



Daily Reflections

July 19, 2020

Scripture

Matthew 13:24-43

Jesus proposed another parable to the crowds, saying:

“The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field.

While everyone was asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds all through the wheat, and then went off.

When the crop grew and bore fruit, the weeds appeared as well.

The slaves of the householder came to him and said,

‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field?

Where have the weeds come from?’

He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’

His slaves said to him,

‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’

He replied, ‘No, if you pull up the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them.

Let them grow together until harvest;

then at harvest time I will say to the harvesters,

“First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn.””

He proposed another parable to them.

“The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field.

It is the smallest of all the seeds,

yet when full-grown it is the largest of plants.

It becomes a large bush,

and the ‘birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches.’”

He spoke to them another parable.
“The kingdom of heaven is like yeast
that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour
until the whole batch was leavened.”
All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables.
He spoke to them only in parables,
to fulfill what had been said through the prophet:
I will open my mouth in parables,
I will announce what has lain hidden from the foundation
of the world.
Then, dismissing the crowds, he went into the house.
His disciples approached him and said,
“Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.”
He said in reply, “He who sows good seed is the Son of Man,
the field is the world, the good seed the children of the kingdom.
The weeds are the children of the evil one,
and the enemy who sows them is the devil.
The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.
Just as weeds are collected and burned up with fire,
so will it be at the end of the age.
The Son of Man will send his angels,
and they will collect out of his kingdom
all who cause others to sin and all evildoers.
They will throw them into the fiery furnace,
where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.
Then the righteous will shine like the sun
in the kingdom of their Father.
Whoever has ears ought to hear.”

Our Scripture Reflection

Jesus' parable serves, in some sense, to answer the question of theodicy (Why does a good God allow evil to exist?). Just as the master allowed the weeds for a time because he was unwilling to harm the wheat, so God tolerates the wicked in the present until the time of judgment.

“Harvest”, a common image for the end time, appears numerous times in Scripture. Matthew wants us to know through this parable that God will rectify the opposition Jesus faced with the religious leaders and the opposition the Matthean community faces. The wording of verse 41 (“The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all who cause others to sin and all evildoers”) offers assurance and hope that all causes (ta skandala) of sin, as well as evildoing, will be dealt with by God and God's angels.

The parable acknowledges the presence of evil in the world alongside the presence of God and a form that this evil may take in its opposition to God and God's children. Even though both the Son of Man and the evil one sow in the field (the world), Jesus leaves no doubt as to Whom the world belongs. Evil will be cast into a furnace of fire and the righteous will be vindicated, shining as the sun in the kingdom. Therefore, neither evil nor the evil one has the last word. Indeed, in

this parable Jesus tells us that the words of His prayer in 6:13, "lead us from all evil one", will ultimately be answered.

Food for your Journey

People who spend a great deal of time in their gardens attest to the natural mindfulness that gardening requires. What could be more naturally mindful than weeding? It requires a great deal of sustained attention. Weeds need to be taken up with care: Pull too hard, and the weed breaks in your fingers, leaving the root to grow and spread. Different weeds need different techniques and, sometimes, tools. When we weed our gardens, we have to pay attention to where and how we walk and bend. Move too far in one direction or another, and we'll squash growing things.

-Sura Lama Das, Awakening to the Sacred .

A Prayer from the Heart

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread;
and forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors;
and do not subject us to the final test,
but deliver us from the evil one. Amen!