

July 20, 2014
Sermon for The Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
St Peter Lutheran Church
Bowie, TX
Larry Knobloch, Pastor
Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43

J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus

Matthew 13:24–30 (ESV)

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.’ ”

Matthew 13:36–43 (ESV)

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 end 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 end 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.

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Amen.

The parable of the wheat and the weeds can be seen from two different angles. One way is to compare the wheat and the weeds to people inside the church; those who are true believers and those who only act like believers.

The other is the one we are going to focus on today.

In this world there co-exists both Christians and unbelievers, people of God and people of Satan. This state of co-existence will continue until Christ returns and brings this world to an end.

At that time, God will order the separation of his people from Satan's people and each group will receive their just reward – end of story.

But what about the time in between? What about from now until then? As Christians, as the wheat of God, what are we to do with our lives?

Of course, there is nothing you can do to earn salvation. Christ's death and resurrection have covered your sins and it is only through faith in Him that you will be saved. However, Christians aren't here to just live their private lives.

Coming to worship on Sunday is not the Christian's "job." If that were true, Jesus wouldn't have said things like: *Let your light shine before men* (Mt 5:16 NIV), or *You are the salt of the earth* (Mt 5:13 NIV). And he certainly would never have said: *Go and make disciples of all nations* (Mt 28:19 NIV).

In a real field, the wheat and the weeds may grow up together and be separated at the harvest, but the wheat will never have an effect of the weeds. Co-existing in that field the wheat will always be wheat and the weeds will always be weeds.

But in the field of this world, the wheat of God, we Christians, can have a very profound effect on the weeds, the lost souls, and we are called to do so.

Since Christians, growing up side by side with unbelievers, can have an effect on the lost, and are meant to have an effect on the lost, Christians have a job to do. It is a fact that only God can change a weed to wheat, but it's the Christian's job to point the lost to God, to allow the Holy Spirit to use you as His hands and feet.

Let's look at some ways God's wheat can affect the weeds. The most obvious way for Christians to affect the world around them is to witness. When was the last time you told someone about Christ? When was the last time you did something that left no doubt that your motivation was nothing but Christian love?

Maybe we should ask the question from the other side. When was the last time you passed up the chance to tell someone about Jesus? Or when was the last time you looked away from an opportunity to demonstrate the love of God?

Make no mistake, as a Christian, you are always a witness. You may be a good witness or you may be a bad witness, but you are always a witness. Jesus wants us to be His witnesses, but He wants us to be the light of the world, the salt of the earth, the teachers of the world.

Another way Christian wheat can be beneficial to the world is service. We can serve inside the church and outside the church. We can hold church offices, usher, greet people, do building maintenance, or any one of a number of jobs inside the church that are waiting – maybe even begging – for someone to help.

We can serve outside the church. Maybe we can cut the grass for our elderly neighbor or visit with the man across the street whose wife just died. Maybe we could spend a day at the Bowie Mission, or at the crisis pregnancy center.

We do not live in a vacuum. People see what we do and what we don't do. And if those people know, and I hope they do, that we are Christians, our actions send a powerful message. Jesus said that he came: *not to be served, but to serve* (Mk 10:45 NIV). As Christian wheat, can we do any less?

The next way Christian wheat can make a difference is prayer. Prayer is an easy thing for many Christians to overlook. I'm not talking about prayer here in church or even prayer at the dinner table. I'm talking about private prayer. That personal conversation we carry on with God; the time we take to talk to the Maker of the universe and tell Him everything that's on our minds.

I don't think many Christians stop to think what a fantastic gift it is to be able to sit at the feet of God Almighty and talk to Him as any child would talk to their father. And with reference to the wheat and weeds of our sermon text, what should we be talking about?

We should be daily praying for the lost. The aunt or uncle, the brother or sister, the neighbor, the co-worker, the enemy, or anyone who doesn't know

Christ and is headed for destruction. James tells us: *The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective* (Jas 5:16 NIV). And God has promised to hear our prayers and respond according to His will.

Prayer is so important that Jesus took time to teach his disciples how to pray. God wants His wheat to pray for the weeds.

Bible study is also important. Why? Because we need to know what God says to us. Too many Christians have the idea that a quick once over is enough when it comes to the Bible. Now they may watch their favorite movie over and over, but the Bible, "Aw, I've read that."

The Bible is the soil that Christians grow in. Take away the soil and there is no growth. Take away the growth and there is no maturity. Take away the maturity and you have wheat that cannot affect the weeds. You have Christians that cannot reach the lost because they don't know how.

The Bible is so important that God spent years writing it. He doesn't want us to just read it. He wants us to study it as He talks to us through its Words..

Another easily overlooked part of being Christian wheat is worship. A recent study showed that the American Christians surveyed considered attending worship once every three or four weeks to be regular church attendance. But God told the Israelites to set aside one day each week for Him. God demanded regular worship for two reasons.

First, it's good for us to be constantly reminded of who God is and who we are. Regular worship helps to keep us from dethroning God and replacing Him with something else, or replacing Him with ourselves.

Second, regular worship also recharges us. It lifts our souls and puts us back on track. We are a minority of wheat living in a world full of weeds. We cannot make it on our own. We need God's help. We also need the support of a Christian community around us. One stalk of wheat can easily be chocked out by weeds. A whole field of wheat will survive. God intended His wheat to live in community, and worship is a big part of that community.

The last item on this list of wheat responsibilities is giving. Some of you may be thinking, "Ah ha, the other shoe has dropped and the money thing as surfaced." Well, that's not true. You see, God doesn't want your money. God doesn't need your money. If God wanted money, He could fill this church with it. So if God doesn't want our money what does He want, and what does money have to do with it?

God wants our love and our trust. When we give back to Him – in proportion to how He has provided for us – we display our love for Him and our dependence on Him. We are saying that we will make our offering, not because we have to, but because we want to. And we give without concern for tomorrow because we trust God to take care of tomorrow, just like He said He would.

So, how does the giving of God's wheat affect the weeds? It maintains the church. It feeds the hungry. It pays the pastor and staff. It funds outreach programs that help to introduce the lost to the Word of God. In short, it's one of the primary fuels that drives the church's engine of Christian love.

So there you have it. Six things that, as God's wheat, we can do while we grow among the weeds of the world. We can witness, serve, pray, study the Bible, worship, and give. And all of these things have a purpose.

A farmer doesn't plant wheat just to see it grow up green, turn gold and look pretty. He has a purpose. He has a plan. A farmer plants wheat to have what is left when the plant is gone. The kernel that remains becomes flour to nourish, and seed to give life to new plants.

We look back and say, "Paul, Peter, Stephen, Abraham, Moses, these people who inspire me to go on." But what we can't see are the ones we nourish with our lives, who may look back and say, "Mom, Dad, Grandma, Grandpa, pastor, friend, neighbor, these are the people who inspire me to go on."

Being faithful wheat for God can have effects that we may never see. However I guarantee you, it will have an effect. Because God's Word doesn't go out and come back empty; and when you are the faithful wheat of God you are a vehicle for God's Word and God's work.

Through faith in Him as your Savior, you have the free gift, the promise of eternal life. In Jesus' name,

Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Amen.

The Wheat and the Weeds
Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43

1. In this world there co-exists both Christians and unbelievers, people of God and people of satan.
2. Can God's wheat can affect the weeds?
3. How does the wheat grow strong?