

7 S. after Pentecost                      7/19/20  
Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43                  11A

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN MAY BE COMPARED TO A MAN WHO SOWED GOOD SEED IN HIS FIELD, BUT WHILE HIS MEN WERE SLEEPING, HIS ENEMY CAME AND SOWED WEEDS AMONG THE WHEAT AND WENT AWAY. SO WHEN THE PLANTS CAME UP AND BORE GRAIN, THEN THE WEEDS APPEARED ALSO.

How great is the hatred the enemy has for the man and his wheat in our parable this morning? I ask you that because Jesus teaches us that this is a crime of pre-meditation. There is nothing happenstance about it. People don't ordinarily have a supply of weed seeds, do they? Consider this: Spring rolls around, and it's time to plant the garden, so you go buy carrot seeds, and tomatoes, and peas and broccoli; do you buy a bag of weed seeds, as well, for your garden? If you called your seed salesman, would he even have a supply of weed seeds on hand? Yet, the enemy has a ready supply of weed seeds at his disposal. This is definitely a long term, pre-meditated attack. It indicates an evil, bitter, long term -- even permanent -- animosity. This is a hateful, despicable, and cowardly tactic.

This, My Dear Friends in Christ, is an excellent picture of the animosity that the devil bears toward Christ and the Word of the Gospel. In our parable this morning, our Lord Christ is teaching us that the devil does his greatest and most dangerous work here, in the Lord's Church, sowing his lies among the Word of God.

Do you happen to recall the devil's first words to Eve in the Garden, "Did God really say?" (Ge 3:1, NIV). The very first thing Satan does is cast doubt upon the very Word of God Himself! The lie is the main weapon of the devil. In fact, Jesus said this about the devil, "[The devil] was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because

there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (Jn 8:44).

Since the devil does not care which lie you believe, he has multiplied lies and spread them throughout the world just like the weed seeds in the parable. Jesus Himself says, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me,” yet we hear that all religions are just different paths to the same heaven (cf Jn 14:6). Oh, how about this lie: The Bible says, “For by the works of the law no human being will be justified in [God’s] sight,” yet the voice cries even from within the church that Christians must do good works to get into heaven (Ro 3:20). The Bible says that Baptism forgives sin and gives eternal salvation, yet we hear the lie that baptism is a work of man, not God. We hear that the Lord’s Supper is just bread and wine, nothing more. We hear the lie that anyone can marry anyone. And, how about this lie: “you only go around once,” so put yourself first; your ego, your selfishness, should be your god.

Wherever the Gospel is sown, there is the father of all lies, sowing and spreading His lies.

In the year 1523, Martin Luther wrote a tract on Baptism. In it, he says this, “Remember, therefore, that it is no joke to take sides against the devil and not only to drive him away from the little child, but to burden the child with such a mighty and lifelong enemy” (Luther 102).

Look at the life of our Lord Christ Himself. Jesus is baptized, “the heavens were opened...and behold, a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased’” (Mt 3:16, 17). And immediately, immediately, the Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. There came the father of all lies, sowing the seeds of his lies to the very Son of God, “If you are the Son of God” (Mt 4:1,3). “Did

God really say?” Wherever the Word of God is, there is the devil sowing his lies, to cast doubt on what God has said.

Wherever Jesus went, whatever Jesus did, there was the devil with his lies. Jesus heals the blind, mute, demon-possessed man, and the lie is told, “It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons” (Mt 12:24). He goes home to Nazareth, and He stands in the synagogue and reads from the prophet Isaiah and proclaims, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing”. And when the hometown folks heard His words, they “were filled with wrath...and brought Him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw Him down the cliff (Lk 4:21, 28,29). “Barabbas,” they said (Mt 27:21). “They shouted all the more, ‘Let Him be crucified’” (Mt 27:23).

The Good News of the Gospel is that Jesus went to the cross for all the times you doubted God’s Word; all the times you believed the lies of the devil; all the times that you despaired that God doesn’t keep His promises; Jesus carried all those sins and all sin to the cross of Calvary. By His bloody death upon that cross, the very Son of God crushed the head of the devil to silence all his lies. As we sing in the Battle Hymn of the Reformation, “He’s judged; the deed is done” (*LSB* 656:3). Jesus was crucified upon that cross so that you would be forgiven all your sins, and He rose again from the grave the 3<sup>rd</sup> day to give His victory over the father of all lies to you.

And that’s what He did in your Baptism. He made the forgiveness and victory He won for you very own victory over sin, death, and the devil.

But, we must ever remember that it is no joke to take sides against the devil and to be burdened with such a mighty, lifelong enemy. At your Baptism, God declared, “This is my beloved Son, Daughter, with whom I

am well pleased". And now the father of all lies comes to whisper in your ear, "Did God really say?"

Daily in this Church Militant, the devil comes with the seed of his lies to deceive and mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. And often, it appears to our human reason and season that all we see is a crop of weeds blooming and blossoming before us. You look at your neighbor's toys, and your thought is, "If only I had that". You look at your neighbor's wife with lust, and say to yourself, "Then I would be happy". It seems Christianity has less and less of a sanctifying effect in our country and in people's lives. It is disheartening to see empty church pews; especially, when it is our children and grandchildren not filling those pews. Rioting, looting, anarchy loose in our nation's streets. We see our neighbor's property, maybe our own property, destroyed and we wonder if God really is in control of His creation. We hear so much of injustice in the media, but not a word about the rampant vandalism against Christian churches, including a 24-year-old man who purposely slammed his car into a Christian church -- during worship -- before setting a fire. May I be so bold as to ask what if this same event happened to a mosque or an anti-police march?

Worldwide, that means throughout the world, there have been about 591,000 deaths from Covid-19. Compare that to the 800,000 children -- that's an average of 2,000 per day -- that go missing each and every year in the United States alone {BTW, I confirmed those numbers from several different sources}. I'm not trying to discount nor discredit concerns over the coronavirus; and I believe my actions as your pastor bear witness to that. But if we are going to shape our society around it, then I think it is more

than fair to ask what mask, what social distancing, are we utilizing to protect children?

“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” our Lord Christ teaches us to pray (3<sup>rd</sup> Petition). We pray that God would strengthen and keep us firm in His Word and faith He began at our Baptism until we die.

Amid all the weeds that we see this day, the Good News is -- God does. Which is why we are here this morning. You hear His Word, and your faith grows. As we eat and drink at His table, we hear “This is my body; This is my blood; for the forgiveness of sins,” and you are strengthened to walk by faith, until that day we are gathered into heaven.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.