

- WELCOME TO -
MAURICE REFORMED CHURCH

...following God, loving others...

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Lessons from the Farm



SERMON SERIES WITH PASTOR JEREMY
SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER
MAURICE REFORMED CHURCH

Daily Devotionals
WEEK OF: SEPTEMBER 24-30

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

MATTHEW 13:24, GENESIS 1:26-31 -- PLANTING THE GOOD SEED

Today I invite you to go back to the beginning. Yes, to the very beginning of the world as we know it when God spoke everything into existence. Where God made everything from nothing and planted the seed of His kingdom. God sowed the seed of truth into the lives of Adam and Eve. It's hard for us to imagine the garden of Eden. The place of perfection on this earth that we have never experienced. We can't even fathom what it would have been like to walk with God face to face without fear or tremble, but in love and friendship. Let's go back together to that place of perfect peace and beauty as God creates and God walks with His creation.

As we continue with the farming analogy, we see that God plants His seed into fertile soil and it blossoms and grows. Adam and Eve are created to be in a relationship with God & it is beautiful. They have a job to take care of the creation and they have guidelines of what they should and should not do. God, the Creator, knows what is best for them and shows them exactly what that is. After a day of rest, God comes to walk and talk with the perfect seeds he has planted and finds that something else was planted in the perfection. This wasn't a surprise to Him, but I can only imagine the pain in His heart as He sees the beautiful field filled with weeds.

Fast forward in creation and we still see that the field is filled with righteous and unrighteous. Jesus Christ came to bridge the division that came between God and humanity and now those who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are clothed in righteousness. It is only by the grace of God that He is filling the field of His Kingdom with good seeds of faith and truth again. We see the seeds throughout scripture & we see the commitment God has to His chosen people. Today as you look at the fields of grain, I encourage you to think about the seed of faith that is planted in your heart and how you are called to be a flourishing and fruitful plant in the field of the Kingdom of God!

SONG:

"Eden (Isn't It Just Like You?)" - Benjamin William Hastings

KIDS' QUESTIONS:

Adam and Eve walked and talked with God. Do you walk and talk with Him too? How does that make you feel? Could you tell a friend about it?

ADULT/YOUTH QUESTIONS:

How would you describe walking and talking to God with someone who doesn't know God?

PRAYER:

Lord, I pray that the seeds of your Kingdom will grow into strong, flourishing plants that produce much fruit!

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TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

MATTHEW 13:25, GENESIS 3:1-7 -- PLANTING OF THE BAD SEED

The perfect creation was up and running smoothly and then something happened. Another seed was sown into the garden, and it began to take root and change everything. The Devil planted the seeds of doubt and deception, and they grew quickly within the heart of Adam and Eve. So fast indeed, that they almost immediately followed the words of the enemy that encouraged their prideful hearts. To be fair, who wouldn't want to be like God? Unfortunately, the grass was definitely not greener on the other side of the fence. Truth be told, because of this choice, literal weeds began to grow on the perfect landscape of God's creation. The pleasant work that God had created us for was no longer easy and pleasant. The perfect relationship that God had created us for with Him and each other became broken. Our world today is still causing chaos in relationships between man and woman. Our culture has turned it into a competition rather than a partnership where we each use our God given abilities and gifts to benefit the other.

It's not just human relationships that face a division, but our relationship with a Holy God. Walking face to face with a Holy God is no longer possible and the gap is far too wide for us to get across. Like we said yesterday, there is only one way to bridge that divide and it is Jesus Christ. We will not bridge that divide by baptism, church attendance or membership, or even the amount of Bible verses we have hidden in our heart. These things are good and a part of honoring God with our lives, but none of them bridge the gap. The weed seeds caused the perfect field of God's creation to be changed and impacted, but it wasn't a lost cause. God had a plan, and we know His plan will always succeed.

As we finish up today, I encourage you to think about the sin in your life. The weeds that you sow, the weeds that have impacted your life, and the weeds that you have used to impact others. I pray that we will learn to get rid of the weeds in our life through the power of Jesus Christ and that we will also learn to never throw weeds into the lives of others. The reality is that we have only experienced a field littered with weeds. We don't know what it's like to live in a clean and pure field of grain. My prayer is that we can each see the weeds around us and not get caught up in being a weed ourselves.

