killed, if any one word does it. Our translation calls them ‘law-breakers.’ We’re in Matthew 13. In Matthew 23, the Lord uses the same word, and calls the best people you’d ever want as a neighbor, pillars of church and society, ‘LAWLESS!’

It makes perfect sense that THEM wanted Him dead.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. ²⁸ So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”

The VERY PEOPLE who prided themselves that—though NOT perfect! They would NEVER claim such perfection for themselves! Only GOD is perfect!—the men who at least were TRYING to follow the Law, in minute detail—He calls LAW-LESS?! Those who live as if there were NO LAW whatsoever? How DARE He!

Here's how He DARE! He brings the NEW, an orientation of heaven and earth, God and men, that has NOTHING AT ALL to do with OUR verdicts, OUR judgments, OUR view of things. In short: heaven OVERLOOKING what we offer up, or around. So much so—ALL that we are and do, so UTTERLY absorbed into That One Helpless Man on the cross, that heaven is NOW, and ONLY, absorbed and oriented and obsessed with those over whom the verdict rings: 'I don't think you're even trying!'

'THOSE are the ones I have come to call to repentance!'

My dear ones, your poor pastor's nightmare is that I leave you leaving here today the way all popular preachers and church officials leave men; for they know their CUSTOMERS well! To leave you leaving here going: 'Pastor had some good advice today! He's given me some good things to work on; and it's high time I commit to some better things!'

Come, Holy Fire, Comfort True! Grant us the

will your work to do; and in your service to abide!
Let trials turn us not aside. Lord, by your pow'r
prepare each heart, and to our weakness strength
impart, that bravely here we may contend, through
life and death, to Thee, Our Lord, ascend.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

The LAW offers NO HOPE! So KEEP THE
LAW, with all the powers you can muster! And then,
if the Law has done its job, open your eyes and see
what YOUR works and YOUR words and YOUR
heart has achieved! Just look around at the faces of
those around you; and you will see!

The old movies, from the days when murderers
were not made celebrities, as in our day: the judge
pronounced doom and then said, 'And may the Lord
have mercy on your soul!'

If you want a check about how the US versus
THEM is going with you, around you, just check that
out. I have been walking out the door of this very
sanctuary, after PLEADING with y'all to trust the
Good News of sins forgiven, and have heard the
names and weak deeds of poor people we know,

rolling around in the maws of those who are CALLED the children of God. And what I hear is just that: Lord, have mercy on THEM!

YOUR right standing before God surpasses the best people God has ever seen, my dear ones! How? I forgive you all your sins! In Christ's place and by His Command, I DECLARE, I MAKE YOU...FREE! And if the Father, the Son or the Holy Ghost give you any trouble at the End—even the angels!—you get ahold of me!

Now is that word enough for you? If not, you are lawless and doomed. If you confess yourself lawless and doomed, then rejoice! For....I FORGIVE YOU ALL YOUR SINS!

And God is your FATHER—and will NOT REST TODAY until you call on Him as such!

And Christ pardons you with His Body and His Blood today! NOT ENOUGH for THEM! And we understand THEM well, don't we?! 'Oh, I wish the people I knew were trying harder!'

Ah! US'n looks just like THEM'n! Therefore, let all the disciples of Jesus pray! Lord, have mercy on THEM?! Sure thing. But most of all: Lord, have mercy on US!

In the Name of Jesus! Amen.