

The “enemy” (whose identity we learn later) sows the bad seed secretly (“while everybody was asleep”, v. 25.) Both the good and the bad seed grow together. At harvest time the roots of the weeds have intertwined with those of the wheat (v. 29). The occurrence of gather three times in vv. 28-30 is a clue that Jesus speaks of the community.

Jesus offers two interpretations of the parable to his disciples. In vv. 37-39, he states what each of the figures and events in the story stands for. The kingdom begins now when Jesus (“the Son of Man”) sows the seed, drawing people to him, but the Devil seeks to subvert his efforts. The “harvest” is when Christ comes again, at the end of the age. The second interpretation is in vv. 40-43a. At the end of the age, he says, the evil will be separated out, judged and destroyed (“burned up”, v. 40). The lots of the “evildoers” (v. 41) will be a miserable one (“gnashing of teeth”, v. 42). The “righteous” (v. 43), those who are faithful to God, will be gathered together, rewarded and brought into God’s presence. Finally v. 43b: the gospel is open to all who will listen!

© 1996-2020 Chris Haslam

~ Notices ~

Resumption of Services - A number of precautions are in place due to Covid 19 and we accept that this will mean some inconvenience and changes to our normal routine. Rather than worry people, we hope that these measures will reassure you that we are taking the anti-virus advice very seriously in order to ensure that our churches are as welcoming and safe as possible. The first few services will use a shorter liturgy with music but without hymns and Communion will also resume soon.

Prayers - Prayers are said daily for the welfare of our community, our nation and the world. If you have any particular issue that you would like to be prayed for, do please email me on frkevinobrien@me.com or call me on 065 672 4721.

Online services - Please note that these are to continue each Sunday, in addition to the regular meditations during the week on Facebook. During this time away our website <https://clareanglicans.ie> has significantly developed, so please do scroll down the opening page to explore the new sections and information. There are six new sections:

- Worship - a number of videos of services
- Pray - leaflets and resources on ways of praying
- Explore - videos of some inspiring speakers
- Think Question Believe - a parish podcast
- Viewpoint - videos on the basics of Christianity
- Rector’s Blog - articles, thoughts, opinions

Select Vestry - Easter Vestries are now to be held between mid-August and the end of September - elected Select Vestry members remain in post until a new meeting is convened.

Rector: Email: frkevinobrien@me.com Tel: 065 672 4721

New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicized Edition, copyright © 1989, 1995 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. <http://nrsvbibles.org> The Common Worship psalter is © The Archbishops’ Council of the Church of England, 2000. Common Worship texts are available at <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources>



6th Sunday after Trinity (Year A)

Readings and Hymns

Collect

Divine reaper, who alone can judge without vengeance or fear: free us from our desire to repay evil with evil; root in us creation’s longing for freedom from oppression; shape us by hope unseen for the victory of love; through Jesus Christ, with whom we suffer and are glorified. **Amen**

Suggested Hymns - For the online service you might like to view these hymns with lyrics on YouTube.

- 1) Dear Lord and Father of Mankind
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4KnIqWzI3Y>
- 2) The King of love my Shepherd is.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4-KQG2cLso>
- 3) O Lord hear my Prayer
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-2WZFF_uAc
- 4) immortal love forever full
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eMLvVYFxCtO>

Wisdom of Solomon 12.13,16-19

For neither is there any god besides you, whose care is for all people, to whom you should prove that you have not judged unjustly;

For your strength is the source of righteousness, and your sovereignty over all causes you to spare all.

For you show your strength when people doubt the completeness of your power, and you rebuke any insolence among those who know it.

Although you are sovereign in strength, you judge with mildness, and with great forbearance you govern us; for you have power to act whenever you choose.

Through such works you have taught your people that the righteous must be kind, and you have filled your children with good hope, because you give repentance for sins.

Psalm 86.11-17

Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart to revere your name.

I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name for ever.

For great is your steadfast love towards me; you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

O God, the insolent rise up against me; a band of ruffians seeks my life, and they do not set you before them.

But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

Turn to me and be gracious to me; give your strength to your servant; save the child of your serving-maid.

Show me a sign of your favour, so that those who hate me may see it and be put to shame, because you, Lord, have helped me and comforted me.

Romans 8.12-25

So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear,

but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. 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.

