

W E E K L Y M E D I T A T I O N

Let both grow together until the harvest (Matthew 13:30)

Our scripture reading this week includes Matthew 13: 24 - 30 (on Tuesday). This is the parable of the wheat and the tares (weeds). A man sows good, clean weed-free seed in his field but during the night his enemies come and sow weeds. Both wheat and weeds sprout and grow up together. His servants are puzzled by the weeds because they know he has planted clean seed. When he explains the actions of his enemies, the servants suggest that they will go out into the field and pull up all the weeds. In proposing this, the servants think that they know what their master wants, but he tells them not to do this because in pulling out the weeds they will also pull out a lot of the wheat and damage his crop. He says that he will instead wait until harvest time, and then his reapers will be able to go through and pluck out the weeds before gathering in the ripened wheat.

Although there will ultimately come a time of reckoning and separation - here wheat from weeds, elsewhere sheep from goats, good fish from bad, those who have ministered to others from those who have not - in this world the good and the bad grow up together intermixed. It is just the way things are. This is a cause of pain and sorrow, and the well-intentioned are often impatient to make things right. Like the servants in this parable, some think that immediate and drastic action is the answer. Unfortunately, the unintended consequences of such actions can be even more tragic than the initial situation. They make things worse in trying to fix them. More importantly, all such ultimate judgments - the final, determinative separation of wheat from weeds - belongs to the Lord, and not to busybodies who think that they are doing His work, even if earnest and sincere.

This is not only a warning to those tempted by social engineering, utopians or advocates of theocracy and other ideologues - the history of which is a rogues gallery of devastation and wickedness - but to all whose earnest desire to make things right on a more modest scale leads them to presume to treat others as if they were simply weeds to be pulled and tossed away. While our capacity to distinguish the weeds from the wheat is limited, and our ability to render appropriate judgments is also limited, our inclination to judge and condemn often seems to be boundless! Humility concerning our own capacity for being right on the one hand, and on the other our trust in God - that He will Himself resolve what needs resolution and will sort things out - means that we are to be patient and to put up with a lot Prudence, discernment and justice require this of us.

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