

7/13/11

**THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON**      Isaiah 44:6-8

*(There is only true God, the Lord, Israel's King and Redeemer.)*

6 "This is what the LORD says-- Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God. 7 Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come-- yes, let him foretell what will come. 8 Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one."

**THE GOSPEL LESSON**      Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

*(Jesus teaches lessons of faith with the parable of the 'Wheat and the Weeds'.)*

24 Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. 26 When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. 27 "The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? **Where then did the weeds come from?**' 28 **"An enemy did this,' he replied. "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'** 29 **"No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'" . . .**

36 Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field." 37 He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are **the sons of the evil one**, 39 and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. 40 "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. 42 They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

**THE SERMON**      **"Dealing with Problems in God's Church"**

**Matthew 13**

INTRO – I'm not saying this did happen, and I'm not saying it did not happen, but I remember something like this. I recently said to my kids, "Why did you leave your dishes in front of the TV?" Before they could answer my wife said, "Why did you leave your dishes in the living room?" It is not helpful if someone takes a stand for a certain cause if they do not live what they speak themselves.

I That is true of the church, It is not helpful for the church's witness if it stand for faith, or love, or righteousness as children of God, if it acts differently from that stand.

- A. But the church often acts differently than its message to the world.
  - 1. Big name pastors who have called others to sexual purity, have been caught in unrighteous situations.
  - 2. Christians who call the world to love can be unloving to other Christians with whom they disagree.
  - 3. Christians can say they trust God, but cheat to get what they think is right.
- B. Unfortunately we should not be surprised.
  - 1. First, everyone is a sinner, who has failed the Lord. Otherwise, we would not need a Savior.
  - 2. But, we are fighting a battle against the enemy of God and His church. This is different than the struggle each of us have with sin.
  - 3. There are those in the world, and those in the church who are given over to evil. They are '**sons of the evil one.**'

**C. GOD'S CHURCH FACES TROUBLE FROM WITHIN AND FROM WITHOUT BECAUSE WE ARE IN A BATTLE WITH THE EVIL ONE!**

II So, how do we deal with evil? One solution says get rid of those who are evil, but there are problems. Many churches believe that abortion is wrong because it takes an innocent life. That is the stand of our church. But, does that mean? In May of 2009, Dr. George Tiller was shot and killed because he provided abortions. Is that how Christians should fight sin and evil?

- A. Jesus tells this parable.
  - 1. When the question was asked **Where then did the weeds come from?' 28 "'An enemy did this,' he replied. "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' 29 "'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"** . . .
  - 2. You see, there is only one judge, and that is God.
  - 3. Only God sees the heart. Only God knows who is a child of the kingdom, and who is a son of the evil one.
- B. This does not mean being quiet about the Word of God. We are called to teach everything that Jesus commanded.

1. So, we are to speak and live what God says.
2. When those in the church do otherwise, God calls in Ephesians 4:15 for “**speaking the truth in love.**”
3. Please remember everyone struggles with sin, we heard that just 2 weeks ago.

**C. BUT, WHAT JESUS CALLS FOR IN THIS PARABLE TAKES FAITH.**

1. It takes faith that God will judge justly.
2. It also takes faith that God will forgive us.

III. Have you seen the commercial where an actor playing Abraham Lincoln is asked by his wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, if she looks overweight in a certain dress. That’s the kind of question where it seems there is no right answer. In today’s lesson, the Lord who calls us to live righteous lives and to stand for righteousness tells us to trust Him to do the judging.

- A. This is where Jesus makes a difference in our lives, and in the world.
1. God calls us to love and forgiveness, but He did not overlook sin.
  2. He punished all the sin in the world in His Son.
  3. The righteous one suffered as the unrighteous to offer forgiveness and the righteousness of God to sinful people.

- B. We are not impotent, we trust God.
1. So Christians teach everything God commanded, speaking the truth in love.
  2. And Christians leave the eternal judgment to God.
  3. This is impossible for us, but as God calls us by His Word, as He forgives us by the sacraments, and as He strengthens us through His Spirit, we attempt the impossible because we trust God who has loved us in Jesus.

**C. Knowing and trusting Jesus makes all the difference in dealing with the difficulties of living as a Christian.**

CONCLUSION - So, a father is called to teach His children things like faith, and righteousness, and being neat and organized. Should I give up my job as a father because I fail too sometimes. No, Jesus makes a difference here too. Even a father can call for children to live well, because we are forgiven and called by Jesus. Even a sinner can speak God’s truth and call others to righteousness, because we are forgiven and called by Jesus. We trust our Lord to guide and be the ultimate judge.