

People Are Interconnected

Matthew 13:24-30

Verse 29 But he said, "No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them."

Sunday, July 19, 2020 at The First Congregational Church of Marshalltown,
Iowa

Introduction

I remember once, years ago, volunteering in a hospital for the poor in the Boston area that held a number of people suffering from AIDS, all long gone by now. During that time I had a conversation with a nurse in which I mentioned that I viewed the church as a voluntary community of sorts. She asked if I might not feel that it is more than that. I replied that she is right, the church is the "Bride of Christ" according to Scripture, the "nation of the Messiah" if you will, with people from every ethnic group in the world. The church is an institution that is not a human creation, but I mentioned that while I believe what the Bible says about the church I also recognize that people are not part of a church by force, they choose to participate in the life of a congregation. Some people are more involved than others. Some are involved with the purest of motives, but the Bible warns that there are people, within and without the church, who are up to no good. Jesus Himself addresses this.

Set the stage, since this is a rare parable that Jesus Himself explains.

Jesus instructed His disciples often using parables, and a few of them included commentary by the Master Himself. In the parable for today Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven is like a farmer's field, sown with wheat. An enemy comes at night and sows poisonous seed along with the wheat crop. Once discovered, the farmer advised his workers not to pull up any poisonous weeds, for fear of damaging the wheat. Instead, they will wait until the harvest and pick up both. The wheat will be harvested and put into barns and the weeds will serve a cheap fuel.

Tares and Wheat: One offends and practices lawlessness, the others are the people of God, but the roots interconnect and it is up to God to disconnect. Scholars know that particular weed discussed in this passage. It resembled wheat in the early stages of growth to such an extent that a person could not tell

them apart. Later, when the poisonous fruit began to show, the roots of the weed had intertwined with the surrounding wheat, so uprooting the weeds could destroy the crop. This was not fantasy. In the days of the Lord Jesus some unscrupulous farmers actually did this. For the purpose of this parable, Jesus compares the world to a field, with the people of God and the people of the devil mingled together. The harvest is the end of the age, and it is the angels, under the direction of God, who separate the crops. It is not up to us.

Application

Here are a few applications. First, note the wise among you. Those who are knowledgeable, able to solve problems and heal relationships, and try to keep them as close to you as possible. Watch out for people who always cause strife. They tend to go from one church to the next, and controversy always seems to follow them. Finally watch out for "religious" people who do what is wrong without apology. We all have faults against which we struggle, but when a person decides to stop repenting of a sinful habit and starts to make excuses for it, he crossed a dangerous line. These people may not always be "weeds", but there are such people in the world, and some of them can show up at church.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Lord Jesus often used agricultural imagery to describe spiritual or apocalyptic vistas. In this parable, he addresses human nature and the end of the age, and warns us that people, both good and bad, are intertwined in our lives. Be careful and discerning, and also know that the separation of the good from the bad is not our work, but ultimately that of the Lord.