

THANKS...I GUESS
THANKSGIVING EVE

MATT 13:24-30, 36-43
NOV 23, 2016

²⁴ He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, ²⁵ but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. ²⁶ So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. ²⁷ And 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?' ²⁸ He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' ²⁹ But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. ³⁰ Let 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.'

³⁶ Then 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." ³⁷ He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰ Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, ⁴² and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

Is this really a text for Thanksgiving?

It fits well with the theme of Last Sunday of Church Year
which we celebrated three days ago,
when we think of Jesus' return at end of time, as judge of all,
Reference to harvest does connect this text with thanksgiving
but the harvesters don't seem all that thankful.

Still, I think this text does include good reasons for us
to be thankful.

GIVE THANKS FOR GOOD THAT COMES WITH BAD
GIVE THANKS FOR GOD'S PATIENCE WITH OUR BAD
GIVE THANKS FOR GOOD THAT COMES FROM GOD

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If you sit down to a nice meal with family this week,
I hope you remember to thank God, and also host & cook
But it is possible you may wonder how thankful you really are
if you notice meal includes some things you don't really like.

If you are vegetarian or just don't like cranberries, yams
or, worse yet, if cook included in favorite casserole
little pieces of whatever it is you really dislike.

So, what can you do? You could tediously pick it all out
while it all gets cold, or just do without, or just eat it all.

Servants in text may not have noticed at first
what they were not thankful for.

Just as English words for weed and wheat are similar,
two plants referred to in text are similar grassy plants.
Difference hard to see until seed grows on grain, not weeds.
By then, it is a bit late to do anything about it.
because the roots are intertwined.

You might be really excited about something to start with,
a class in school, new job, car, house, new relationship,
only after while discover something not so good in it.

After elections, some are discovering with politics
you can't get some things you want without others.

In this world, good and bad usually come mixed together
in ways that are very hard to separate.

This parable warns God's servants not to imagine
that we can somehow get rid of all the bad people
or that God will keep everything bad out of our life.

So what shall we do? Take both together & be thankful,
including being thankful it is not all bad with no good,
which it easily could be without God's constant care.
But also be thankful that God doesn't just get rid of all bad.

GIVE THANKS FOR GOD'S PATIENCE WITH OUR BAD

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The field is the world. As long as we live in this world
not only is good mixed with bad all around us.
but both continue to be within us.
In bodies are sometimes cancerous tumors in organs
where doctors could cut out or destroy it
but not without ruining the organ it is in.
Seed planted by the devil has roots that grow into our hearts.
God could certainly destroy all evil right now
but that would mean we ourselves would be destroyed.
How thankful we can be that God delays the harvest
and gives us time for the seed of his word to grow in us
producing both faith and fruit of good works
which show what kind of plant we are.
God's intention is that the spiritual growth in our lives
crowds out the work of the devil in us & in world
like flourishing grass or garden leaves no room or light
for weeds to grow.
But we can also be thankful that God recognizes who is his
and that he will send his angels when the time is ripe
and will take us out of this world to heaven
and will finally purify us from all sinfulness.
But while we wait, we especially...

GIVE THANKS FOR GOOD THAT COMES FROM GOD

³⁷ ... "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.

⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, ⁴² and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

If you have ever seen a field that is not planted at all,
you know it is not just bare dirt. It is all weeds.
This is the way it is with our world, the only reason
there is any good in it at all is because of God's planting.
The whole world is God's field, created by him.

So why are their weeds at all? They were created by God.

Definition of weed is: a plant in the wrong place.

God created everything for a good purpose, even though

Nothing so good devil & his servants can't use it for evil..

So why does God allow evil in his world?

Because there is nothing so evil God cannot use it for good.

God only allows evil when he has way to use it for good.

Even weeds like dandelions can be used for some good.

One good use God makes of bad things that happen

is reminding us of our need for him.

God can use even bad things in process of bringing to faith

and training us in patience and obedience.

Greatest example of evil turned to good use

is the greatest injustice in the history of the world,

the innocent death of Jesus by which we are saved.

God is the one who planted Jesus in the womb of Mary

so that he could be the son of Man who came into our world

as our savior from all evil.

But Jesus himself said that a seed remains a single seed

unless it is put in the ground and dies

and comes to life again & grows to produce many seeds.

By this he meant his death and burial and resurrection

which produced the seed of the word of the gospel

which works powerfully in our hearts to bring us to faith

so that we receive his forgiveness of sins

It is also the gracious work of God himself

that the fires of affliction cause us to see our need for God

and so to repent and be forgiven and purified.

before God does his final work,

which he can do using the evil of death

so that instead of being left in this world forever,

his angels take us to the place he prepared for us

where we will finally shine like the sun.

It is because of this promise that already now we can...

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in ways that are impossible to separate in this world

GIVE THANKS FOR GOD'S PATIENCE WITH OUR BAD

and not uprooting or destroying us with the bad

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the good that is in our world and in us,

and the final good of being gathered to heaven.