

7th Sunday after Pentecost

7/19/20

Tom Baker

Immanuel Lutheran Church 906 E Grant St **Macomb** IL 61453-3322

Immanuel Lutheran Student Center 301 N Clay St Macomb IL 61455

Western Illinois University

Tom & Karen Burtch, President 309-252-2408 H: 309-833-5365

tkburtch@yahoo.com

Cindy Lueck, Office Secretary **309-833-5483**

secretary@ImmanuelMacomb.com

St John Lutheran 424 W Washington St **Rushville** IL 62681

First Lutheran 111 W South St **Mt Sterling** IL 62353

Ron Engelbrecht 217-322-4550

Tim Clark 217-204-6756 timdeb@casscomm.com

What Is The Seed?

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The text is Matthew 13, verse 24.

²⁴ He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, (Mat 13:24 ESV)

The parable from last week's sermon was about the sower who sowed good seed on various types of ground from on the path, on rocks, on thorns and on good ground. Jesus explained that parable about the good seed being the Word of God. Today's parable is again about a sower sowing good seed. The question for this message is who would disagree that the good seed the sower sows is again the Word of God? Since both parables speak of sowing good seed, it makes sense to conclude that the good seed in each parable is the Word of God. But that is not the case.

We observe a number of differences in today's parable itself from last week's parable. In last week's parable the same good seed is sown on the various types of ground. But in this parable while the first sower sows good seed in his field, the second parable has weeds sown. Perhaps the good seed is the Word of God and the weeds refer to false doctrine.

Fortunately we again have the disciples of Jesus asking Him in verse 36 to explain to them the parable. Unlike last week's parable in which the sower is any Christian sowing the Word of God, this week's parable the sower is the Son of Man Himself. Why the difference? Because the good seed is not the Word of God as in last week's parable but instead the good seed according to Jesus refer to the children of the kingdom of God; that is believers.

Then what do the weeds represent? The weeds do NOT represent false teaching. The weeds according to Jesus are the sons of the evil one who is our enemy the devil! So while the Sower is none other than Jesus Himself and the evil sower is the devil, so the good seed stand for believers while the weeds stand for unbelievers.

Now in the parable when both the good wheat and the weeds begin to grow, the servants want to uproot the weeds but they are told not to lest the wheat also be uprooted. How can that be? Can't someone working on the farm distinguish between wheat and weeds. While some translations refer to the bad seed as weeds, other English translations used the word "tares." You see, a tare is a special kind of weed called a darnel which resembles wheat except the grains are black but don't appear until near harvest. So it would be easy for a servant to confuse the young wheat from a young tare and might uproot proper plants along with the weeds.

In fact, when Jesus explains the parable He notes that those who will be uprooting the weeds or tares are the angels sent by the Son of Man at the close of the age which we refer to as the Day of Judgment. The weeds will be thrown into the fiery furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Okay pastor, so we learned today that when we read the Bible we need to be aware that the same words such as sower and seed might mean us or Jesus, wheat or weeds and only through a careful regard of the context will we be able to discover which is which. But what has the second parable for today's reading have anything to do with this congregation?

Last week's parable taught us that when we as Christians sow the Word of God, the results depend on the attitude of the ground receiving that Word of God. This week's parable has a somewhat different teaching. Because the seed stands for believers it is necessary that the sower who sows believers is none other than God Himself. In other words, we Christians can sow the Word of God but only Jesus can sow believers.

A primary teaching of the Reformation is that God and God alone creates the planting and growth of believers. But how does He do that? We have a perfect example when an infant is baptized. In the sacrament of baptism it is impossible for this precious water connected to the Word of God's promise to result in a child that is NOT given faith, forgiveness and eternal life. Infant baptism is a perfect result of what today's parable teaches that God's holy sacrament never results in a weed but a wheat; that is, not a child of the devil but a child of God.

Then who do we thank for this miracle of miracles. We can thank God that this is a Christian congregation that practices infant baptism as a sacrament with God using the voice and hands of a pastor. We can thank the parents of an infant for recognizing the importance of this new birth and bringing their child to be baptized. But primarily we can thank God for instituting this means of grace through which the infant becomes a child of the Most High God.

However, I also want to say a word about the godparents of newly baptized children. They are more than witnesses to the baptism, say "yes" to a promise and then do nothing. So the following is addressed to any of you who are godparents of a child of God. Remember to provide the child a gift, not just on the birthday but also on the rebirthday. The gift might be a Christian book or cross or symbol. As the child grows up, perhaps quality time with an invitation to lunch to talk about how important was the baptism.

During the time of this virus there has been a marked increase in the number of suicides by young people. Why? It has been shown that when rebellious prisoners misbehave and they are put in solitary confinement, many of them contemplate and carry out suicide. With today's virus there are many young people who are locked up in their homes without friends visiting and no school. That confinement needs to be addressed even by godparents and grandparents.

Phone or email them to tell them how much you love and appreciate them. When possible visit the home and join in a family celebration. And that kind of relating to young people also needs to be directed toward the elderly who often feel alone. On the July 13th Portals of Prayer the following was written:

The purpose of such conversations with the young and elderly along with gifts and visits is not to make ourselves look better in God's eye but to make God look better in their eyes. For those who have been baptized as the seeds of God that have nurtured into believing Christians that cling to the promises of God based on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that never gets tired of hearing. Amen.

And may the peace of God that passes all understanding, sustain and keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of the Church**Seventh Sunday after Pentecost****19 July 2020**

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Brief silence

Lord, continue to raise up witnesses in this and every place to faithfully proclaim Your Word. Let Your Church continue to bring forth good seed; that is, believers through hearing the Word of God or through being baptized. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Redeemer and Lord of hosts, the future is in Your hands, and only You know what is to come. Remove from us fear of the unknown and the trepidation that uncertainty brings. Keep us mindful that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed in us. On this day we pray for rain to water the ground so that the wheat, the corn, the beans and other crops come to a bountiful harvest. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of all, bless our nation and its citizens. Give us good leadership, satisfying work, loving families, and a quiet and peaceable life that glorifies Your name. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of all compassion, look over the sick and all who suffer from any malady of mind or body. Give them patience and endurance in their trials and, if it be Your will, return them to health. Be especially with those who live in nursing homes and care facilities. Give them an unfailing faith in You and a lively hope for the redemption that You promise. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You have given us Communion as a gift, guarantee and pledge. May all who partake of the Sacrament receive the body and blood of Christ in faith. May it nourish and strengthen them in devotion to You and in service to others, and keep them safe during their earthly sojourn. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We join our prayer with the unending prayers of those who have gone before us and are now with You. Together the Church in heaven and the Church on earth await the time when the righteous will shine like the sun in Your Kingdom, O Father, for You live and reign with Your Son and Spirit, ever one God, world without end. **Amen.**