

Connecting to Jesus the Storyteller...“The Weeds”

Hillsboro Presbyterian Church

August 16, 2009

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Before television, there was story telling. Jesus was a master storyteller. The stories Jesus told were well crafted, memorable, insightful, and incisive. The parables of Jesus are designed to get through to simple, sincere seekers and to hardheaded, hard-hearted skeptics alike. (Look at [Matthew 13:10-15,34](#)) Jesus told stories to get through to his listeners what it means to be his disciple...or what it means to operate out of the present reality of the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 13:24-30 *Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’ ‘An enemy did this,’ he replied. The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’ ‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: first collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’”*

That’s it. Jesus will go on to explain it later to the disciples, but this is what the crowds heard. Good seed is planted by the Lord of the Harvest, but the enemy plants weeds in their midst. The surprises of the parable – or the “ahas” – are (1) that the weeds are not weeded out and (2) the wheat is expected to survive and thrive in a less than ideal setting.

This parable is simple, memorable, and profound. We begin with **the context**.

Jesus is speaking to large crowds – and to the disciples – in an agrarian society. They knew about good seed and weeds; I have trouble discerning the difference. In fact, Jesus just finished telling and explaining the Parable of the Sower who sowed seed on the path, on the rocks, on the thorns, and on good soil. In that parable, believers are receptive soil; in this parable, believers are productive seed.

Next we go to **the setting**.

First century Israel is occupied territory. The ungodly are clearly around them and choking them. They cry out to God to rid their land of these intruders. Their strong desire for the Messiah to come and to free them – kept them from recognizing the Messiah who was speaking to them and who was saying “Be fruitful, right now and right here, in the field where God has planted you.”

Now we begin with **the application**.

This world is where God planted us. Until we get to heaven this is where we are to be. Consider some of the weeds in this field. Anxiety and fear are common weeds. Nuclear proliferation. Terrorism. A faltering economy. Global warming. The Health Care crisis. Famine and genocide in Africa. Aids. Swine flu. These and others make us all anxious and fearful. But do they keep us from being faithful and fruitful? Do we “write-off” this world as a wasteland and try to ignore it? This parable would teach that we – as Christians - are to be righteous world citizens. We pray for peace. We give to the poor. We work for justice. We seek to make a difference in the world “God so loves”.

This nation is where God planted us. God holds us accountable for being good and godly citizens ([Romans 13](#)). If “*righteousness exalts a nation*”(Proverbs 14:34), then we better live out our rightness with God for America’s sake. Do we pray for our president or do we mock him? How committed are you to being a Christian in America?

This community is where God planted us. What is God leading you to do to impact our community? “*Spiritual gifts are given to each for the common good*”(1 Corinthians 12:7), but we are also sent as God’s ambassadors into the world. Do you coach Little League? Scouts? Some Christians don’t go to AA meetings because they aren’t Christian enough. Get involved and be Christian there. Every parent faces the School question...home school, Christian school, public school...which is biblical? They all are, but God has to guide you where He wants you. And when God plants you, God expects you to bloom.

This church is where God planted us. There are far more consumers of Christ than there are servants of Christ. You can go to mega-churches – and God bless them – but if you are never sinking roots anywhere...that is not biblical. In the Middle Ages, church hopping was such a problem that a fourth vow was instituted in addition to the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience ...the a vow of stability. No longer were Christians to be nomads seeking the latest teaching, they were to stay and serve and learn right where God placed them. If you are in a church because of that Pastor, then you need to seek the Lord...you need to discern whether that church is where God wants you to be and that God has blessed you through this pastor OR you need to discern whether you have fallen into idolatry ([1 Corinthians 3](#)). A similar danger is being somewhere simply because it is familiar. We are to seek God’s will and dig in where He plants us! At HPC, we stress membership but only when someone can say “HPC is where God wants me to be”.

Why am I Presbyterian? Because it is where God has planted me and where God wants me to produce fruit even in the midst of weeds. Churches are sometimes likened to asylums where people are committed to an institution when really Churches are like an army, the company of the committed. **There are no weed free churches**; God doesn’t grant that request. **Weeds are a great excuse for not making a commitment – or for bailing out on a commitment.**

We live in a non-committal society and this mindset has infected the church. This mindset has made the Bride of Christ spastic and the Body of Christ ineffective. We like to keep our options open. “Pastor, you can count on me; unless it’s a holiday weekend or if the weather is good or if we have company or if something better comes along”. It is called “The Peter Pan Syndrome”...grown ups refusing to grow up. Are we more like Peter Pan or Simon Peter? Friends, **spiritual maturity comes through making and keeping God-led commitments...and the surprise is the lasting joy when you commit and your taproot hits the river of life.** Do we live our life – our sincere Christian life – keeping our options open? Or are our wills submitted to God’s will being done? Friends, **my prayer is that you grow deep and grow strong and be productive where God has planted you...as good seed growing a harvest for Christ.**

In [Matthew 13:36-43](#), Jesus explains that in the end there is judgment. “*Everything that causes sin and all who do evil*” will be weeded out of the Kingdom. **What we do and what we cause are judged along with to whom we belong.** **The promise for the righteous is that they “will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”** That is before us – if we are good seed today - rooted and grounded in Christ, committed to God’s will, growing and producing a harvest.