



Harvest Fields by van Gogh

Church at Home for Abridge

19th July 2020

Matthew 13: 24-30

**Further resources
for worship and reflection**

Read through today's Gospel again slowly, pausing between verses to allow God to speak through this parable.

Matthew's commentary in between the parables in chapter 13 is significant. He quotes Isaiah and later in verses 34-35 he references Psalm 78, which tells us that parables disclose secrets from the beginning of time. Parables are more than just fun illustrations of a truth - everyday anecdotes to break up a sermon; they are doorways into deep wisdom and Jesus's seed stories in particular are examples of this.

When Jesus offers an explanation of this parable (because his disciples ask him) the focus is clearly on the harvest...the judgement and the burning. But in the first telling the key moment is surely when the farmer says, 'Let both grow together...' (v30). Amazingly the word used in the original for 'let' is 'forgive'.

In contrast to some interpretations, **this parable is really about God's patience, mercy and forgiveness.** God is unwilling that any should perish....even 'the evil seed people'. The weeds in this parable looked exactly like the wheat until they were fully grown. It's not up to us to judge or decide who's in or who's out in God's Kingdom. That is in God's hands alone....especially when we recognise that all of us are an unhappy mixture of weeds and wheat; but unlike the weeds in this parable, we human weeds can change! God always hopes for the best of us.



This song '[O Lord, the clouds are gathering](#)' by Graham Kendrick captures both the justice and the mercy of God expressed in this parable

You may also find [this short accessible reflection](#) on the parable helpful, by the Franciscan theologian Richard Rohr.

What if....

If God had never let the seed of the tree of knowledge grow, then choice would never have been a possibility...

If God had never let the fruit of that seed be picked, then love would never have been a choice...
If God had stopped the Fall there and then, then God's image in creation would have faded from the very start...

If God had decided to wash away *all the evil* from the earth, then not even Noah and his family would have survived...

If God should count our sins, says the Psalmist, who could stand...

And if God had pulled up the weeds sooner, then the whole harvest would have been ruined...
Instead God allowed it all to grow, permitting good and bad to exist together....and rather than destroy...
God chooses to wait, to love and to forgive...

Because 'my ways are not your ways', says the Lord, 'neither are my thoughts your thoughts'.