

Pentecost 7 – July 19, 2020  
Text: Matthew 13:36-43  
Theme: Are the Disciples Dense?

**They were just a group of regular guys, Jesus' first disciples.**

**None of them were Rhodes Scholars so I don't expect amazing prose to roll off their tongues or profound thoughts to be uttered, but good heavens, sometimes they just seem so dense. By the time Matthew 13 comes along, they have been with Jesus for a couple years, so one would think that they would have mastered the basics. The kingdom of Heaven is like a field planted with good seed and an enemy came in and over sowed it with weeds. God made the world holy and perfect and Satan introduced sin and brokenness. Duh. Why do the disciples need this explained?**

**This reminds me of something Danya says to me occasionally when I am talking about something at church that seems obvious to me but is not so obvious to her. She'll say, "Okay, but remember, you're the only one who lives there." It is often a temptation for pastors to assume that everyone knows and remembers all of the important teachings of Christianity. But when we do that, we risk the truth being overlooked. It is easy for pastors to forget that few people in his flock live immersed in God's Word like he does. Jesus, being the perfect shepherd, does not make that mistake and so, Jesus explains the parable. In fact, he explains the same message**

**again and again throughout the Gospels. God created the world to be perfect and holy. Satan introduced sin and brokenness. People followed Satan. Christ paid for the sin of the people by dying on the cross and suffering Hell. Now people still live in the midst of the brokenness but will be rescued when Christ returns.**

**It sounds so simple, but Satan counts on us thinking that it so simple that we don't need to hear it over and over again. That's why pastors sometimes preach complex sermons on the customs of the ancient Amalekites and the function of the Aorist case in the Greek New Testament. Pastors get bored talking about the same old thing week after week but that same old thing is the wheat of the field. The weeds are everything that obstructs our view of the wheat. The wheat is simple, beautifully simple. Jesus loves you so much that he was willing to die for you and be damned in your place. You sin much because you are weak. That sin damns you to Hell because you have failed to be holy as God is holy and that is what God demands for entry into paradise. But Jesus redeemed you. That is, he bought you back from Satan with his own life and soul. And that fact changes everything for you.**

**First, you can forgive yourself. You do and say stupid, sinful things and that is not okay, but it is 100% forgiven. God no longer**

**remembers the last stupid thing you did or said, so you can forget it too.**

**Second, you can forgive others. Since every sin has been paid off on the cross, no one owes you anything and you owe no one else anything. Holding grudges and keeping score is a waste of energy and a waste of time. I don't care if you are absolutely, completely in the right; I don't care, God doesn't care and you are wasting your time if you care.**

**Third, you can live a life of peace because you can see the wheat, and if you can see the wheat, you know what is important. All we have to care about is the wheat. Everything I do is wrapped up in the wheat. What can I do and say to make the wheat more evident to others? What can I do and say to make the wheat predominant in my life? What can I ignore, put aside and let go of because it is a weed and gets in the way of the wheat?**

**The disciples were not dense. They were just like us. The weeds were always grabbing their attention and trying to hide the wheat. Satan, the world and their sinful flesh was always trying to convince them that they had to keep careful track of the weeds and that the wheat would be fine on its own. Come on Judas, the wheat is fine, you better pay attention to the money bags. You better push**

**Jesus to take a political stand if we're going to get ahead. You better judge that woman for pouring expensive perfume on Jesus' feet when that money could have been used for us. The disciples were just like us. Church is great but I can go to Church anytime, right now I have to do this or that. I'll read the Bible when I finish this project. I'll go to Bible Study when they study something that interests me or when they meet on a night when I'm not busy. The disciples were just like us. They were not dense. They were distracted.**

**What's distracting you? What in the world is causing you to take your eyes off of Jesus? What in the world are you worrying about and thinking about instead of Jesus? Satan does not stop sowing weeds in the wheat field. It is his only chance. He cannot touch us, but if he can distract us enough to damage our faith, or even kill our faith, he wins. If he can divide us from one another and separate us with anger, bitterness, and hostility, he wins. Ignore the weeds. The weeds divide us. Focus on the wheat. The wheat unites us. The wheat makes us strong. The wheat tells us who we really are.**