

Lots of good folks love this parable of Jesus....
They take comfort in the fact that the weeds,
in the end, at harvest time,
get bundled for the burning...

Oh Yeahhhhh...the weeds may have grown up with the wheat...
they may have been bathed in all that beautiful sunlight
and watered with all of that luscious, refreshing rain...
but in the end...they're gonna get their due!

Lots of good folks see this as a justice parable...
They read inside of it that God, in the end,
will punish all those sinful people...
who are, of course, not us,
well, we hope they are not us..
we pray and cross our fingers,
they are not us!

That understanding of this parable, which is the most common,
doesn't need a lot of reflection or pondering
because, quite frankly, it seems so obvious....

And that's the problem...
because parables never have obvious, common sense teachings...
Jesus loved to tell parables...he loved to lead people along
with "common sense" reasoning and then do a quick flip
and catch people off guard and catapult them into the larger wisdom of God.
So, how does that happen in this parable?

Notice that it is the landowner himself that tells the slaves an 'enemy' planted the weeds...

**and what do you do to an enemy who is destroying what you have built up,
in this case a whole field of life giving wheat?**

**Well...of course, everyone knows that you root out the weeds...
you get rid of what the enemy has sowed...**

**Ah...but wait the landowner says...if you do that you will destroy the wheat as well...
patience....let's wait until the harvest time,**

then the wheat and the weeds can be separated...

then the wheat will be placed in the barn...and the weeds will be burned...

Now, notice, the landowner only says the weeds would be burned...

Commonly, we read into burning as punishment,

because our egos want the offender punished...

but the story doesn't say that...

mmm....hold onto that thought...

Now, before we go any further, let me just say:

we could reflect upon this parable as if it were talking

about good and bad people... the wheat and the weeds of the world out there...

or we could talk about the world in here..

we could talk about those parts of us that we like or we don't like....

So for today, I'd like to reflect upon the

wheat and the weeds inside of us...

Most of us are really uncomfortable with the weeds that grow inside of us...

Most of us, like to hide those parts of us that we feel ashamed of,

or those parts that are not socially acceptable,

or those parts that don't fit our self –understanding of who we are...

we would love to pull them out!

Get rid of them!

Burn them!

Then...after their gone....

we will *finally* be the person we now only pretending to be,

We will *finally* be the person we truly want to be..

once we have weeded out all those things we hide deep inside...

but who ever gets there?

Who is ever 100% weed free?

and for that matter, who is only 100% weedy???

Given the reality of our complexity many of us do one of two things...

First....

If we refuse to see the weeds inside of us,

if we deny that weeds and the wheat are both growing at the same time, within us,

we become insufferable...

we become judgmental hypocrites.

If we *only* see the weeds and deny the life giving wheat

that is also growing inside of us

we become so crippled by our perceived faults

that we fail to do the good we can do .

The Good News is twofold:

#1: whatever our struggles are...

whatever short comings we find within ourselves...

when we acknowledge and admit them...

we find ourselves with a bit more humility...

and it is a lot easier to live with a humble person full of wheat and weeds

than an arrogant hypocrite who only lets you see one side of them..

#2....

**Now...remember that business about burning the weeds ...
if we understand the burning of the weeds as the fires of hell
and use this parable to instill fear into someone so that they will be good...
which, by the way, is the most common understanding of this parable...
all we've done is force someone to do something
or not to do something
because of fear...**

Fear is not of Jesus...He always told people: "Be not afraid".

**Jesus rejected a fearful understanding of Yahweh, his Abba Daddy...
We would not have helped any one to grow in love,
but to grow in fear....**

So, let's put that interpretation to one side...

**Now, think of all the things we burn to help us:
we burn fuel in the winter to make our homes warm
and we burn fuel in our cars to provide transportation...
we burn wood in our fireplaces to feel all cozy....
we burn a match to light a candle...
just to name a few...**

**What if that landowner took the weeds to burn for the fuel to warm his home...
now...the tables are turned!**

**The enemy thought he had done something disastrous...
instead through non retaliation, through patience, through creativity and ingenuity,
the landowner took what was meant to do harm and turned it into a gift...**

The second part of the Good News for today is that
We can use our failings, our faults, our shortcomings
what we might call the 'weeds' of our personality...
as fuel for our healing and our transformation!
You know....there is absolutely no motivation, no reason
to grow in love if we feel we are already 'there' 100% wheat...
Even if we thought we could rip out all our weeds ...
that's impossible!
Yet so many folks have been taught that they must have no weeds
so that God would love them...
That is so not true...
God loves us just the way we are,
right here...right now...
weeds and wheat together.

When acknowledge our weeds we can become humble
When we harvest our weeds,
we bring them into the light,
and they can become the fuel of our transformation and healing..

Our transformation and healing
then sends out ripples of positive energy and grace
for the healing and transformation of the world...

So, in fact we are talking about both our inner world
and the outer world...
for, in truth, all is one...all is connected...

All of us good folk have both wheat and weeds in our hearts...
Being willing to see all of who we are, has the power to liberate us from arrogance ...

**Being willing to accept the unconditional love of God
has the power to liberate us from fear...**

**Being willing to see that we complex, beautiful, limited, yet magnificent daughters and sons
of God becomes the fuel for the healing and transformation of the world...**

So for all of this, we can only but whisper: "Thank you" amen.