

## Lectionary Bible Study Our Savior Lutheran Church

### Lectionary 16

#### Readings Readings and Psalm

Isaiah 44:6-8, Psalm 86:11-17

Romans 8:12-25, Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43



[Click here](#) to join Pastor Mark for a Live Zoom conversation each Wednesday at 10am.

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#### Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 (NRSV)

<sup>24</sup> He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; <sup>25</sup> but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. <sup>26</sup> So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. <sup>27</sup> 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?' <sup>28</sup> He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' <sup>29</sup> But he replied, 'No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. <sup>30</sup> 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.'"

<sup>36</sup> 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." <sup>37</sup> He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; <sup>38</sup> the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, <sup>39</sup> and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. <sup>40</sup> Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. <sup>41</sup> The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, <sup>42</sup> and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. <sup>43</sup> Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!

Matthew 13 is what might be called, "The Sermon on the Lake," a series of parables (short teaching stories) intended to help hearers learn about God's character / what is pleasing to God / what the Kingdom of Heaven is like / how to behave now in order to practice how to behave in the Kingdom of Heaven.

*1. Review the whole of Matthew 13 and quickly review all seven parables.*

To understand this parable of the weeds among the wheat, it is important to remember the

audience and the setting of Jesus by reviewing previous verses until the setting of the parables can be identified. Matthew 13:1 reveals it was the “same day” when Jesus went out and taught the crowds from the boat. But what happened on that “same day”? A reader would need to return to Matthew 12:1-2 to find the early part of that day when Jesus and his disciples were walking through the grainfields. His disciples ate some grain. That doesn’t seem like a problem, but it was the Sabbath. The Pharisees complain and conspire against Jesus throughout Matthew 12. Thus, it is a very long day for Jesus.

2. *How do you think the complaints of the Pharisees spoken earlier in the day influenced the teachings of Jesus?*

Listening seems to be an underlying theme of these parables. In fact, “Listen!” is how the parables begin. (See Matthew 13:3, 9, 43)

3. *Do you think there might have been difference in how the Pharisees listened to Jesus as opposed to how the disciples listened?*

4. *What influences how we listen? How important is it to realize those influences?*

Jesus’ parables often contained surprising twists and turns. In considering the Parable of the Weeds and the Wheat, the fact that an enemy would come in the night and sabotage one’s livelihood was not unheard of - not a surprise - to Jesus’ hearers. A widespread fact of life was generations of feuding between families or other groups. So what is the surprise? Consider these possibilities:

First, notice that Jesus does not advise taking revenge of the enemy. Jesus does not advise continuing the feud by getting back at the enemy.

Second, notice that Jesus does not advise that we try and make the situation pure and perfect. Jesus rightly points out that our trying to make things perfect will only make things worse (pulling weeds unavoidably means pulling up wheat roots).

Third, notice that (unlike real life?) these weeds do not harm the growth of the wheat.

5. *Do you find anything else surprising?*

While it may be natural for people to separate the weeds from the wheat (to distinguish good from evil), Jesus is teaching that’s not how it works in God’s kingdom. We are to leave the separating and the judging to God, and in doing so we should remember that the whole of Jesus’ teachings and life were about inclusion, not exclusion.

Maybe the best reading of this parable is to understand the field as our collective experience (both individual and communal). In other words, in our life we find an unavoidable, inseparable mixture of good and bad, wheat and weeds together sown. According to this parable, as we should confess that to be true, we should not expect God to come and take out all the bad things and make everything and everyone wholly good and pure.

The good news is that in the end, all is not lost; at the end, what is pleasing to God is taken into God’s care and keeping; at the end, evil and sin do not win, but are destroyed and the Lord of the harvest makes sure to save and preserve God’s intention in planting.