

The Enemy

Romans 8:12-25, Matthew 13:24-30 & 36-43

If you put petrol in a diesel engine, don't blame the manufacturer for your monstrous repair bill. It was never meant to run on petrol. So, if human life was meant to run on love (respect, compassion, cooperation, mercy and commitment) don't blame God if you run into strife trying to live selfishly. Life running on love was always God's intention and through Christ he opened this up in what he called the kingdom of God. But God has an enemy. The figure of the devil has been lampooned so often that it is hard to take it seriously, but no one can read the Bible without meeting up with the idea that God has an enemy. Personal experience and observation back this up. By whatever name, there is one who sows weeds among the wheat. There is a destructive power pitted against the Creator. Not to be identified with any particular group, or nation, there is a rebellious spirit in the human heart that opposes God's intended way of life.

Now those who, by faith, belong to God's realm live side-by-side with those who are acting as agents of the enemy. Wheat and weeds grow together within our own hearts and lives. Ultimately though, there comes a day of reckoning whether that's a day on the calendar or a figurative expression. The world was made to run God's way, mess it up and face the consequences or respond to the opportunity opened up by Jesus and live intimately with God, redeemed, forgiven and empowered by God's own Spirit. Live each day in anticipation of living in a transformed creation characterized by peace, justice, goodness, love and joy, and, although it means struggle and strife, seek, by the Spirit, to live that way every day.

- What forces do you see in the world today that are opposed to the way of life that God wants for us?
- Why is it important that we do not identify Satan with any particular person, group or nation?
- How important do you think the theme of God's judgment is for the Christian faith?
- How important for your faith is the theme of future glory as expressed in Romans 8:18-25?

Rev Ron Potter

Romans 8:12-25

¹² Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. ¹⁵ The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “*Abba, Father.*” ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Present Suffering and Future Glory

¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.

²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

Matthew 13:24-30

The Parable of the Weeds

²⁴ Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵ But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶ When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. ²⁷ “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?’

²⁸ “‘An enemy did this,’ he replied.

“The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’

²⁹ “‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰ 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.’”

Matthew 13:36-43

The Parable of the Weeds Explained

³⁶ Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.”

³⁷ He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

⁴⁰ “As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age.

⁴¹ The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. ⁴² They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.