

Sunday 23rd July 2017

Trinity 6

Proper 11 **Green**



Collect

Merciful God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as pass our understanding: pour into our hearts such love toward you that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Romans 8:12-25 English Standard Version (ESV)

Heirs with Christ.

8¹² So then, brothers,^[a] we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Future Glory

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Footnote: a. or *brothers and sisters*.

COMMENT: Many people still believe that Paul is to blame for separating the concepts of flesh and spirit because he was a Jew who had been greatly influenced by Greek philosophy. It would be better if we regarded his separation of the two metaphorically as representing two ways of living. He frequently used the term *flesh* to describe unredeemed human nature, meaning nothing more or less than our physical existence without Christ.

In this passage Paul struggled to describe how the moral and spiritual can become the dominant factor in human behaviour in this present life and prepare the believer for eternal, spiritual life with God beyond death.

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 English Standard Version (ESV)

The Parable of the Weeds

13²⁴ He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field,²⁵ but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds^[a] among the wheat and went away.²⁶ So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also.²⁷ And the servants^[b] of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’²⁸ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’²⁹ But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them.³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”

The Parable of the Weeds Explained

³⁶ Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.”³⁷ He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.³⁸ The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one,³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels.⁴⁰ Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age.⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers,⁴² and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place 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.

Footnotes: a. probably *darnel*, a wheat-like weed. b. Greek *bondservants*; also verse 28.

COMMENT: “Tares” are probably “bearded darnel,” (*Lolium tementulum*) a weed which is similar to rye grass. Since both wheat and tares are in the grass family, they look similar shortly after germination. But as soon as the wheat begins to form grains, the difference becomes obvious. Jesus’ hearers knew that this kind of “bio-terrorism” sometimes occurred. What is unusual is the farmer’s response to his servants’ (slaves’) question. Tares could be pulled with minimal harm to the wheat crop—but the farmer forbids this. His solution is to wait until harvest time and then separate them, storing the wheat and burning the tares.

The parable reveals something about the hostile environment which the early church encountered. As a parable about the kingdom of heaven, it should be looked at from God’s point of view, not that of the apostolic church or the church today. Its originally simple purpose warned that the circumstances in which the church was to grow might not be ideal, but the outcome would be determined in the end when God finally brought history to an end and established the kingdom.

℟ How wonderful is this knowledge of yours that you have shown me, Lord.

¹ O LORD, you search me and you know me.

² You yourself know my resting and my rising;
you discern my thoughts from afar.

³ You mark when I walk or lie down;
you know all my ways through and through. **℟**

⁴ Before ever a word is on my tongue,
you know it, O LORD, through and through.

⁵ Behind and before, you besiege me,
your hand ever laid upon me.

⁶ Too wonderful for me, this knowledge;
too high, beyond my reach. **℟**

⁷ O where can I go from your spirit,
or where can I flee from your face?

⁸ If I climb the heavens, you are there.
If I lie in the grave, you are there. **℟**

⁹ If I take the wings of the dawn
or dwell at the sea's furthest end,
¹⁰ even there your hand would lead me;
your right hand would hold me fast. **℟**

¹¹ If I say, "Let the darkness hide me
and the light around me be night,"

¹² even darkness is not dark to you,
the night shall be as bright as day,
and darkness the same as the light. **℟**

¹³ For it was you who formed my inmost being,
knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ I thank you who wonderfully made me;
how wonderful are your works,
which my soul knows well! **℟**

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being fashioned in secret
and moulded in the depths of the earth. **℟**

¹⁶ Your eyes saw me yet unformed;
and all days are recorded in your book,
formed before one of them came into being. **℟**

¹⁷ To me how precious your thoughts, O God;
how great is the sum of them!

¹⁸ If I count them, they are more than the sand;
at the end I am still at your side. **℟**

¹⁹ O God, that you would slay the wicked,
that men of blood would depart from me!

²⁰ With deceit they rebel against you,
and set your designs at naught.

℟ **How wonderful is this knowledge of yours that you have shown me, Lord.**

²¹ Do I not hate those who hate you,
abhor those who rise against you?

²² I hate them with a perfect hate,
and they are foes to me. **℟**

²³ O search me, God, and know my heart.

O test me, and know my thoughts.

²⁴ See that my path is not wicked,
and lead me in the way everlasting. **℟**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,**

**As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

COMMENT: This psalm reiterates the theological message that God could be present to anyone anytime anywhere in great poetry. The poem begins with an expression of the individual worshiper's deep, but awesome consciousness of God's being aware of one's actions at all times (verses 1-5).

Post Communion

God of our pilgrimage, you have led us to the living water: refresh and sustain us as we go forward on our journey, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Blessing

God the Father, by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead, strengthen you to walk with him in his risen life; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**