

On Tiptoe

[Romans 8:12-25](#)

[Matthew 13:24-30,36-43](#)

If I have a favorite passage from the Bible I think it must be today's reading from Romans 8 which has been rendered as "all creation's standing on tiptoe just to see the daughters and sons of God come into their own." All creation's standing on tiptoe just to see the daughters and sons of God come into their own.

Let me remind you of what Paul actually said,

"I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience."

There is some way in which human redemption and the redemption of creation are tied up together. As we are reconciled with God so too Creation is reconciled with God.

Yet sometimes it seems as though this idea of reconciliation and redemption is just a pipedream, or perhaps just not true at all. Rather than moving towards the reconciliation of humanity with one another and with the environment of which we are part, it seems like we are moving away.

So this year I find the parable of the wheat and the weeds oddly comforting. One morning the farmer woke up and realized that his field was full not just of wheat, but of weeds. One morning we woke up and realized that we were all being infected with a potentially deadly infection; One morning we woke up and realized that our society was full of inequality.; one morning we woke up and realized that life will never be the same.

And we want to do something about it, or we want someone else to do something about it. The farmhands were horrified and wanted to get out there and get rid of the weeds. But the farmer said no, wait until the harvest is ready and then we will harvest them both and separate them out.

I find this comforting because Jesus is acknowledging that the fulfilment of the kingdom of heaven takes time and that while we wait the wheat in us gets to hang out with a lot of weeds. It isn't a perfect situation. There will always be suffering. There will always be evil until the day that Paul is talking about when the glory of God is fully revealed.

Helen Keller said, "Although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it. My optimism, then, does not rest on the absence of evil, but on a glad belief in the

preponderance of good and a willing effort always to cooperate with the good, that it may prevail.”

None of us has or can expect a life which is all golden wheat. There will be weeds both in our individual lives and in our common life. And right now we can see those weeds pretty clearly. The restrictions of the pandemic have forced us back on ourselves so that we cannot distract ourselves in the normal way from the weeds of our individual lives and it has also exposed massive racial and economic inequalities which have also been underlined by acts of racial profiling and brutality.

I want to remind you that Jesus is telling a parable. This is a story and his explanation is bound up with the ideas and culture of the time. This year we will be hearing many parables from Matthews gospel and they tend to have the theme of separating the good from the bad, the bad then being sent to the biodigester at the landfill and the good going on to glory. It is easy for us to take this more literally than Jesus probably meant.

It is easy for us to start thinking that people who are racist or white supremacist are bad people who are going to hell and we should treat them like that. But no, the weeds and the wheat get to grow up together in the field of the reign of God. It is not up to us to try to pull them up – that is up to God. The weeds are still beloved of God the Creator. Yes, even your most disliked politician, whether is Donald or Nancy, is beloved of God.

Paul’s viewpoint offers a corrective to Matthew’s separate and burn policy: Paul says, “For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.” Now we are not in anyway separate from creation – we humans are creatures just like the possums and rats who prowl my yard at night – so if creation is to be set free from decay then that includes us and yes it includes all of us, the golden wheat and the not so golden weeds.

So that’s the good news. Creation is waiting for the fullness of redemption, just as we are, and it is coming. The possibly not-so-good news is that it is waiting for something – it is waiting for us! “The creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God.”

We don’t just get to passively hang out in the field putting up with the weeds until the angels show up at harvest time. Certainly it’s not our place to call them weeds and try to get rid of them, for all we know they’re a new species of wheat. But just as certainly, we get to do our own spiritual work. We get to be the children of God coming onto their own.

And what is “coming into our own”? It is actually living in the truth that we are the children of God, brothers and sisters of Jesus the Christ.

We use that phrase “children of God” very lightly. It’s a useful way of suggesting that we are all equal, all beloved. But there’s more to being a child of your parents than being loved by them.

Every now and again I look at a picture of my parents and ask Jill – who do I look more like? Am I more like my mother or my father? And of course the answer is both – I have my dad’s mouth but my mother’s chin – I have my father’s fast thinking and my mother’s tendency to stumble over words.

Being the daughter of Francis and Kathleen makes me who I am. It gives me basic genetic characteristics which are then formed by my life experience and my spiritual journey into who I am today. Being the daughter of God is something I get to grow into- something that I am formed into by the Holy Spirit working with and in me. As I grow spiritually, so the child of God is revealed more and more in me.

As we become more and more the royal priesthood, the holy nation – we are revealed as the children of God. As we draw closer to God and change the habits and thought patterns that prevent us from being fully Christ-like, then our true nature is revealed.

We are already reconciled with God. That’s taken care of, Jesus sorted all that out for us. We are already wheat. But wheat starts off looking a lot like grass and only over time grows into the recognizable ripe wheat which is good for harvesting and eating.

That is for us the process of sanctification – of being made holy – which is what the Holy Coach is all about – teaching us to live out our reconciliation in the world. Loving God, loving neighbor, loving ourselves which automatically means loving the planet. And in doing so we may have to let go of privileges that we have enjoyed. We may have to let go of white privilege, or of using more resources than we need.

In order to allow others to fully live, we have to live more simply. Our lives have to change. Our lives are changing and it may feel like suffering, but Paul reminds us that this too will pass, “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.” That is our hope.

The early church father Irenaeus said, “the glory of God is the human being fully alive.”

People of God, let us become fully alive.

Glory to God whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine;
Glory to God from generation to generation in the church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever.
Amen