



Daily Reflections

July 28, 2016

Scripture

Matthew 13:47-53

Jesus said to the disciples:

“The Kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea,
which collects fish of every kind.

When it is full they haul it ashore

and sit down to put what is good into buckets.

What is bad they throw away.

Thus it will be at the end of the age.

The angels will go out and separate the wicked from the righteous

and throw them into the fiery furnace,

where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.”

“Do you understand all these things?”

They answered, “Yes.”

And he replied,

“Then every scribe who has been instructed in the Kingdom of heaven
is like the head of a household who brings from his storeroom
both the new and the old.”

When Jesus finished these parables, he went away from there.

Our Scripture Reflection

Jesus reminds us that His Father allows good and evil to exist side by side in this life. While it may seem that evil at times has the upper hand, nevertheless, God will, indeed, have the last word. Our job is to live as God's good people whose primary goal is to please Him.

Food for your Journey

In a corner of our back yard is an apple tree that we purchased because a tag tied around its branches said that it would begin producing fruit in two seasons. We ignored the fact that its spindly trunk was crooked and that it had only four branches on which apples might grow. We bought it anyway and gently carried it home. Three growing seasons have passed, and visions of apple pies and climbing the branches of our tree are waning. It is still spindly and crooked.

Some days I feel like that tree — bent over with the stresses of life and wondering if I will ever bear any fruit. I worry that the next stormy wind will break me or that my roots are too shallow. Then I am reminded that I have been purchased and planted in a carefully chosen location. God tends me during painful growing seasons and prunes me so that I will bear more fruit.

Looking at our tree makes me realize what a hopeful gardener God must be. While seeing and loving me as I am, God also sees what I will one day become.

—Lisa Tresch, "Planted and growing." *The Upper Room*.

Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, how it hurts to see people suffer from the effects of evil. It breaks my heart and makes me wonder. Please Lord, strengthen me with your amazing grace so that I will never lose hope and know even during the darkest of times that you are near. Amen.

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