



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

August 6, 2017

Pastor Randy Ott

9th Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: [Joel 3:12-16](#)

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 18](#)

Second Lesson: [Romans 8:26-27](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43](#)

Sermon Text: [Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43](#)

The Christian Lives as Wheat Among Weeds as He Waits for the Harvest

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

In Christ Jesus, dear fellow redeemed:

When you listen to that parable, do you kind of wish it worked that way in gardens too? Just let the weeds grow. It will be alright. You can just sort them out at the harvest time. Twenty-seven years I've been married to Paula and she hasn't bought that line once. But here Jesus is still telling parables about what the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God's grace is like. That kingdom is his ruling activity in this world. I think you could say the whole point of this parable is to tell us the purpose of God's kingdom is not to take all evil out of your life. The purpose of God's kingdom is to have you live as wheat and produce a crop 30, 60 and 100 fold, like we heard about last week, until the harvest comes at the end of time. As you do that, the weeds are going to be right next to you, rubbing shoulders with you.

It's probably a good truth to remember the next time that things that cause evil and hardship in your life start to make you get angry at God and you start acting like God owes you something better or something more, or he should take trouble out of your life because you're a good Christian and you deserve this and that from God. This parable is telling you that's not the way it's going to be. Until Christ returns, his people will live as wheat among people that are evil, among people that hate Christianity and hate God, among those who love the kingdom of Satan, and that's not going to change until the very end of the world.

It's a pretty straightforward parable, I think, once Jesus explains it. I think one of the key things to remember in this parable is that the field is not the kingdom. The field is the world. He says the field is the world and he says the good seed are the believers. That's the kingdom. That's the Holy Christian Church. God rules among them through his Word and his Sacrament, through his grace, to bring them to faith, to keep them in

faith until he returns again. But what he is teaching us about that kingdom is that it is going to be hard. In fact, at times we're going to think we know better, just like the servants in this parable who think they should just be going out and pulling out all the weeds.

You might think that weeds should have been easy to see. I'm not a 1st Century Judean botanist, but from what I've read, the Greek word that he uses is a weed that looks like wheat when it's growing and you can't tell the difference until the head sprouts. Notice in the parable it says when the head sprouts, then the weeds appear. So the whole time it looks like a wonderfully growing field. The weeds and the wheat look the same until the head, until the fruit are seen. Then you can see the weeds. Then these servants got upset and said, "Should we go and get rid of them?" He said, "No, because you might uproot some of the wheat with it."

That's an interesting thought I thought for awhile. Does that mean that if we all start buying shirts that say "Kill them all. Let the Lord sort them out" and go out and try to kill people we think are weeds, does that mean we might miss and hit some wheat? I don't think so. I think what it is saying is if we act so harshly and abruptly and think that we can remove evil from this world by our own actions or by passing the right laws or by getting people to do the right thing, we're going to end up missing the boat on sharing the Gospel. Some of those weeds that are destined to become some of God's elect wouldn't be brought to faith because the wheat, the believers, wouldn't be doing their job. They wouldn't be operating by Word and Sacrament. Instead, they'd be trying to operate by force. In the course of history, Christians have made this mistake.

In the course of history they tried to legislate morality. That was Calvin and Geneva and it didn't work. They tried to, by force, drive out the infidel in crusades and it didn't work. God's people quite often are the servants that are saying "Just let us go destroy them and we'll pull the weeds out." God, ahead of time, said that's not your job. Your job is to be wheat. Your job is to produce that crop we heard about last week of 30, 60 and 100 fold. Your job is to live trusting that He will preserve you even though you're rubbing shoulders with evil and Satan and he is constantly attacking you. God says, "Trust that I'll take care of you with my gracious ruling activity in this world. You do what I told you to do. Make disciples of all nations. Teach them to obey everything I've commanded you. Grow in your knowledge of the Word and don't just give it lip service. Then you'll be producing that crop." Throughout history, Christians thought they knew better than God and tried their own solutions, and it's always failed.

I suppose the opposite of that is what we just sang in the Hymn of the Day (Hymn 541). At times the wheat, the believers, are sluggish, thoughtless and cold. We're only concerned about ourselves. "Lord, get rid of the weeds because it's making my life hard, and I don't care if they go to hell or not." It always amazes me how those who carry the name "little Jesus," "Christian," carry the name of the One who said "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing," when he was being nailed to the cross, that we can say "Good, those unbelievers should go to hell." I can't fathom that, but I'm sure I've done it. I'm going to guess at one time or another, so have you. We

don't love like God wants us to love. But our God keeps reaching out and telling us that the evil is going to be there. Don't expect it to disappear. And when the evil is there, you're going to have hard times, but just do your work. Be the wheat among the weeds. Love like Christ loved. Serve like Christ served. And don't think it's all about you. That's when Christians mess up so much stuff.

It's all about God. It's all about God and his love. By all rights, those who do evil that will be gathered at the end, at the harvest, on the Last Day, and that will have weeping and gnashing of teeth in hell forever should be us. We're evil. There's nothing better in us than in your Muslim coworker. There's nothing more inherently good about us. The only difference is, someone shared the Gospel with us and the Holy Spirit worked faith in our hearts, and then God's roundup didn't kill the weed. It turned it into wheat.

As that wheat, we are called to trust God, to repent when we haven't, to repent when we've whined about "Why would God let difficulty in my life? I'm a good Christian," and to simply trust God and his plans for our life, because he's already seeing the end when we are in the glory of heaven. As we've been hearing in Romans 8, our present suffering, wheat living among weeds, is not worth comparing to the glory that will be revealed in us at the time of the harvest, when we will shine like sun in the kingdom of the Father.

Lord willing, we have ears to hear that. Lord willing we have lives that live it. Amen.