

# Sermon preached at Gisborne, 19, July 2020

*O God, our guide, set your path clearly before us and lead us to follow you willingly for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

Genesis 28:10-19a; Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

## **The parable of the Kingdom of God Part 2 - *The seed and the weeds***

We continue to explore the kingdom of God. Do you remember what we talked about last week? The parable of the sower was the one. The sower seems careless. But in the end, we see that he works diligently in his field. Also, the sower has faith in the seeds as he liberally scatters the seeds. We also talked about the soil, which depends on the sower's diligent work to produce grains in the harvest. Today our focus is on the seed and the weeds first. Next, we'll think about the roles of the weeds, and lastly, the harvest will be followed.

### ***The seed and the weeds in the same field***

In the parable of the weeds, a new character – an enemy appears who alongside the good seed sows weeds. No one knows why he did it as if the seagull dropped a can of bright orange paint right over Mr Plumbean's house.<sup>1</sup> Without giving any clues about it, the parable focuses on two responses to the effects of his work. First, the workers become alarmed at the sight of weeds sprouting among the wheat. They are irritable. They are perplexed as to where the weeds came from. They even ask the householder if the seed was 'good' seed. When the workers are told that an enemy is responsible for the weeds, they want to take matters into their own hands and pull up the weeds to maintain a pure crop—their response is understandable.

Second, there is the householder, who doesn't seem surprised or agitated about the weeds but urges the workers to be patient. It's not necessarily mean that the householder is indifferent to the weeds or doesn't care. Instead, he knows what to do with weeds. When the time comes, he will turn them over to the reapers at harvesttime, who can properly separate them from the wheat. Any premature 'weeding' is bound to damage the wheat as well. At this stage, a question arises. What are the weeds doing in the field, then?

### ***The roles of the weeds***

In God's kingdom, the weeds are also allowed to grow with the seed side by side. It seems that there is no such a border to separate the good seed from the weeds. It is a borderless kingdom where the citizens might not immediately appear. It helps us understand the sower's seemingly careless manner better. For the sower, the present conditions of the soil such as the rocky ground or the thorn bush are not important as the soil will improve by his continuing work. Now here one more thing – the weeds or fake seeds is also added to his field. But it doesn't worry him too much either as he knows what to do. For him, any attempt to separate the two hastily could do damage to God's kingdom. So we'd like to see the roles of the weeds from a fresh look through Genesis 28:10-19a.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Big Orange Splot*

Jacob is on the run as he stole the blessings of Esau from his father, Isaac. Now, he is outside of all the family protection as journeying in a 'non-place.' He even doesn't know that place exists. Here, he also encounters God in the most vulnerable way – while he is asleep. The meeting with God happens in a dream. While the wakeful world of Jacob was a world of fear, terror, loneliness, the dream permits the entry of an alternative into his life. The dream is not about the past, but about an alternative future with God. The ladder connects two separate world – heaven and earth. It shows that earth is not left to its own resources, but cared by heaven. The presence of the ladder allows us to see earth as a place of possibility. As if the field where the seed and the weeds are growing side by side, earth - that is Jacob and we have not been and will not be cut off from the sustaining work of God. This meeting with God transforms the non- place into a crucial place. At the same time, this 'non-person,' - Jacob who is exiled and threatened to be killed is transformed by the coming of God to a person crucial for the promise. Good and bad, and the reality and dream are intermingled which is the part of the growth of the seed for the harvest. Now Jacob understands it and accepts the fact that the kingdom is at hand. He is prepared to repent and believe. He repents, deciding here and now to abandon his old self of fear for the new reality of assurance (v. 15). Here we can identify what the weeds are – they are the doubts, fear for life, ignorance while not knowing who God is and what God is doing in the world. As Jacob continues to grow, the weeds also. Even so, now he has hope in the promise of God although it doesn't appear to be present. Paul said, "For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience."<sup>2</sup> For the seed, sustaining hope for the harvest is the source of life and the growth.

### ***The harvest***

We are informed that the fate of the weeds is left in the hands of the ultimate judge. The servants want to help the farmer by uprooting the imposters, but they lack the sensitivity of the angelic harvesters. The parable makes it clear that it's not the job of the servants or make judgments about what is and isn't actual wheat. Their job is to serve the farmer as s/he spreads the legitimate seed. In our story time, we heard about a girl named Luisa. She has been bullied by another girl Sam. The question was that what the good seeds together with the weeds are in the story. The easy answer may be that Luisa is good seed while Sam - as a bully the weeds. But if we read it through the biblical lens, we find both - the seed and the weeds - in Luisa. Being bullied together with the overcoming the bullying has helped her grow and regain her identity. Now she loves herself as she is. Likewise, living in the hope in Christ helps us love ourselves as we are. It also enables us to love others as ourselves, including bullies like Sam and all the other weeds that may appear in the course of life. The seed may be attacked by the weeds through different ways that may hinder the seed from growing. Yet the seeds also learn how to endure and to remain persistent by re-learning the hope for harvest continually. It is the by-products of the growth. In this way, the weeds are actually helping the seed grow strong. In the end, the great harvest is coming in God's time, as the Son of man who on earth forgave sins freely, who suffered at the hands of betrayers, confirms for us that God's gracious promises can be trusted. This is the reign of God in God's kingdom. Next week, we'll explore the parables of the kingdom of God Part 3. So the conversation will be continued. Amen.

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<sup>2</sup> Romans 8:24-25