SONG:

"The Narrow Way" - Steffany Gretzinger

KIDS' QUESTIONS:

Have you ever thought of your sins as weeds? Unwanted, taking over the good things God has given you? What weeds do you need to get rid of in your life? Ask God for help!

ADULT/YOUTH QUESTIONS:

Ask your friends and family what sins they see in your life. Remember this is anything outside the plan of God.

PRAYER:

Lord, I pray that you keep me aware of the sins in my life, and by the blood of Jesus, that you clothe them with your righteousness.

[illegible]

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

MATTHEW 13:26-28, 2 TIMOTHY 3:1-9 -- THE LOOK-A-LIKE PLANTS

I have a confession to make, I do not have a green thumb. In fact, if I had to identify a flower or a weed, I would come in last place. I am that person who, when asked to go weed the garden or the flowers, would ask, "Is this a weed?" to almost every plant. To be fair, there are some weeds that look a lot like plants, but in the end, the fruit will always prove what the plant truly is. That is the same in our parable today.

The Greek word is Zizanion and it refers to a wheat like weed called Darnel. If you are like me and don't know much about plants, let me explain what Darnel is like. Darnel is said to look very much like wheat, especially in the growth stages. Once the ear or grain appears, that is when the differences come out. The Darnell plant produces a black seed, and to top it off, the seed is poisonous. We get a small picture of that in 2 Timothy where it talks about having a form of godliness, but not living in its true power.

For our lives today this can easily be seen as someone who can act the right way, but have a heart that is far from God. They can be nice and kind and caring, but not truly hold to the teachings of Jesus or the truth of the gospel. It could also be someone, like in 2 Timothy, that may claim allegiance to God, but their lifestyle is far from reflecting His truth. Whether in word or deed, it can be easy to look and sound like you know Jesus, but the Lord looks at the heart and knows the true motives of everything you do.

The final warning about this is that the seed produced from the Darnell plant is poisonous, and so is a fake Christian life. Do not be deceived, God will not be mocked. A life that says it follows Jesus, yet does not actually follow His truth, bears poisonous fruit. This lifestyle can bring death to the people around it because they will intake that seed and start living the same godless life. Be careful to not be deceived and to not deceive anyone with false faith, but be a true plant that bears Godly fruit rather than a look-a-like that brings death.

SONG:

"That's the Power - Acoustic" - Hillsong Worship
Benjamin William Hastings

KIDS' QUESTIONS:

Some weeds may not seem like weeds! Just like some people who are nice and kind and claim to believe can be deceiving, just like a weed. How do you know that you are not a weed, but a TRUE plant for God? What does that look like?

ADULT/YOUTH QUESTIONS:

How do you know that you are a true plant for God and not a deceived look-a-like?

PRAYER:

Lord, I pray that the faith I reflect is an authentic reflection of you and not just a form of godliness that doesn't use your power.

[illegible]

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

MATTHEW 13:28-29, PSALM 1:1-6 -- GROWING TOGETHER

This part of the parable describes the current state in the kingdom of God. The good plants and the poisonous plants are growing together. Another problem with the plants looking similar is that it's hard to determine which ones need to go and how many of the good plants will be harmed in the process. Our world is full of those who follow and those who do not follow and if we took the role of gardener here, we would be in trouble. Like I said earlier, I can't tell the difference between plants that don't look alike, let alone those that do look alike. So for now, in the field of the kingdom, there are weeds and wheat that grow side by side and we wait for the harvest.

Today, I want to encourage you as you live among the weeds to not be like the weeds. We are called to be wheat and to produce an abundance of good seed in the Kingdom of God. It's not going to be easy. The Darnel will be fighting for the nutrients in the soil and the sunlight and the water and could often feel like they are trying to choke out the life in our own life, but God knows that even in the temporary struggle, we will survive and produce in the Kingdom of God.

Finally, take a look at Psalm chapter 1 today. In the midst of a field that is mixed with weeds, be the wheat that delights in the law of the Lord and not in the counsel of the wicked. Be the one who is planted by the stream of life and not withered. Be who God created you to be regardless of the things and people around you that are trying to tell you otherwise. Remain faithful, and in the end, it will be clear who the true wheat is and who the Darnel is.

SONG:

"Till I Found You" - Phil Wickham

KIDS' QUESTIONS:

Who did God create you to be? Don't let the world distract you from being that person! Talk with your family about what this looks like.

