

Reflection A brief revisiting of the Parable

Do Not Weed. Reimagine the World as Inclusive.

The parable is about wheat and weeds and is like all parables, a literary device that is more than simple prose because it imagines a new world and it has like all parables a sting in the tail that challenges the interpretation, As a way into this I want to read you the first verse of an Iona hymn that gives us a picture of what this challenge might be

The challenge of the parable might be to

*Shake up the morning, let the dawn undress,
Let dew re-glisten nature's loveliness;
Waken the songbird and unseal the throat
That greets the daybreak with a crystal note.
Praise to the Lord, whose morning we inherit;
Praise creation's fuse, the Holy Spirit;
Praise to the Son who rises with the dawn,
Leaving graveclothes scarcely three days worn.*

As Fei reminded us last week the weeds and the wheat look alike until late in life and thus the parable is a call to not weed too early. We also heard last week that when mono culture is the economic aim the timing of the weeding is crucial for the future of the planet and the impact of pollution. The third point I want to remind us of is the importance of difference or as Iain McGilchrist suggests there is value in the coincidence of opposites that lies beneath and through all differences. It is collectively challenged again in the charge to Not Weed.

B Brandon Scott, a founding member of the Jesus Seminar, and a student of the study of the parables, says: 'The parables give us access to the way Jesus re-imagined the possibility of living, of being in the world. They are not just religious, not just about God, although they are that too... they are multifaceted re-imaginings of life, of the possibilities of life'. (Scott 2001:6).

So, if we opt rather for the 'critique' and the 're-imagining' then we will have grasped Matthew's understanding of Jesus' purpose: To call his hearers to see the world differently. And in keeping with the proposition offered by the parables the central call of the parables can be summed up in the phrase... 'God's reign is not an other-worldly proposition.' In that phrase we have the challenge to see first that this thing or this Way of living and being is one that constitutes the world, It is not imposed upon it, it is not wheat or weeds it is wheat and weeds.

I want to suggest that the human species as a conscious being relies on the 'Coincidence of opposites' which is necessary for us to make the choices inherent in a free life. Or A free will. Doubt is an essential in opposition to certainty. Essential because they each enable the existence of the other, in fact McGilchrist would say they are both a part of the same thing. They are common in their cause. The issue is that we become alienated from real life when we create them as extremes. They are required not as separate definitions but rather as catalysts for the dynamic living moving balancing of them. They are fundamental requirements as long as they are constantly subject to the other not separate from. The prejudices are the extremes concretized and in the religious world they become dogma.

Matthew's so-called 'point' of the story is Don't weed! Deal inclusively. Why? Because it is in the midst of the mess of conflictive coexistence that the Sacred is also revealed. Not in some

hypothetical idealistic situation where 'good seed' or 'proper' congregations' or 'real Christians' grow in pure isolation. That is not reality? That is not the Jesus Way of. However simple and marketable economically it may seem.

This does not suggest confrontation should be advocated, because if McGilchrist is right confrontation is a divisive action rather than a critique of a way forward. But it does mean that where there is confrontation: we are called never to cease to act graciously or to have compassion, never write people off, never uproot people in your mind or attitude by treating them as no longer of any worth. Which, in reality; can be somewhat difficult at times.

The place we find ourselves in in life might seem like this

"Often the peace we seek is asking God to make things easy for us, to spare us trouble, to make us safe or to be relieved of the precariousness of things and we do this without an awareness that such safety, such relief, would actually spare us of God, and prevent the event of God from happening."

Doug Lendrum

I offer you a poem as invitation to imagine what a dynamic life in the balancing of opposites might look like.... Being unafraid of weeds with the wheat by engaging responsibly with their dependence upon each other.

The coincidence of opposites

*Caught in the kaleidoscope pain of love
I am confronted by the beauty in life.
Swept away in gratitude for graced glimpses of white dove,
wallowing in companionship with comforting strife,
mesmerized by constancy of declaration above.*

*Serendipitously your created beauty calls
deeply carrying me far away un-healed
to a place beyond and yet within the simple and complete falls
Drawn by sunsets the dark clouds of distance are revealed
Yet still promise near the peaceful peaks and mountain valley hauls*

*The coloured strands of vision dance
and glow like every changing form
bouncing off barren branches and fluttering leaves of chance
Your beauty is revealed in the gift of magnificence born
like a cloaking of the soul brought to bear askance*

*In loving, consolation, affirmation, healing,
challenge and gratitude.
A dance of allurement in the heart of mystery, appealing,
Born a life of beauty, of mind and latitude
beyond mundane, a life of sacred unity revealing.*

The coincidence of opposites

D Lendrum

Do not weed, reimagine, be inclusive. Amen