

## Passion and Patience – Wheat and Weeds

*Genesis 28:10-19a; Psalm 139:1-11 ,23-24; Romans 8:12-25; Matthew 13:24-43*

I invite you to look at some of the Scriptures printed in front of us as I go through today's message.

V 17 in the Genesis 28 reading – Jacob awakes and says: *“How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.”*

Churches are that for God too – because Jesus tore the veil of the temple in two and opened the gate of heaven. Jesus told Peter that upon this rock he would build His church and that the gates of Hades would not prevail against it.

- Churches are houses of God.
- Churches are houses of Prayer.
- And through Christ's presence churches are gates of/to heaven.

To the church in Philadelphia in Rev 3: 8 Jesus says: *“I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.”*

**Romans 8** our second reading.

V 12 *Therefore* (the therefore is obviously following from the previous verses saying that if we do not have the Spirit of God in us we do not belong to Christ and when we belong to Christ our spirit is alive because of righteousness).

So *Therefore... we have an obligation – but it is not to the flesh.* V 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.*

How many of us live by obliging the flesh? Putting the deeds of the flesh to death is part of living out our salvation in fear and trembling. Only we can do that – no one else can do it for us.

V 14 *“For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.”*

In applying this verse to our lives it is good to ask: who leads us?

- Our flesh
- or
- God's Spirit?

V 23 a bit further down. *“Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.”*

This reminds us that, like someone waiting for an inheritance, – it will come but we are to live led by the Spirit of God in the meantime – for to live by the flesh is death. Remember back in v 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.*”

Now let's look at the Gospel and we'll go to v 37 where Jesus is explaining the parable of the wheat and weeds.

He makes it clear He is the one who sows good seed.

The field is the world. And the good seeds are the people who have chosen to belong to the Kingdom of God.

The weeds are those who follow the evil one.

In vv 41-2 He also makes it clear that there will be a time when the weeds are gathered and burned but that v 43 *the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.* This is our inheritance – through the adoption given to us by our heavenly Father. But to know that we are in that place we have the benchmark to compare and check up on how we are doing with this.

We can ask:

- Are we wheat or weeds?
- Are we people who live by the Spirit of God?
- Or are we people who live by the flesh and cause sin and do evil?

So a quick recap from the readings:

Churches are God's house – a place for God to dwell. I have heard one person say about one of our churches, God is here.

As it is God's house – all that is said and done is for God and to please God – not us.

And in this place is an open door of heaven through the death and resurrection of Jesus. So it is a spiritual place.

We are to live by the Spirit – not by the flesh and when we are led by the Spirit of God we know we are children of God.

We live in a world where there are both wheat and weeds. Jesus came and opened the door to the kingdom of God for us - but the enemy also comes along and tries to steal and rob us. We are to be alert to that.

John 10: 9-10 Jesus said:

*“I am the gate; whoever enters through Me will be saved ... The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”*

When wheat and weeds are together in a place we know them by their fruit. What fruit are we exhibiting?

Wheat or weed?  
Kingdom of God or  
Kingdom of darkness?

For if we are led by the Spirit of God we will exhibit the fruit of the Spirit. Love, peace joy, goodness, kindness, patience, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control.

We can always check our fruit and seek to nourish and multiply it. It is rather important that we do; so that we do not lapse into being lukewarm in our walk with Jesus or grow stale.

A passage that has had a deep impact on me and is one that I use to check how my walk with Jesus is going is Rev 3:15-18.

*“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! 16 So, because you are lukewarm – neither hot nor cold – I am about to spit you out of my mouth. 17 You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. 18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich’ and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.”*

Jesus does not want us to miss out on all He has for us.

We get an idea of the passion Jesus has for us – He is hot for us. No one hangs on a Cross, after unspeakable torture, out of love without that love being a burning fire within – for us!

He does not ‘do’ lukewarm – in fact He so hates lukewarm that he vomits those who are lukewarm out of His mouth. Jesus is not lukewarm in His love for us.

His love for us is fiery, it is real, and it is strong – similar to the love described in Song of Songs as strong as death.

*Song of Songs 8:6 Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame.*

This is the love our Saviour deserves – from us – burning passionate, unquenchable love.

I can’t make anyone passionate for Jesus. But I know that it is important for you and I to stay ‘hot’ in our love for Him.

I can’t make any return to their First Love.

But I can offer some opportunities for each of us to be fired up again.

For passion wanes with time and familiarity - and needs stirring up again.

It is up to each one of us to choose how we renew our passion.

As leader of this congregation I seek to offer ways that fire up your love for Jesus and the coming missions are just that – opportunities.

Archbishop Ben is a man with a passion for Jesus who lives were he could be killed for his faith at any moment. He and his wife, Gloria, have suffered greatly for their faith and have turned that suffering into a greater passion for Jesus.

Hanging around with passionate people feeds our passion.

Hanging around with, and letting weeds speak into our faith, saps our passion for Jesus.

How much do we want to take up the coming mission opportunities and get as much out of them as we can?

Are we willing to miss a day at work, a night in front of the TV, or warmth and comfort at home, to be at the events and rallies where the Spirit of God will be moving in passion and power?

When the mission team is visiting us are we willing to come forward and have prayer one to one, especially in order to increase our passion? Are we thirsty and wanting to get as much as we can from their visit?

For Missions in a church are about reviving our faith and giving it life again. They are a passion boost – like a vitamin drink. But they only work if we drink from them, if we engage in them.

How long is it since this church had a mission team visit?

Do you remember the days of a mission coming to parish and staying a week and the whole parish would prepare and be part of it?

That was part of regular parish life to enthuse and to take the Gospel out to the local neighbours with passion.

The people in this visiting team have paid their own airfares or travel to come and be with us. They have given up work, time with families for the time to be with us. They are doing this for us – because of their love for Jesus.

In thinking about our own relationship with Jesus we are to remember that we are not passive in it and in our journey to eternity.

In any relationship: When one party loves another deeply, passionately, they long for the other to return the love deeply.

You and I have been chosen to be the Bride for Jesus – yes adopted children of the Father, but also a spotless, righteous Bride who has eyes only for our future bridegroom – Jesus the Son of God who has done all for us.

What are we willing to do for Him?

What are we willing to do to change our temperature from lukewarmness to hot?

And then are we willing to do what we can to keep it on the boil?

For Him?

For that is our part in the relationship.

Let us pray: