

Title: “The Farmer Still Reigns”

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Matthew 13:24-30

7/19/2026

Service Readings: Isaiah 44:6–8; Rom. 8:18–27; Matt. 13:24–30, 36–43

The Farmer knows what He is doing even when the field looks like a mess.

Message:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

²⁴ He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, ²⁵ but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. ²⁶ So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. ²⁷ And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ ²⁸ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ ²⁹ But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, “Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.”’”

God’s field extends to the four corners of the Earth. Carved out of that field is a small section of ground that has been entrusted to St. Mark. And within that portion are smaller plots entrusted to each of us. Nothing in this field is more precious to us than the people God has entrusted to our care. This first includes our own children. We dedicate our lives to them. We nurture them in the faith. We bring them to the Word. We pray for them. We teach them. We encourage them. We baptize them. We bring them to Christ’s Word. We kneel beside their beds. We teach them to pray. We bring them to his table. We encourage them when they struggle. Our plot includes those in our congregations. We pray for them, encourage them, hold them accountable for their faith.

Yet our concern does not end with the people under our roof. We pray for extended families, our neighbors, our coworkers, our community, and even those we have never met. We pray, as Paul urges us, “for all people,” that they would come to know Christ. But as we look across God’s field, we can’t ignore what we see. We see unbelief. We see hearts hardened against God’s Word. We watch people we love drift from Christ. Sometimes we even see faith grow cold within the Church itself. And if we are being honest, we do not have to look very far before we discover that the weeds are not only out there. They grow very close to home. They surround the people we love, and they expose the sin that still clings to our own hearts.

And that is why we pray so fervently. We pray because we know what is at stake. Eternal life is not a small matter. We pray because we know our limitations. We can teach. We can encourage. We can bring our children to Baptism and to the Lord’s Table. We can open the Scriptures in our homes. But we cannot create faith. We cannot sustain faith by our own strength. Those gifts belong to God alone. And that helplessness is painful. Especially when the people we love seem to wander farther from Christ. Little by little, almost without noticing it, we begin to believe that the future of God’s field—and especially this little plot He has entrusted to us—depends upon us. That is exactly where the servants in Jesus’ parable find themselves. That is one of the temptations Jesus exposes in this parable. It is a sin that is subtle; a sin that is difficult to discern and even repent of. For we care deeply about God’s field, and even more deeply about our intimate plot of land. We can’t stand to see the weeds, especially when we *just know* that there is something we can

do, something we *must* do! “Master, do you want us to go pull them up?” To be faithful to God means to go out into the field and tend it. If that is being faithful, how can it also mean that we are to let the weeds continue to grow?

What Jesus teaches us is not that we should stop caring. What he is teaching us is that faithfulness is actually caring *deeply* for God’s field without trying to become its Farmer.

Notice how the servants actually challenge God. “Did you not sow good seed?” As if to question whether he knew what he was doing. Or maybe, just maybe, they could have done better! This echoes back to Genesis 3, doesn’t it? If God is really good, if he is really in control, why does the field look like this? You see, this is where worry eventually goes. We don’t stop at “I’m anxious” but “I’m beginning to doubt whether God manages his kingdom well.”

What is the answer to this sin, then? It is not simply to trust the Farmer. Instead, it is that we *can* trust the Farmer because he has already shown us who he is. From the very beginning, the Farmer has known what the enemy would do; he has never once been surprised by the weeds. But instead of pulling them all up, he promised to make it right. He promised to restore what had become broken. And his promise was fulfilled on the cross.

On Good Friday, every servant might have concluded that the enemy had won, the weeds had prevailed, and God had lost control. But what appeared to be Satan’s greatest victory became the Farmer’s greatest harvest. God knew what he was doing in that first garden; he knew what he was doing at Calvary; he knew what he was doing throughout all time. He knows what he is doing in his Church today.

This week our Synod gathers in convention and many of God’s people will be praying for its work. We pray because those decisions matter. We pray for wisdom, faithfulness, and unity in the truth. But even there we remember what Jesus teach us today: Christ – not delegates, presidents, pastors, or conventions – is Lord of his Church. The future of God’s kingdom has never rested in human hands. The Farmer still reigns over his field.

And he knows what he is doing in your family: the names that keep you awake at night, the children you pray for. And he knows the grandchildren you worry about and the people you long to see restored to faith. He knows every weed you see growing in his field. He not abandoned his field. The Farmer is still at work.

This does not mean we stop praying. It doesn’t mean we stop teaching. It doesn’t even mean we stop encouraging each other in faith. The servants still have work to do in the field. We are still called to scatter the seed of God’s Word, to care for those he has entrusted to us, and to faithfully fulfill the vocations he has given us. But we do so differently – not as anxious owners but as faithful servants, because the harvest does not depend on us. The harvest belongs to him.

The same Savior who planted his Word in you is the savior who preserves you through his Word. The same savior who gave his life for the Church is the savior who will not abandon it. The same savior who walked out of the grave on Easter morning will one day gather his people into his eternal kingdom.

The enemy may sow weeds. The world may appear broken. Our own hearts may cause us to doubt. But the Farmer still reigns.

And the Farmer knows exactly what He is doing.

Please pray with me.

You have planted Your Word among us and gathered us into Your field by the grace of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Forgive us when we become anxious servants, when we carry burdens that belong only to You, and when we forget that You remain the Lord of the harvest.