

AM I WHEAT OR WEED?

Matthew 13:24-30

TEXT: *Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. "The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' "'An enemy did this,' he replied. "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' "'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"*

In Jesus' name, my fellow redeemed:

Heaven is invisible to our eyes. But it does exist. In trying to teach what Scripture says about heaven, I often use the expression: another dimension. It is the dimension of existence in the presence of God. God, who is outside of His creation of time, has no beginning or no end. With God, time is insignificant. The Bible says that for God, a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day. Just to ponder this fact overwhelms me since I am a creature of time. Yet I do have a beginning, while God tells me that I will have no end of days and years. For I have eternal life!

So do you. For our Lord Jesus has declared: ***God so loved the world that He send His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*** In 3 Ponder that simple fact and then get serious about the parable that Jesus set before his disciples one day that begs the question: AM I WHEAT OR WEED? From this parable, those who are "the wheat" will be concerned about I. What the angels of God see now; and, II. What the world will see at harvest time, that is, on Judgment Day.

First of all, what do you and I care about what the angels of God see in regard to our behavior? Well, according to Jesus, the angels of God are "the harvesters" of this parable. That is, they will select and escort God's Elect, His believers, "the Saved," to heaven. I know this because the Bible says that Jesus himself explained this parable to his disciples. This particular parable seems to have bothered the disciples because the Bible says that a little later, they asked Jesus for clarification: ***His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field." He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons 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. "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.*** Now, my concern is this, that if God promises to send to me "guardian angels" what do they see and hear in regard to my life as a Christian? For Scripture clearly says: ***... he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways...*** Ps 91 So what do these angels whom the Lord assigns to care for us actually see and hear? Do they see "Wheat" or a "Weed?"

We know from Scripture that only God is all-knowing. Only God is able to read the heart and mind, to know our thoughts even before we think them. But the angels are creatures as are

we. The angels are not all-knowing, nor can they read our secret thoughts. But they are invisible and they are charged by God to watch over us day and night. While they cannot read your thoughts, they watch what you do and hear what you say all the time. And the angels are the ones portrayed in Jesus' parable who see that Satan has spread his evil influence throughout the world. Jesus said: ***The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. ... The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil.*** Not only do the angels see the evil that the ungodly commit in this world, but so do we. We see the evil murderous deeds of today's terrorist groups. We see the gross immorality of the Hollywood culture. We hear and are sick of the lies of our political leaders. And we are distressed at the spiritual apathy of those who call themselves Christian but have no heart to worship the Savior.

What must be distressing to the angels is when there appears to be little difference between the "weeds" and the "wheat" that they are commanded to protect. What must be distressing to the angels is when they see my secret sins and hear the words that come out of my mouth. They must wonder: "How can he be a pastor and say those things? I wonder what is really in his heart." That's probably why Jesus, in His parable told the workers not to pull up the weeds. He said: ***When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. 'The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' ... 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' 'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest.*** God's angels are not sent to judge us, and for that we must humbly thank God or they would surely kill all of us well before the final judgment!

Instead, God is our Judge! And he knows what is in our hearts and minds. Only He is able to see the faith that makes a sinner a saint. Only Jesus could look at that wretched weed hanging on the cross next to him and see instead the faith that saves. Only Jesus could see that the man next to him whose only hope was to cry out: ***"Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom!"*** and see that this was no weed, but precious wheat who would soon be gathered into his barn. Only Jesus could declare to that repentant man: ***"I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise!"***

What the angels see now is only what we also are able to see: a world full of sin and sinners. But there are the Lord's Elect, those who by faith in Jesus are true members of the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints. So it is the Lord's will that we grow together in this world until the Judgment Day when He will send His angels out, no longer to protect the righteous, but to gather them into His Kingdom for eternal life in heaven. Then the world will see who are "the Wheat." As Jesus says: ***Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.***

The most important thing that anyone can know as this parable sets forth, is whether I am, in God's eyes, Wheat or Weed. It matters not what the angels think, or what you think. In fact, it doesn't matter what I think about myself! For if my hopes of salvation are based upon my own feelings about my status before the Lord I must despair, like David did when in his famous penitential Psalm 51: ***For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.*** Or Isaiah who confessed: ***How then can we be saved? All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags...*** Is 64. Or Paul who confessed his innermost self-assessment in Romans 7: ***When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ... What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?***

One of the most successful faith-destroying seeds of Satan is the attitude of self-esteem that causes people to think that their sins aren't that bad. They feel good about themselves for they have compared themselves to other weeds who seem to be growing quite well without God's Word and the saving power of the Lord's Supper. To these weeds, the Lord has to love them for they already have a righteousness of their own that they think will be good enough to save them.

No! What matters to me what the Lord says concerning my status with Him. For on Judgment Day, while the Wheat, or the believers in Jesus are gathered up together to meet the Lord in the air and to begin eternity in heaven, the Weeds, the unbelievers will go to hell. Jesus' parable is clear: *At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn. ... As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.* For now, the righteous, the blessed holy Wheat, are those whom the Lord has called by the Gospel. They are those whose sins have been washed away in the water of Holy Baptism. They are those whose troubled consciences are silenced by the precious words of Jesus as they eat and drink His body and Blood: This is my body and blood, given and shed for YOU for the forgiveness of YOUR sins!

Here, and hear alone, does the human soul find certain assurance, coming from the mouth of the Lord Himself, the Judge of Heaven and earth, declaring that you are something that you cannot see or feel. You are something that He has made you to be: righteous and holy by the blood Jesus Christ. Here is the answer to the question: Am I weed or wheat? What has the Lord told you who have been baptized into the name of Jesus?

Believe what the Lord has told you in the Gospel and when He comes in judgment, THEN you and all the world and all the angels will see you shining like the sun! Amen.