ADULT/YOUTH QUESTIONS:

How does it feel living in a world that seems to be filling up more and more with ungodly behavior? How can you stand firm on Jesus Christ in the midst of that culture?

PRAYER:

Lord, may I be strong for you in a culture that is gradually going away from you.

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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

MATTHEW 13:30, 25:31-46 -- WE ARE NOT LIKE EACH OTHER

In a life where the rain falls on the unrighteous and the righteous it can feel like what's the point? What's the point when bad things happen to "good" people and really bad people seem to succeed and not face any consequences? God tells us to wait for the proper time and then everything will be made right. God encourages to not be so short sighted, but to take a look at the big picture that He can see. Yes, for a short time it may seem that the wicked and the ungodly are winning, but in the end, they will receive the consequence which is due them.

We also know that in scripture Jesus warned the religious people to not be so confident in their self-righteous faith, because in the end, it is God who will judge and He will throw some of those thought to be godly people into the lake of eternal destruction. In the end, God will collect the wheat and bring it into the barn of the Kingdom of God and He will take the Darnel and he will burn it in the fire. It's not too hard to see that picture of heaven and hell as God talks about the harvest of the plants. The plants that bore the seed of life that God planted in the beginning and restored through Jesus will be the plants that enjoy the eternal storehouses of the Lord. The plants that grew with the seed of deception sown by the enemy will find themselves destroyed for eternity in the fire.

The harsh reality of the passages today shows that not everyone will inherit the kingdom of God and not everyone that looks like a believer is a believer. We may be able to fool the people here on this earth for awhile, but we will never fool God, and in the end, it is God who determines our eternity. Make sure today the right seed is growing in you.

SONG:

"Let Every Heart" - Bryan & Katie Torwalt

KIDS' QUESTIONS:

God is our almighty gardener! He planted you and will help you grow. You need to watch out for those weeds and focus on the sun (son)! Sometimes life may not seem “fair” but in the end, God will be sure that when you live a life for Him, you will be rewarded!

ADULT/YOUTH QUESTIONS:

What are some of the topics that people inside and outside of church are being deceived about in our culture today?

PRAYER:

Lord, I pray that you will help me truly see what is growing in me and then help me to spread that right seed to those around me.

[illegible]

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

MATTHEW 13:24-30 -- LEARNING TO DEAL WITH THE WEEDS

Take a moment to review all that God has taught you this week through this parable. We started talking about the perfection of the creation of God and how humanity was created to be in a perfect relationship with God. Shortly after that, we know that the enemy came to steal, kill, and destroy all that he can. He deceived humanity and the perfect creation was no more. Not only did this introduce sin and the possibility of disobedience, but it also broke all of creation. All of a sudden there was pain, sorrow, sickness, and death. The unity was broken and now there was arguing, pride, and jealousy. Sin truly messed everything up, but God had a plan to deal with it. Since God created the world in the first place, He is the only one that could fix it when someone else broke it. So, he started a sacrificial system that ended thousands of years later with the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. It is through that action and our reception of the gift that we can be assured of eternity in heaven with God. Until then we live in a broken place.

From the moment that Adam and Eve disobeyed God, the world has been full of righteous and unrighteous. In the story of Noah, we hear that only his family was righteous. Can you imagine living in a place where you are the only believer? In the promised land there are nations that desire the followers of God to die and in the New Testament the religious want the followers of Jesus to die. In this world we will have trouble, but the bible tells us to not fear for Jesus has overcome the world. Yes, we are planted in a vast field mixed with weeds, but do not despair for you can and will produce the crop that God intends for your life. Take heart and keep living a faithful life and do what God has called you to do to bring some unity into this broken world.

Finally, praise God for your salvation through Jesus Christ. Shout for joy knowing that you will one day be in eternity with Him. That all the bad and the negative will fall away and will never be again. It is so encouraging to know that we are watched over and cared for by the Creator of all things. Live in praise today as you bear fruit for the Kingdom!

SONG:

"All Creatures (Sing the Harmony)" - Shane & Shane

KIDS' QUESTIONS:

Sin will always be in this world. What can you do this week to shine your light for Jesus?

ADULT/YOUTH QUESTIONS:

Sin will always be in this world. What can you do this week to shine your light for Jesus?

PRAYER:

Lord, may I always be a fruitful plant for you no matter what comes my way.

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