

## Weeds and Wheat

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### LET US BEGIN WITH PRAYER:

Father God, we seek your presence with us now as we worship, and seek to know you through your word. So join us our God, and enable us to discern your will today and in the days ahead . And, Lord, strengthen us to be your agents in a disbelieving and at times hostile world. In Jesus name. Amen

### HYMN:    *AHB 160 by Benjamin Rhodes 1743-1815*

1. My heart and voice I raise, to spread Messiah's praise, Messiah's praise let all repeat;  
The universal Lord, by whose almighty word creation rose in form complete.
2. A servant's form he wore, and in his body bore our dreadful curse on Calvary;  
He like a victim stood, and poured his sacred blood to set the guilty captive free.
3. But soon the Victor rose, triumphant o'er his foes, and led the vanquished host in chains;  
He threw their empire down, his foes compelled to own o'er all the great Messiah reigns.
4. With mercy's mildest grace he governs all our race in wisdom, righteousness and love;  
who to Messiah fly shall find redemption nigh, and all his great salvation prove.
5. Hail, Saviour, Prince of Peace! Your kingdom shall increase til all the world your glory see,  
And righteousness abound as the great deep profound, and fill the earth with purity.

### SCRIPTURE READINGS

- PSALM 23.5-6a

You prepare a Table before me in the presence of my enemies, you anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life.

Thanks for the invitation to share a message with you. I am using one of Jesus' parables. It is both a warning and a promise, but above all it is full of wisdom, both earthly and divine. The parable of the weeds.

- MATTHEW 13: 24—30:

Jesus told them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. **But while everyone was sleeping**, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. 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?'

" 'An enemy did this', he replied.

" The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'

" 'No' he answered, 'because while you are pulling up the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. 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.' "

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A nurse in a London hospital is told she is no longer welcome at work because she wears a cross. A police officer is told the same. A Christian hospital in Australia is told to cease business because it will not perform abortions. (Calvary hospital, Canberra). In the U.S. a father of 7 and his wife are vilified for praying in public near an abortion clinic. It is illegal in Australia to pray with a person about their sexual orientation (even at their request!).....

Are these and other anti-Christian measures the “weeds” of our time?

I think they are. What does our Lord say about such things ?

This parable, but not only **this** parable, (see also John 10:13) – false prophets—warnings and promises.

Jesus, in my understanding is saying to us, be alert, be ready, be circumspect. Know your master, know His call. Be prepared for the kingdom (the barn) speaks to situations which Australian Christians increasingly experience in everyday life. It has been said that the Christian faith is the most persecuted religious group in the Western (‘Christian’?) world.

Jesus’ parable gives us powerful guidance in our world.

1. If you can recognise evil, keep watch over it (no sleeping)
2. There will be a time to act, and then
3. Act decisively.

In the meantime how will God sustain us? David’s Psalm 23 tells us that God will lord it over unbelievers by uplifting us in their presence. But we are not meant to be idle.

1 Peter 3:14—16: “but even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed..... always **be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.**”

It has been estimated that within 30 years there may be more mosques in Germany than churches, and, in that other bastion of protestant Christianity, the U.K., a Daily Telegraph headline stated that quite soon “the flag of Islam could fly over Downing street”. Not quite, but there is a Hindu prime minister in residence. Not far behind is the U.S.A., and Australia.

Yet the words of Jesus do not advocate paralysis, or panic. We are called to be alert, to remain faithful, and be ready to pull the “weeds” at the right time. Throughout his ministry Jesus was caring, compassionate,..... and, yes streetwise. From his outrage at the temple, to his “calling out” of the pharisees, he rose to the occasion where he saw the weeds of his time. The same Jesus’ message to us is from John 16, following his warnings and his own fateful prediction, in verse 33 “ I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble, but take heart! I have overcome the world”.

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### SHALL WE PRAY:

Lord God, be with us in the days of trial and trouble. Lord we find it difficult to be optimistic about our faith at times. But draw us near, Father, and renew our faith even in the midst of turmoil. Turn us to the words of your son, and His kingdom promise.

In His name we pray. Amen

### HYMN: *AHB 165 Joseph Scriven 1819—1886*

1. What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear,  
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer,  
O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,  
all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.
2. Have we trials and temptations, is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged; take it to the Lord in prayer,  
can we find a friend so faithful who will all troubles share?  
Jesus knows our very weakness, take it to the Lord in prayer.
3. Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?  
Jesus is our only refuge; take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Do your friends despise, forsake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer.  
In his arms he'll take and shield you. You will find a solace there.

### HYMN: *by Sabine Baring-Gould*

1. Onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war,  
with the cross of Jesus going on before.  
Christ, the royal Master, leads against the foe;  
forward into battle see His banners go!  
  
*Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,  
with the cross of Jesus going on before.*
2. At the sign of triumph Satan's host doth flee;  
on then, Christian soldiers, on to victory!  
Hell's foundations quiver at the shout of praise;  
Brothers, lift your voices, loud your anthem raise...
3. Like a mighty army moves the Church of God;  
Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod.  
We are not divided, all one body we,  
One hope and doctrine, one in charity...
4. Crowns and thrones may perish, kingdoms rise and wane,  
But the Church of Jesus constant will remain.  
Gates of hell can never 'gainst that Church prevail;  
We have Christ's own promise, and that cannot fail...

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5. Onward then, ye people, join our happy throng,  
Blend with ours your voices in the triumph song.  
Glory, laud and honour unto Christ the King,  
This through countless ages men and angels sing...

### BLESSING:

He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new..... it is done I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End." (*Revelation 21:5-6*)

May the Lord bless you, strengthen you and sustain you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Amen

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