



Praying Together



*Weeds and Wheat.
Number Fifteen
July 2020*

Dear Friends,

Well, I am delighted to report that our first service at St Michael's, after almost four months, took place last Sunday. Our Archdeacon, Rev Mike Gilbertson, took our service after attending Tushingham earlier the same morning to take their first service too. Although things were a little different, and various rules were put in place to abide by the guidelines, it was lovely to be worshipping together again. We continue to pray for those members of our church family who are, as yet, unable to join us due to a continuing risk to either themselves or others. We look forward to seeing you when it is safe for you to join us again.

So, this week we have another parable. The parable of the weeds among the wheat. This comes immediately after the parable of the sower which we looked at a couple of weeks ago and I will be reflecting on this particular passage further when I take the service next Sunday at St Michael's.

From the Bible: Matthew 13: 24-30

He 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.'"

As in the parable of the sower, if you continue and read verses 36-43, the disciples ask Jesus to explain to them what this parable means. We learn that the one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, the field is the world and the good seed represents the children of the kingdom, the weeds are the children of the evil one; the harvest is the end of the age and the reapers are angels.

Quite a rich visual image is given to us here. This parable is showing us exactly what happens in our everyday life. Good and bad live together, they share the same field, if not

the same sower. In these past few months, we have become so aware of the pain and suffering that exists in the world, but also the great goodness the world has to offer and that we can offer to each other. Do not be deceived by all the negative things you may hear, there is a lot of good going on too, and if you look you will find it. As Christians we can bring to mind the visual image of being strong stalks of wheat, rising taller and stronger than the weeds around us. Through our faith and hope we live in the assurance of the ultimate triumph of God's loving purpose.

Let us Pray:

(Prayers this week by Raymond Chapman from his book Reflections on the Gospels).

Lord, keep my faith strong through all the dangers and difficulties of this life. Teach me to grow in grace and to trust in the assurance that all things work together for good in those who love you.

Strengthen my faith when I hear of suffering I can do nothing about, the sorrows that are beyond my reach except through prayer. Help me to be grateful for all the blessings of my life, and make me more sensitive to the needs of others, those simple and close at hand as well as those great and far away.

Open my eyes to see your presence in others, open my heart to receive you in them, open my door to welcome you in them. Open my ears to hear your word as I read it from the Bible and hear it in the teaching of the Church, and in the daily encounters when even casual talk may suddenly speak of you.

Amen

We are currently unable to sing in church at present, but there is nothing to stop us having a good sing along at home! I'm sure you are all familiar with this hymn, a real favourite. Click on the link to sing along with a choir.

All my hope on God is founded; he doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance he guideth, only good and only true.
God unknown, he alone calls my heart to be his own.

Human pride and earthly glory, sword and crown betray his trust;
What with care and toil he buildeth, tow'r and temple, fall to dust.
But God's pow'r, hour by hour, is my temple and my tow'r.

God's great goodness aye endureth, deep his wisdom, passing thought:
Splendour, light and life attend him, beauty springeth out of naught.
Evermore, from his store new-born worlds rise and adore.

Still from earth to God eternal sacrifice and praise be done,
High above all praises praising for the gift of Christ his Son.
Christ doth call one and all: ye who follow shall not fall.

(Text Robert Bridges-1844-1930) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5I1HTkK17A8>

"But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint". (Isaiah 40: 31)

Ali, on behalf of St Michael's Church, Marbury.