

God Has a Purpose for Us

Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

In the Lord of the Rings trilogy the portrayal of good vs. evil can be viewed in a variety of ways. We can look at Sauron and his orcs as evil and hobbits, elves, dwarves, and men fighting for good. In the midst of this grand picture there is one character who is conflicted. This character demonstrates both good and evil qualities. During his good moments, this character is known as Sméagol. Sméagol helps Frodo to journey to Mordor to destroy the one evil ring and defeat Sauron. However, Gollum, the evil side of Sméagol wants the ring for himself. He wants the power. He'll do anything to get it, even betray the trust of

Frodo by leading him to a large Spider. Gollum portrays a side that is distasteful to say the least.

In fact, in the first film of the trilogy, Frodo asks Gandalf why they just don't kill Gollum since he was following the fellowship on their journey. Gandalf's response to Frodo was "Even the wise can not see the end of all things." Frodo was quick to judge. Gandalf's point was that we all have a purpose.

"Even the wise can not see the end of all things"

In our gospel text for today, Jesus uses the parable of the wheat and the tares to make a point. He talks about noxious weeds being sown among the wheat by an enemy. Servants want to remove the weeds, but the

master tells them no because they might pull up the wheat as well. In Palestine, the weed that was most likely sown in the midst of the wheat had a striking resemblance to the wheat making it difficult to differentiate from the two. Therefore, the master instructs his servants that the weeds will be separated from the wheat and burned during the harvest.

After two more parables, Jesus explains the meaning of the parable to his disciples. Again as we heard, the one who sows the good seed is the son of Man. The Devil is the evil one who sows the bad seed. At the end of the age God will separate the good seed from the bad seed.

This parable is rich with meaning. We can reflect on the seeds in our own lives. We all have good seeds and bad seeds sown within us. God

plants good seed in each of us and the devil comes along sowing bad seeds – the seeds of temptation, greed, hatred – just to name a few. Like Gollum we have our good and our bad moments. In Lutheran terms we are simultaneously saint and sinner. We do both good and bad things throughout our lives.

God sows good seed in us. We are good seed in a world where bad things happen.

Our gospel text and our epistle lesson from Romans make an important point for us to remember. We are in a time of waiting. In the Romans text, Paul reminds us that we have hope in God in the midst of sufferings of the present time. Jesus tells us in the explanation of the parable that the Son of Man's angels will separate the weeds from the wheat. We

have hope in God's promises as we wait and participate in the world surrounding us.

Margaret Guenther in her Living by the Word article in The Christian Century writes, "The juxtaposition of this Gospel text and a passage from Paul's letter to the Romans reminds us that we aren't there yet. Both passages suggest that this is a time of waiting, of letting this grow and unfold. But it's also a time of looking forward to some sort of resolution, an end time. We live in the "not yet." We are poised on the threshold."

We live in a world where evil things occur. We experience acts of terrorism. We see people hurting from abuse. We know of others who

have no food, shelter, and other basic necessities of life. We are surrounded by many injustices.

As we wait for God's kingdom, we can help. The good seeds that God has sown in us and spring in to action so we aren't passively waiting for God's kingdom. The seeds God planted in us can grow and blossom as we do God's work in the world.

Those good seeds blossom and grow at work camp, Christmas in April, or by helping with safe nights, or bringing coins for flood victims at VBS. The seeds sprout when we study scripture, pray, and take time for God daily. As disciples we are called to serve the neighbor. We all have a purpose. God has something for us to do. At time, we may not understand why God is leading us down a certain path. Only in

hindsight we may see God's purpose for us. We may not see the end in all things...and we may rush to judgments about what can and can not be done or who can or can not do certain things.

We have an important part in God's garden as we wait. Guenther writes, "On the one hand, the people of God are filled with the yearning for God; on the other, they are part of God's garden, active and growing toward the ultimate harvest. Both images remind us that we are living in a not yet time, that we live in a radical trust that God's promise will be fulfilled. We wait. We Labor. We hope for that which is not seen, but somehow knowing that what Paul calls our glorious liberty are children of God is all that truly matters."

"Even the wise can not see the end of all things."

We are God's seeds. We blossom while we wait. As we grow on our journey and wait for God's promises to be fulfilled let us be mindful that God has a purpose for each of us.

The peace of God which surpasses all human understanding be in your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus the Lord. Amen.