

Waiting for the Harvest
August 6th, 2017
Matthew 13:24ff

Are you a patient person? Scale of 1-5 where do you rate? 5 being you don't mind watching 3 episodes of house hunters in the doctors office while you wait an hour and a half for your doctors appointment, because you know doctors are busy. Very patient. Or a 1, the worst thing in the world are lines and any single line you are in your mind just goes crazy thinking of all the reasons why this line could have been avoided if people would just do what they are supposed to do, it doesn't matter if its traffic or the grocery store or the post office. Lines and waiting are the biggest enemies that you have.

Patience is a big issue for us. We are almost trained to be impatient. If my google home page doesn't pop up in under 2 seconds you better believe I am going to hit refresh. If my amazon package from china is delayed a day from and I am no longer getting 3-5 day delivery around the world but 6 day delivery, someone might be getting an email. We want things to happen conveniently for us. We want everything to be easy breezy and on time. But that's not always how it works.

Our lesson today is another parable from Jesus. He is talking to his disciples again about crops and farming. Last week he talked about a farmer sowing his seeds. And we talked about what happens to faith in this world. This week we have a different parable about farming.

Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵ But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶ When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

²⁷ "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?'

²⁸ " 'An enemy did this,' he replied.

This isn't even about impatience. But just how upset would you be? A whole field planted of good seed. And then an enemy comes by and scatters seeds of a harmful plant all over your field. Talk about an enemy. The enemy isn't even out for his own gain, he is just out to destroy, or frustrate or ruin the perfect field. Pure evil. Terrible. I digress.

Jesus continues with his parable:

The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'

²⁹ " 'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰ 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.'

Patience. That master showed it didn't he. Many times when we get frustrated the easiest thing to do is to take action. Just try to do something, but often just doing something, especially when we don't think it out, isn't beneficial it can actual be harmful to the who situation. Like switching lines at the grocery store, it almost never works out.

We will get back to that. Jesus tells the disciples and the crowds of people who were around listening one more parable, and then he went away with his disciples to a house. And as soon as they get in the disciples ask Jesus to explain what this parable means. And he tells them.

The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

So the Farmer, Son of Man, Jesus, sowed good seed, or people of the kingdom, in the world. Jesus made the world full of only good seed, only of people of the kingdom. The kingdom means people who believe in Jesus as their king and savior and believe in him and have faith in him. Or as Jesus calls them later, the righteous ones. That's how the world was. Perfect. Think of Adam and eve. Both walking with God, talking with God, believing in the one true God. No shame, no sin, no death. Perfect

But then, the weeds are the people of the evil one and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The devil came. And he infected this world with sin. In the parable the word that the Bible uses for weed isn't like a dandelion. The devil was a lot more sinister than that. The weed that Jesus was talking about is looks just like wheat. But its poisonous, it causes naseau and disorientation if you eat it. It not just annoying, it is harmful. It grows up and has a very similar stalk as wheat, it has a similar color to that of wheat. It's a real problem that farmers in some areas have, determining which wheat is real wheat and which is this stuff called cheat wheat or darnell. many people would have a tough time determining which is wheat and which is the weed that the enemy planted all over the field. But when the plant creates a kernal, when it buds and flourishes, then it shows itself. The weed is a different color at the harvest and the fruit looks different.

Rather than have the servant go through the field and rip out all of the plants that might be the poisonous weeds and risk uprooting and hurting the good seed that he planted. Jesus is patient. He says wait. Wait till the harvest. Wait till the end of the world and then I will sort between the two. I will sort the righteous ones from sinners.

We are the wheat in this story. You and me and all people who believe in Jesus. That's what makes us righteous. The fact that Jesus has made us righteous. He has planted

faith in your heart. He has nurtured that faith through the word of God. He has cared for you, placed you right here among all of these other people in our church who know who their Savior is. And we are just waiting for that day when the harvest will come. When Jesus will take us to be home with him forever in heaven. When he will take us from this field on earth full of weeds and troubles and problems and take us to a place far away from those things.

Isn't this a lesson about patience? Don't get me wrong there is a definite threat here in this lesson. There is a promise to irradiate evil from the world. To throw all sinners who are not righteous into the fire where there will be gnashing of teeth, literal fire and brimstone here. That is part of the lesson, but to you and me, the wheat, aren't we talking here about patience. Aren't we talking about waiting for the harvest.

Having weeds in the field is bad for the farmer because it is bad for his crop. Having evil in the world is bad for the son of man because it causes distress in our lives. In the lives of the people that Jesus loves. And many times when those weeds pop up in our lives, bad influences that lead us away from Jesus, people who cause us pain and heartache, internet trolls, terrorists groups, people that are bent on hurting us and all of the other people in the world, it is very easy to get impatient. How long O lord will you let us suffer. How long O lord will you let evil endure. Why God don't you do something about this? Why don't you care about us?

It is very easy to get impatient when things are difficult. No one likes to suffer. No one likes to be uncomfortable. And when we are uncomfortable, or suffering, or when times are difficult, we get impatient with our God, that's when doubt creeps in. If I am in the doctors office for 45 minutes I assume that my time is of little value to that doctor. I start to think that I am not very important to them. And that makes me frustrated.

If you are struggling with some weed in your life. Some evil and If you are praying to your God for years or decades to help you with something in your life, and you feel like you are waiting on him, it is easy to think that you are of little value to him, or you aren't very important, and that can make us frustrated. There are sometimes when we don't even know what to pray for. Have you ever gotten to that point? We look around and there are just so many things that we wish we could do something about but really we are helpless in those places, and we just don't even know what to ask God to do. We can't even define the problem let alone ask God to help us.

Our Romans passage says IN the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Sprite himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

Jesus isn't too busy for you. Jesus isn't over scheduled. Or running behind. He doesn't think your problem or your struggle isn't worth his time. He just has a better plan than you do. Even if we are speaking to him in just wordless groans. In tears because we don't know what to do. He knows what is best for you. He will take care of you. He just knows what is better for your life than you do. And that is hard for us to see sometimes. But

it requires patience. And patience with our God requires trust that he knows what is best for us and he will not withhold from us what is best for us. We are God's people. And God will take care of us.

The field that Jesus is talking about in this parable is the entire world. That's what he says here in his parable. The field is the world. There are a lot of good seeds in this world, and there are a lot of plants in this world that look good, but really they are evil. They are not good for the good seeds, they are not good for the rest of the world. They are harmful. There is a lot of that. And looking at this world as a whole, sometimes it is easy to get impatient too. We are like those servants of Jesus who run to him and ask God why won't you just irradiate all evil from this world. Why do you let all of this go on day after day? Don't you care about us? Don't you love us? Why won't you do something about it?

He will. We just have to wait for the harvest. Be patient. Trust him. He knows what he is doing. The reason the farmer did not pull the weeds from wheat was not because he didn't care about the wheat, the reason the farmer did not pull the weeds from the wheat was because he cared so much about every single stalk of wheat that he did not want to risk destroying even one of them.

Your God loves you. Your God cares for you. He is patient with you. He forgives all your sins. He helps you with all of your doubts. He nourishes you to chase away your fears. He cares for you so deeply, and he has a plan. And his plan will work. He will not remain idle forever. There will come a day when he does separate those who are righteous because they believe in Jesus from those who do not. There will come a day when he will destroy evil. There will come a day when he takes you to heaven forever away from all of the evil and pain. But it might not be today. Be patient with him. Trust him. He knows what he is doing. Keep waiting for the harvest patiently.

Amen