

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ!

I have a tendency when I'm in a garden (not often I admit) to want to pull up weeds as I see them. Even not being a gardener nor knowing a weed from a useful plant, I still want to pull them up. However, being well aware of my lack of knowledge, I don't. I suppose I could say that I have the same tendency as the slaves in Jesus' parable, I want to get rid of what doesn't belong, to ferret out that which is wrong. I have the same tendency, the same desire, when it comes to any kind of wrong, a social evil, political evil, any kind of evil. I've always been this way, if it's wrong, then I want to fix it, to make it right.

It troubles me when I can't fix it, when I can't make it right, as I'm sure it troubled the slaves in Jesus' parable. I want, we want things to be okay, we want evil to be vanquished, we are called to work for justice and that's what we want, we want justice. We want sickness, death, the results of sin, to be gone. We want sin to be gone.

We want to go to the Master and ask him "then do you want us to go and gather them?" We're ready to go, to act. Yet the Master tells us "No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn." Not exactly the answer we were expecting, is it? The Master tells us to be patient, because the Master recognizes full well that we are basically clueless.

We slaves aren't equipped to do the weeding, we are much as the slaves in the parable who didn't know where the weeds came from and aren't equipped to distinguish between weeds and wheat. And truthfully we can't distinguish between wheat and weeds, we have such strong opinions about what's right and wrong that we often fail to recognize our own prejudice and ignorance, our own sins.

The Master's perspective is different from ours, we see what we perceive as problems and we want to act. But the Master is patient, he is looking to the harvest. The weeds will be dealt with then.

Now this doesn't mean we ignore evil, we can identify evil in society, in our selves, in the church. But the our task is to grow wheat. Honestly, you and I can't solve the problems in our country or the world. We need to be about the task that is immediately in front of us, because there is time, God's time, time for life, time to turn our hearts to him. We cultivate the good, perhaps one person, one problem at a time, but that's what we are to do.

It's hard for us to separate good from evil because both exist with in each and every one of us. Paraphrasing what the Apostle Paul told us in Romans 7, we can will what is right, but we can't do it. And given that each one of us is simultaneously "saint and sinner" we need to walk as disciples, to share the good news of Christ crucified.

Remember the disciples gathered with Jesus the night before he was arrested in the garden. Talk about a bunch of weeds, one would deny him, one would betray him, all would desert him. Yet Jesus called them his friends and gathered them together. Patient with failure, patient with evil, patient then and patient now with us. He gathers us together around his table, even though the weeds in our lives still exist. The Master is patient with each of us, much more so than we are with each other. He gives us time and helps us to grow in him.

Now in fact brothers and sisters, I get frustrated with the weeds around me, the weeds in my life, the evil in the world. But more than anything I get frustrated that I can't be more faithful than I am, better than I am. So again I have to remember that I am to be about cultivating the wheat, in my own life and around me. Again, we are not to ignore evil in others or in ourselves, but we, you and I, are to be about cultivating the faithful, the good, the godly, we are to let God be the judge as we grow in his word and feast at this table before us. We must trust God to correct the wrong around us, and in us, we must allow God to be God, and we can be assured that God will act in God's good time.

AMEN