

Weeds and Wheat: 19th of July, 2026

I have found that distinguishing between a weed and a plant is not easy. From my perspective, it is often difficult to tell which is a weed and which is a plant. In many cases, they look alike and are almost identical.

During my search on Google, I found a way to distinguish weeds from plants.

When you pull them up, the one that comes out easily from the soil is usually the plant, and the one that does not come out easily is often the weed.

Another way to define weeds and plants is simple: pull up everything, and whatever grows back is a weed. It may sound like a good idea, but there is a risk, and it does not sound convincing.

In our Gospel today, Jesus tells a story.

A farmer sowed wheat seeds in his field. While he was sleeping, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat. When the wheat and the weeds germinated and grew together, the servants asked their master, "Do you want us to go out and pull up all those weeds from your good wheat field?" Matthew 13: 24 – 28.

In the story, the servants think that he could identify the weeds and asked permission to remove them. But the master refused to give permission even though an enemy came and sowed the weeds.

In this parable, there is the master, the servants, and the angels. It was all good, then the evil one came at night to sow the weeds. Suddenly, there is a weed among us in the field. The work of the evil one.

Not all can be good, easy, or angelic. There is always good and evil, the Holy Spirit versus the evil spirit, the righteous and the enemy.

Perhaps because of the enemy, we are able to distinguish righteousness, goodness, and holiness. Because there are weeds, we recognize plants.

Do we need the enemy to understand who we are? Do we need evil to identify our own identity? We are thriving to be good and avoid evil. because we know that there is evil one and the work of evil for us.

Throughout history, the concept of a conflict between good and evil has been present, often depicted as the Holy Spirit opposing demonic forces. Biblical imagery continues to portray this struggle as Christ versus the Antichrist. According to Scripture, those who are not for us are against us.

This conflict, or battle, continues through the image of the enemy as reflected in the Pharisees, who were teachers of the law. They saw themselves as the wheat and regarded the Gentiles as weeds.

They considered beggars, sick women who were bleeding, and lepers as weeds in society and in the church.

The Pharisees thought that such people should be removed quickly, for their lives were useless and unclean.

They believed they were the wheat because they were considered holy, for they kept the law of Moses and separated themselves from the unclean. They lived within the myth of wheat and weeds, innocence and enemy.

Whoever the weeds or the enemies are, the main issue in this story is: what should we do with the weeds before the harvest?

Servants says to the Master in the story “Do you want us to go and pull them up?” Matthew 13: 28.

In Jesus’ time, it was customary that anyone considered a weed—anyone who sinned or was condemned by the law—must be judged according to the law.

Weeds were often judged and punished through violence and physical or social abuse.

This attitude is still seen today in the relationship between Palestine and Israel. The judgment seems inevitable, and the instinct is to pull out the weeds immediately.

The parable says that God will deal with weeds wisely at the time of harvest.

God will sort out the weeds and the wheat at the end of the harvest. Any suspected weeds will be handled by the angels, the harvesters, who will place them in the blazing furnace.

Matthew's Gospel makes this clear, and we are surrounded by examples of Jesus' message.

According to Matthew, Jesus came to seek the lost. He is the shepherd who searches for the stray sheep, leaving the ninety-nine behind to find the lost one. He risked his life for the lost.

He continued to teach and preach, giving people the opportunity to listen and bear fruit—even for the sake of one lost person. Jesus also teaches us to forgive seventy-seven times when the man asked how many times forgive the sins of the brother.

We simply do not know who is a weed and who is wheat.

We have no right to judge or condemn others, for Jesus never condemned anyone.

This parable reminds us that we are all accountable before God.

There are times when we deny Jesus like Peter, times when we doubt like Thomas, and times when we simply do not understand what Jesus is doing.

We can be both sinners and saints.

We cannot condemn one another while we ourselves need God's mercy.

Who is in and who is out in the kingdom of God is not our decision.

Judgment is not our job. Punishment is not our job. Those belong to God.

At the harvest, God will sort it all out. He will deal with those who work against His Spirit.

God, who is generous, will also be just with whatever is truly weed.

Since we do not truly know who is weed and who is wheat—even if we think we do—we cannot pull them out.

In Romans, the Apostle Paul says that we are here to produce the fruit of the Spirit. We are all children of God, living according to the Spirit and producing the fruit of the Spirit. We are to grow the fruit of the Spirit.

Here I have a homemaker's confession that reflects Jesus' teaching here.

She says:

I don't clean windows because I love birds and don't want them to run into a clean window and get hurt.

I don't wax floors because I'm afraid a guest will slip and get hurt, and then I'd feel terrible.

I don't disturb cobwebs because I want every creature to have a home of its own.

I don't spring-clean because I love all seasons and don't want the others to get jealous.

I don't put things away because my husband will never be able to find them again.

I don't make gourmet meals when I entertain because I don't want my guests to feel stress about what to serve me in return.

I don't iron because I choose to believe the label when it says "Permanent Press."

And finally, I don't pull weeds in the garden because I don't want to get in God's way. He is an excellent designer.

In God's garden, weeds grow alongside the wheat.

By God's grace, we are given time to grow, to learn from each other, and eventually to thrive as Jesus' cherished, fruitful disciples.

Our challenge is this: don't weed.

Because each one of us is precious.

We are the ones whom the Son of God loves, for whom He died, and to whom He rose.

Amen.