

*24He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; 25but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. 26So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. 27And 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?' 28He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' 29But he replied, 'No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. 30Let 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.'"*

I think I've discovered an attraction that is stronger than magnetism. You all know how a magnet and iron are pulled toward each other. Well, I've found something that is attracted to water, even at great distances. Let me show it to you, my golf ball.

When I hit a golf ball into a vast area, if there is water anywhere within range, the ball will be drawn toward it. For many years I did not understand what was happening, but then someone explained. He said, "Lynn, you will tend to hit the ball in the direction you are thinking about. If you are worried about hitting into the woods, the chances are you will do just that or about the water - that's where you will go."

Maybe that is why Jesus told us today's 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 now sow good seed in your field? Where then, did all 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 them both 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.'"

Weeds. In the world and in the church and in ourselves, everywhere there are weeds.

A long time ago, Christians and others got together to root out the weed of alcohol abuse. Let there be no alcohol available in all the land, was their solution. Prohibition. Today the weed of alcohol abuse is still flourishing.

Sometimes Christians have tried to keep weeds from here, at Jesus table. Right belief, right living were the tickets required to take a place in line. The ones who passed the tests of examination by the pastor felt so right, so righteous. But looking back we might wonder about the weed called self-righteousness, the very weed Jesus seemed most opposed to.

Or maybe you have tried to do some weeding in yourself - a habit, a weakness, a sin in you that you want to pull up by the roots. You set your sights on that weed, but the more you attend to it, the more it flourishes. Like I tell myself I can control my anger. Over and over I assure myself that this weed will no longer get the best of me. And the next thing I know I'm shouting at someone.

That's how it was in me when smoking cigarettes was the weed. I'd quit, spend all my time thinking about not smoking and suddenly I would find I was smoking more than ever.

“Should we root up the weeds?” the servants asked.

“No, for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let them both grow until the harvest.”

Like the power of the water hazard on the golf course, the power of the weeds comes when we fill our minds with them.

The parable begins and ends with the work of God - sowing good seed, harvesting good seed. No matter what happens in between God has sown good seed, God will harvest an abundant crop.

Don't be afraid, people of God!

Be about your work of loving, forgiving, giving thanks to God for all that is good.

Yes, there is violence in our world, but set your hearts upon peace. There is unfaithfulness in relationships, but set your minds on God's faithfulness. Yes, there is hunger, but set you minds on the joy of sharing, feeding, providing.

The weeds are growing, yes. But did you hear that very important word about the one who sowed the weeds. Jesus taught, the enemy came and sowed the weeds among the wheat and then went away.

What a wonderful picture that is, only the sower of the good seed remains. Only God.

In every way Jesus is teaching us what he lived. Though the weeds flourished and grew up around Jesus himself, robbed him of the breath of life and the light of day and left him

thirsting on the cross, the sower of the good seed could not be defeated. God raised him shining like the sun.

As Isaiah said so clearly, there is no other rock. No other power in all the cosmos, no other god beside the one true God. The enemy may sow weeds, but God's good seed will remain when the weeds have all been burned.

And you will shine like the sun in the kingdom of your Father.

Keep your ears and your eyes and your heart focused on that. Amen.