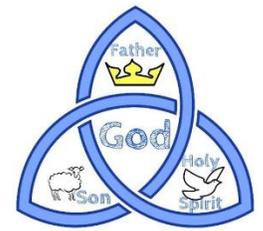




# ONE VOICE



Churches: ♦Bethany ♦Immanuel ♦Lunder ♦Silver Lake ♦Winnebago

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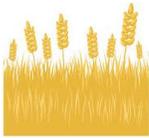
June 2020

## *From the Pastor's Desk*

*"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." Matt. 13:27-29*



When I did my internship in Rolla, North Dakota, the only row crops were Sunflowers. Most of the fields were either, wheat or barley. So during May and June and even July almost all the fields looked a beautiful hue of green. But at the end of July and in August, the wheat and the barley began to turn a beautiful gold. Since the sun flowers were gold, one could see amber waves of gold as far as the eye could see, which is about twenty miles in North Dakota. When the fields turn gold, that is when one could spot a few green weeds here and there.



That is what happened in the parable of the weeds and the wheat. The Farmer and his servants sowed good seed into his field. The seeds had been cleaned and were free from weeds. But in the middle of the night, an enemy came and sowed weeds throughout the fields. When the wheat began to turn gold, the green of the weeds were now clearly visible. The Servants asked the Master, if he had bad seed. The Master said, "No, he had good seed. An enemy has done this." The weeds were not sown by the Master's hand. Then the Servants ask if the Master wants them to go out and pluck all the weeds from the wheat. The Master has an interesting answer. "No, for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let them grow together until the harvest; and at the 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."

Whenever I read or hear this story I am always a little surprised and taken aback by the Master's answer. Having walked bean fields a number of times in my youth, I have pulled plenty of weeds. Sometimes, the root of the weeds were so intertwined with the beans, that a bean plant came out. Rare, but it happened. I have also pulled a milk weed or two out of an oat field. Again the root system of the weed, sometimes pulled up one or two stalks of oats. As I reflect upon the Master's answer to the slaves, the Master wasn't willing to lose one stalk of wheat. Out of a whole field of wheat, if one lost one or two stalks of wheat while you pulled out the weeds, it would seem to me hardly any loss at all. But not to the Master of this parable.

The Master of this parable is our Lord. You and I are the good seed of wheat. The weeds are the brokenness of sin and evil that is sown by Satan. When we read that the Master doesn't want to lose one stalk of wheat, we should read that to the Lord it is not acceptable to lose not even one stalk of wheat, or not one of his children. In another words, to Jesus and the Father, losing you is unacceptable. Losing another brother or sister in Christ is unacceptable. In a different teaching Jesus says, that no one can take you

out of his Father's hand. You are that precious to the Father and to Jesus.

The Master's command then is to let the weeds and wheat grow together until the time of the harvest. Then there will be a separation with the weeds gathered into bundles to be burned and the wheat gathered into the barn. So while the wheat is growing it is in the presence of the weeds and contesting with the weeds for water and sunshine. But the wheat still grows and is harvested for the Master.

As I thought about the pandemic that we are facing now and the scientist figure possibly for the next two years, I thought we are living out this parable. The Lord didn't sow this weed, this pandemic amongst us. It is part of the brokenness of the world, broken by sin and death. Like the weeds in the wheat field, the virus is still in our midst and we struggle against the virus for life and quality of life, much like the wheat struggles against the weed for water, nutrition and sunlight. Yet, it is the wheat that is sown by the Master's hand and it is good seed. You are the good seed, the seed filled with the Holy Spirit, filled with the love of God, filled with peace and joy as an apostle of the Gospel of love revealed by Jesus Christ our Lord.

As we live in the world, amongst the weeds, the Lord is watching over us and providing for our needs. The Lord is watching over you, making sure you are not lost, for losing you is unacceptable to the Lord. The Lord holds you in His hands and no one can snatch you out of his hands. At the same time, as we live in this world broken, invaded by this Corona Virus, we are apostles of the Gospel, apostles of God's love. Scripture bears witness over and over again, God's desire is for everyone to turn to him to receive his love. God said, "I do not rejoice in the death of wicked ones, but my desire is for them to turn to me and live." So while God is watching over you, claiming you with his love, providing for your life, we should also attend to his calling to be his apostles.

We are called to love our neighbor. One of the ways we can love our neighbor is by social distancing and washing our hands so we don't accidentally spread the virus to our neighbor. But we can also listen. We can visit the lonely by phone. We can volunteer or support organizations working to feed neighbors who are hungry. But most importantly, we can share the good news of God's love that will not let us go, a love which declares not one loss is acceptable. So let us build each other up with the Good news of God's love and let us share it with our neighbors.

*Pastor Randy*

