

Weeds

Before we begin, I'd like to welcome our newest member to God's family, Cookie Catani, who was baptized last Sabbath. What a precious addition! We all know how good her cooking is, I can only imagine what it will be like in the Kingdom!

I'm sure everyone here knows what a weed is and just how annoying they can be, especially if you're trying to cultivate some type of garden. There's at least 35 varieties of weeds and dozens of sub-types within each variety. The definition of a weed from the on-line dictionary is: a plant that is not valued where it is growing, one that tends to overgrow or choke out more desirable plants, or an obnoxious growth, thing or person. A fitting definition.

I was out weeding Andrea's garden a few weeks back and came across "Marley's Pool" where she had planted several flowers. Not being pruned on a regular basis, weeds had sprung up and intermingled with the flowers. Me, not being a botanist, couldn't distinguish between the flowers and the weeds, as most of the weeds had flowers as well. I can be dangerous with a weed whacker so I let well enough alone and let her do the pruning. In any case, the weeds we'll be referring to are the ones mentioned as "tares" in Matthew 13.

Matthew 13:24-30- “And He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is compared to a man who was sowing good seed in his field; But while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed *tares* among the wheat, and went away. Now when the blades sprouted and produced fruit, then the tares also appeared. And the servants came to the master of the house *and* said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? Then where did these tares come from?’ And he said to them, ‘A man *who is* an enemy has done this.’ Then the servants said to him, ‘Do you want us to go out and gather them?’ But he said, ‘No, lest while you are gathering the tares, you *also* uproot the wheat with them. Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and at the time of the harvest, I will say to the reapers, “Gather the tares first, and bind them into bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my granary.”’

Tares in this instance probably refers to a weedy annual grass that occurs in grainfields and is difficult to distinguish between wheat and weed (darnel is the name). They spring up quite rapidly and intertwine with the wheat. This is supportive of the reference to them in this parable in Matthew 13. If God’s Harvest were today, could He distinguish us from the tares?

Genesis 2:15- “And the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and keep it.” The words “*dress*” and “*keep*” are instructions from God on how we are to tend to His Garden, in *us*.

Matthew 13:36-43- “And after dismissing the multitude, Jesus went into the house. Then His disciples came to Him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.” And He answered *and* said to them, “The One Who sows the good seed is the Son of man; And the field is the world; and the good seed, these are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one. Now the enemy who sowed them is the devil; and the harvest is *the* end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore, as the tares are gathered and consumed in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this age. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all the offenders and those who are practicing lawlessness; And they shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The one who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

We are not the One Who will do the separating, but we are told to “dress” and “keep” our gardens. We can be cognizant of the weeds and overgrowth that can encroach upon our lives from the world, *if* we are not alert. Are we getting our nutrients for growth from God’s Word or are we covered in the fertilizer of this world?

Proverbs 24:30-31- “I went by the field of the lazy man and by the vineyard of the man without understanding, And, behold, it was all grown over with thorns, *and* nettles had covered the face of it, and its stone wall was broken down.”

Complacency will affect our harvest. The production of good fruit in our lives can be choked out. Successful “gardening” will require our diligence, our attention and our work. The word “keep” and its variations are used in over 451 scriptures in the King James version alone (I don’t have a verse counter for AFV). I would say that is a strong suggestion of its importance. A synonym for keep used frequently in the Bible is “maintain.” We must maintain good works along with our growth in God’s Word.

Titus 3:8- “This *is* a faithful saying, and I desire you to strongly affirm *all* these things, so that those who have believed God may apply themselves to doing good works. These things are good and profitable for men.” (AFV) The King James version renders “which have believed in God *might be careful to maintain good works.*”

Titus 3:14- “And let our *brethren* also learn to devote themselves to good works for services that are needed, so that they may not be unfruitful.” (AFV) The King James renders this verse as “And let ours also learn to *maintain good works* for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.”

1 Chronicles 26:27- “They dedicated *part of* the spoils won in battles to *maintain* the house of the LORD,”

Many things in our lives need to be maintained. Our cars for example, if we do not tend to their regular maintenance they break down. In this day and age, that can be quite costly. Our homes, family life and marriages require maintenance as well. When these break down for neglect it can be far more costly than vehicle repair. Hopefully our discussion covered numerous scriptures and yielded a spirited discussion on renewing our minds, proving what is well pleasing and God’s perfect will.

Philippians 4:4-8- “Rejoice in *the* Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your moderation be known to all men; the Lord *is* near. Do not be anxious about anything; but by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God in everything; And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever *things* are true, whatever *things* are honorable, whatever *things* are just, whatever *things* are pure, whatever *things* are lovely, whatever *things* are of good report; if *there be* any virtue and if *there be* any praise, *think on these things.*” (I know Niecy has this one!)

Proverbs 4:23- “Above all guard the door of your mind with diligence, for out of it *are* the issues of life.”

2 Corinthians 10:5- “Casting down *vain* imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ;”

Isaiah 26:2-3- “Open the gates, so that the righteous nation shall enter in, one that is faithfully *keeping* truth. You will keep *him* in perfect peace, whose mind *is* stayed on You; because he trusts in You.”

The biggest battlefield is in our own minds. Putting every thought under subjection to God and His Holy Spirit. A constant conflict but “winnable” through the Blood of Jesus Christ. Renewing perpetually, putting on the Mind of Christ (**1 Corinthians 2:16**).

Romans 12:2- “Do not conform yourselves to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind in order that you may prove what is well pleasing and good, and the perfect will of God.”

In summary, and in support of our discussion, when we keep and dress God’s Garden in us, we will grow and produce good fruit. Walking in the spirit and staying in His Word will keep the weeds of the world at bay. We will, through

obedience to His Word, grow in the likeness of His Son, Jesus Christ and fulfill His perfect will for each one of us.

Ezekiel 36:34-36- “And the waste land shall be tilled, instead of being desolate before all who pass by. And they shall say, ‘This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden. And the wasted, desolate and ruined cities now *are* fenced and inhabited.’ And the nations that are left all around you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined *places and* planted that which was desolate. I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it.”

Keep your work gloves handy, what a garden God is going to give us! Amen!

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