Lectionary Year A 2020 07 19

2020 07 19 To Weed or not to Weed?

Genesis 28:10-19a. Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24

Romans 8:12-25. Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43.­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Romans 8:12 starts with the words:

“So then” – these are words to fill us with apprehension –

*? when have you heard that – what normally follows?*

*A parent talking to a son or daughter/*

*Someone caught in a situation and the police or principal etc listing the charge and “So then – you are grounded” or whatever. Consequences.*

The writer to the church family at Rome tells that before the Lord Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection all people reaching for God were bound by the law of right and wrong – including those who had never heard of the Ten Commandments because: ”that which may be known about God is evident within them; for God has made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though ‘in themselves,’ they knew God, they did not honour Him as God or give thanks, but became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

The writer now lays it on us : He has agonised as to why the good he wants to do he does not do and the wrong he does not want to do he does!

*? ever felt like that. Did you find a way toovercome?*

Hear our cry reflect his “wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from this body of death!”

“thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

“there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”

“the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

We have the human mind and nature which tries to be their own master, that seeks to gain favour in themselves, and from others, and ultimately from God and for a period of time, life can be satisfying, but it fails to bring us peace and assurance with God and disappointment with life no matter how - ‘successful’ in the world we are.

Look at the richest most powerful and wisest man of history – Solomon. At the end of his life he wrote “Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher, “all is vanity!”

“The conclusion, when all has been heard is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.”[[3]](#footnote-3) “For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.”

This brings us to the reality of living in this human body of ours, living with the experiences of childhood and on in our lives.

We cannot gain peace with God and ourselves on our own, we come to the shout that come from Paul – Who will save me from this body of death - “thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord! … I am no longer condemned for I am in Christ Jesus my Lord” – I am free.

**To weed or not to weed.**

For some the damage of the past disappears or takes on a different dimension and for others it is worked out as we grow in walking with Gods Presence in us.

Back to v12 “so then” – OK we are new people in Jesus – we still have the same body and the same physical desires and an enemy who constantly tries to drag us back to pleasing ourselves or drowning in our hurts –

**“To weed or not to weed”** to bring our thought captive to Jesus[[4]](#footnote-4) or to let them in – maybe even for a few moments?

“We are a new creation in Christ Jesus (the power of) old things have passed away, behold all things are new.”[[5]](#footnote-5)

Two people: 1) a lady that I know, a family member whose mind had put her in care at one stage but has come to the Lord and knowing that she is secure in Jesus she has gained the strength so that when her mind becomes obsessive and thoughts go berserk she simply says “NO” and does not entertain the conflicting thoughts – does not listen or argue -because that gives them authority – she simple in Jesus - says NO and gets on with her life.

The other 2) a man who was abused as a child and has used alcohol to stay alive – he knows the bible very well and quotes the references – an impossibility for me – he rang this week – been sober for some months again but this time he has an added strength – when the past returns to torment him he says NO IN JESUS NAME BEGONE and he said that this and reading his bible and the writings of the great theologians of the past has given him a confidence he has not had before.

Saying NO is how both of these – and now myself – have withered the weeds of life and blessed the growth of the good in Gods’ world.

***To weed or not to weed*** *– that is the question - it is an active thing and the weeds will try and grow back.*

There is a basic starting point in this weeding process - Jesus told us to pray for those who have despitefully used us[[6]](#footnote-6) - to leave God to deal with them and to know that we are forgiven by God for our own abuse of others.[[7]](#footnote-7)

When Jesus “became sin for us on the cross, he cleansed us from our sins and the effect that other peoples’ sins had on us -but he did not leave us empty “he filled us with the rightness of God.[[8]](#footnote-8)” we are alive in this and are to be victors in our lives. We are free to walk with God.

And Jesus asked the Father to send Gods Holy Presence to be in us[[9]](#footnote-9) and said that the Spirit of Truth would bring Himself - Jesus to us.[[10]](#footnote-10)

We are clean and we are not alone.

The reading in Matthew 13 seems to talk of believers and false believers in the Christian family here on earth – I have applied it to weeds and wheat in ourselves BUT what is the Lords message in the church family itself?

Tares are a plant that looks like wheat and it is only when it fails to produce a head of useful wheat that it shows itself for what it is, thus trying to separate tares from wheat will inevitable cause some of the wheat to be pulled up or damaged.

There are many ‘tares’ which can grow in our church family (and in our home family) – I have talked of those in our character but the Lord seems to here be talking of people who are not believers but seem to be –

*but who of us can know another’s heart but God.*

To his own master each of us stands or falls.[[11]](#footnote-11)

This is what I see as the danger of us ‘discerning’ the reality of another’s faith -there is a gift of discernment of Spirits[[12]](#footnote-12) but I believe the Lord is talking of us ordinary people – and if we start looking at each other and maybe talking about each other, we will cause damage to people; maybe a true believer, or one who is not, or who is in a searching or traumatic time of their lives. Only God knows.

The bible tells us however, about people who spread heresy or division or immorality and this is to be judged and dealt with in the manner set out in the bible.

We do not know where others are at in their search and walk and we can damage another believer or a seeker with our words and attitude – hold them up to God in private prayer based in love and show love for them.

Some lines from the wonderful Psalm 139 says it all:

 “O Lord, You have searched me and known me;

You know when I sit down and when I get up;

You understand my thoughts from afar.

You are intimately acquainted with all my ways.

And: v19-22 do we hate our weaknesses as much as this – do we want rid of them?

 Search me, O God and know my heart;

Try me and know my anxious thoughts:

and see if there be any hurtful way in me,

and lead me in the everlasting way.

“bless the Lord O my soul”[[13]](#footnote-13)

So be it Lord.

1. Romans 1:19-21 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Romans 7:24- 8:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ecclesiastes 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 2 Corinthians 10:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 2 Corinthians 5:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Mark 5:44 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The Lords Prayer / John 3:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 2 Corinthians 5:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. John 14-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. John 14-16 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Romans 4:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. 1 Corinthians 12:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Song by Matt Redman [↑](#footnote-ref-13)