

If you open your Bible to Matthew 13, to our text for today, you might see a heading for this parable. And the heading will read: “The Parable of the Weeds.” When Jesus’ disciples ask Him to explain this parable, they say, “*Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.*”

I scratch my head over this a little. Why do the weeds get top billing? And what about the wheat? The heading ignores it completely. And why don’t the disciples ask, “Explain to us the parable of the wheat and the weeds,” or at least, “the parable of the weeds and the wheat”? But no, just weeds, no wheat. As if it’s just a field of weeds, period.

Now this may be intentional. Jesus’ disciples may call it a field of weeds because that’s how it seems to them. They’ve been following Jesus from place to place. They see, and even encounter, those who mouth off to Jesus, those who try to entrap Him with their logic, and those who have no real desire for Him because they refuse to believe in Him. The weeds are everywhere. Perhaps it’s all they see. The weeds have taken over. They’re in control. There is wheat in the field because Jesus says there is. But His disciples are not seeing the wheat. All they see are weeds. “*Explain to us the parable of the weeds.*”

What about you? What do you see? Some people look only for good in everyone. They see only a field of wheat. Some people, like the disciples, see only weeds. It is best to avoid both extremes.

If a Christian refuses to call a weed a weed, he is refusing to distinguish between good and evil. “*The Son of Man,*” says Jesus, “*sows the good seed... the weeds are the sons of the evil one.*” God’s Ten Commandments clearly distinguish between good and evil. And in this world, which is the field in the parable, there are those who are good seed, and there are those who are sons of the evil one. There are those who set God’s Commandments before them, and there are those who make a practice of trampling His Commandments.

“*There is no fear of God before (their) eyes,*” the psalmist here in Psalm 36 speaks of the evil ones, “*they set themselves in a way that is not good; they do not reject evil.*”

If a Christian refuses to call evil evil, he may easily be led into calling good evil, and evil good – a total rejection of the truth. And in our day, this is becoming common place. The weeds are in control. They are taking over the field. And for the wheat, it may seem as if all is lost. And it can be very tempting to call this world a field of weeds.

But no, my friends. There is wheat in the field. Jesus says so. He Himself plants the wheat. He sows only good seed. He sowed you into the field. I am speaking of your baptism. Your baptism marks you as good seed because in your baptism you are covered with Jesus’ goodness, with His innocence, His holiness.

You are not good because you keep the Ten Commandments. You are good seed because Jesus declares this of you in your baptism. He forgives your unholiness. He pardons all your

wickedness. Jesus sees no evil in you because His own blood, shed on the cross for all sinners, covers you.

The day is coming, says Jesus in His parable, when He Himself will separate the weeds from the wheat. But that time is not now. Now we live among weeds. Now we live like Lot in Sodom. He was greatly distressed, writes St. Peter, by the conduct of the wicked weeds that surrounded him. But God rescued Lot. He preserved His good seed while burning, with fire and brimstone, all the weeds of the city.

This is a picture of Judgment Day. Jesus will send His angels to gather up all the weeds, and they will be thrown in the fire of hell. But the wheat, Jesus' righteous ones, will shine like the sun in the Father's heavenly kingdom.

Until that day comes, the wheat need each other. Weeds surround us and distress us. They have no love for God. They do not set the cross of Jesus before their eyes.

You, who are the wheat, need to lean on each other. The weeds are strong. They want to pull us down, pull us away from Jesus, away from His truth, His Church. Lean on each other as you lean on God.

The weeds can overtake a solitary stalk of wheat. Let this not be you. Be in fellowship with the wheat. Be faithful here in the Divine Service with the wheat. Be regular at the Communion Table. Be constant in prayer. Make your Bible your daily companion.

Never forget who you are. You are Jesus' wheat. You are one for whom He suffered, died, and rose again. You are forgiven of all your sins. You are righteous in His eyes. Yes, you may live in a field of weeds, even noxious weeds. But rejoice that you are Jesus' wheat now and forever. Amen.