Matthew 13:24-30,36-43

Jesus put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, "Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?" He answered, "An enemy has done this." The slaves said to him, "Then do you want us to go and gather them?" But he replied, "No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn."'

Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.' He answered, 'The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the 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 causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!

Commentary

Wisdom

Wisdom has been a book of the church since the earliest times. For some Christians, it is part of the Apocrypha ("hidden books"); for others, it is in the Old Testament. In the Hebrew Bible, life simply ended with death (or at best, the dead merely existed in an indeterminate state, separated from God), but during the first century BC, some Jewish thinkers developed the notion of after-life. Wisdom tells us that being made in the image of God includes sharing with him in immortality. Only the godly, the ethical, will be granted eternal life; those who choose to deviate from God's ways will be punished and will disappear into nothingness. Wisdom demonstrates how our understanding of life, death and divine justice changes over the ages. Currently Christianity is undergoing another debate about the nature of

divine mercy and justice and whether we can continue to hold to the ancient notions of punishment or 'salvation from damnation'. May modern Christians might prefer to speak of salvation as not being spared as being equipped for an enduring relationship, not salvation 'from' but preparation 'for'.

Psalms 86:1-10,16-17

That the speaker is "poor and needy" (two equivalent terms) suggests that he is a king, for such repetition is found in royal inscriptions from the ancient Near East. He cries (prays) continually for God to preserve his life (v. 2). He presents his very being to God (v. 4), who is "good and forgiving" (v. 5) and gives love to all who ask. He is confident that God will hear him (vv. 6-7). He prays that God will "teach me your way ... that I may walk in your truth" (v. 11). In vv. 13-15, he contrasts God's love for him (as seen in rescuing him from grave illness) with his enemies' attitude towards God: one of insolence, of ignoring God's ways. He confesses his faith (v. 15) in words God spoke to Moses. He seeks God's support, considering himself without any right to ask. (A girl born of a slave had no rights of any kind.) He prays for a "sign" (v. 17) of his continuing esteem in God's eyes: that this may show his enemies that their cause is hopeless. For us, vv. 8-10 are special: "all the nations" will come to God's ways, realizing that God is greater and more powerful than any god they have now.

Romans 8:12-25

Paul has told us how Christian experience is dominated by life in the Spirit rather than by the desires of the flesh, or self-centeredness. Christians are still subject to suffering, to bearing crosses and affliction, but not to eternal condemnation. Not being condemned, we have hope. Now he says that we are under an obligation ("debtors") to God: to live in the way of the Spirit. Living this way, we look forward to eternal life (v. 13) at the end of time rather than the finality of physical death. We are "children of God" (v. 14). When baptised, we do not lose freedom ("slavery", v. 15) but are adopted by him. As his children, we are "heirs" (v. 17) with hope for the future – unlike slaves who fear their master (v. 15). (In the Old Testament, the land of Israel is God's inheritance for his people.) In calling him as Dad or "Father", we express the close relationship we have with him; our hearts are motivated by the Spirit. (Slaves did not inherit.) Being "with Christ" (v. 17), by sharing in his suffering, we will be able to attain union with him in heaven ("glorified"). Now Paul relates this to the present situation. His suffering and/or that of his readers is minuscule compared to the splendour (glory", v. 18) we will enjoy at the end of time. To Paul, everyone and everything created ("creation", v. 20) has helplessly compounded sin through the ages ("subjected to futility"). All hope for resolution of the present chaotic state of the world ("bondage to decay", v. 21), to attaining the "glory" which awaits us. The world, the material "creation" (v. 23), was in expectation, but also in pain ("labour pains", v. 22) until the arrival of Christ. We Christians have a painful experience too – we do suffer, as we wait for the age to come (the "redemption of our bodies", v. 23), we who are guided by the Holy Spirit ("have the first fruits"). The hope we have is very real: one doesn't hope for what is visible now, but rather for what one can't see but expects to happen. We wait in patience, and endure.

Matthew 13:24-30,36-43

"The kingdom of heaven may be compared to ..." Jesus continues to tell parables, memorable stories with a deep meaning, to teach the crowd how what we do now will affect what happens to us at the end of time, at the "end of the age" (v. 39). Agricultural stories appeal to his rural listeners. The first parable focussed on where the seed landed. All the seed was good, but only some fell on fertile ground; however, here some of the seed sown there is good (wheat) and some is bad (weeds, tares, or darnel – a weed that looks like wheat.)