

Coach House Church BEACONS

W E E D S

26TH JUNE 2020

I think that those who have gardens have found them a real Godsend during these past few months of lockdown, when until recently, sitting in parks was prohibited due to the coronavirus pandemic. Of course, not everyone has a garden and so the lockdown was far more onerous for them, with nowhere outside the house to sit and relax in the good weather that has been around for most of the lockdown. Personally, I never lived in a house with a garden until we bought our present house. It had a well-kept garden, as the previous owner loved gardening. Unfortunately I knew – and still know – nothing about gardening. Eventually I lost control of what was a large garden, and it became literally an ever-growing nightmare! I dreaded the arrival of each spring because of the battle I would be summoned to in a vain attempt to keep back the green monsters that threatened to engulf us! Boy was I glad when I eventually took the plunge, got a bank loan, and had it all cleared – what a relief. My apologies to those gardeners I might have just offended!

Jesus told a story in Matthew's Gospel that had to do with weeds. It is found in chapter 13, verses 24 – 30:

Jesus put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was asleep, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and slipped away. When the wheat sprouted and bore grain, 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. So, the servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' 'No,' he said, 'if you pull the weeds now, you might 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 into my barn.'"

A little later Jesus explains the meaning of this parable to His disciples: the field is the world, the wheat planted there represent God's people – the people of the Kingdom; the weeds represent bad or evil people planted in the Kingdom by an enemy, who is the devil. The harvest is the end of this age and the harvesters are the angels who come to tie up the weeds for burning and to gather the wheat for storage in the barn.

In this parable the word used for "weed" is the Greek word zizanion, which is the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew word zonin. Now zonin was a kind of ryegrass that to begin with looks just like real wheat. The significant difference is that it is poisonous! The difference can't be seen until the heads appear as the plants approach full maturity.

Now zonin is not really a different plant from wheat, but it is a degenerate form of it – a mutation if you like. You can imagine the chagrin that the owner of the field would feel as he saw this nefarious crop mingling with the good wheat! Incidentally, this is just like cancer. The tumour is not an alien invader from outside the body, it is part of the body's own tissue, only the tumour cells have mutated to become a threat to the victim's life and well-being. It is because the tumour is part of the same tissue, or body that it isn't attacked by the body's immune system. Cunning don't you think?

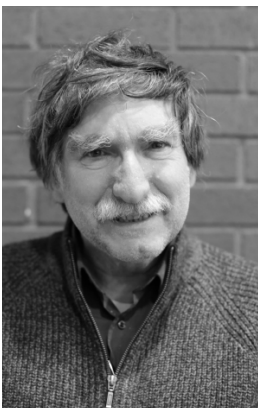
Jesus was making the point here that in the Church, which is His body, there are mutant cells that are a threat to the life of the church. This is a modern way of looking at it if you like. To be a part of Jesus' body, the Church, a person must be born again, or regenerated by the Holy Spirit. This is what happens when a person gives their life to Christ. However, there is an enemy – Satan- who is desperate to destroy Christ's body here on Earth. To do this, one of the most cunning ways he uses is to introduce mutant cells into it. They are people who look like the real thing. They are people who profess faith in Christ; they look and sound like the real thing, only in their hearts they do not belong to Jesus. To start with they do not cause any bother, but as time goes by and they move into positions of authority or influence, their baleful influence becomes a real threat to the life and purity of the Church.

Satan uses them to harm the Church in so many ways, and to cause great dishonour to the Lord's name in the world. I have met individuals like this in the past. They really can do a lot of damage. The thing is though that God knows those

who are His. And He knows who the fakes are too. These will be the weeds that are facing eternal judgement.

I would like to use this opportunity to encourage my hearers to examine your hearts, to see whether you are in the faith, that is, you have really given your hearts to Christ. Paul urges his readers to do this in 2 Corinthians 13:5. Don't wait for the harvest. Don't pretend that you belong to Christ. Make sure you do. At the harvest it will be too late.

May the Lord bless you and cause His Spirit to live in your hearts because you have to faith in Jesus! Amen.



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