

This pre-recorded Sermon was preached at Good Shepherd Baptist Church
By Rev. Stephen Guantai
On July 19th, 2020

Text: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Message: "Who is Doing This?"

When something good or bad happens, people will ask, "Who did this?" For example, you close your gate, yet every morning you wake up and you find the gate open. You will definitely question who is behind this. And I bet you will take action. Perhaps you may install a security camera to catch the culprit.

So, let me ask you, with all the evil things that are happening today, do you asked yourself who is causing it? Let me remind you that the one who is causing all this chaos is so smart, he will not let us think of him. Instead he will spur us to take action. Which, in most cases, will cause more harm than good.

If you have no idea who I'm talking about, a German philosopher and poet Fredrick Nietzsche (1844-1900) tells us, "the devil is in the details," meaning that if we don't pay attention to what is causing these problems, we'll end up missing the point.

So, brothers and sisters in Christ, today I'm here to remind us that, we're are in a battle-a spiritual battle against the forces of the evil one (Eph 6:12). In Revelation 12:9, John calls him "*the great dragon who was hurled down- that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray.*"

However, we who are God's children, we need not to fear for the one who is in us is greater than the one who is in the world (1John 4:4).

Now, let us look at one of Jesus' parable. Those who farm or garden know how frustrating it would be to wake up and discover your plants uprooted and replaced with weeds. How would you feel if you planted good seeds in your garden, only to find someone planted weed seeds in the same place? And when you try to uproot the weeds, you realize you cannot do so without also uprooting the good plants.

I bet it will take a lot of patience not uproot everything and replant again or just forget about it. Brothers and sisters in Christ, this is what God is dealing with every time. Because His enemy, the devil, is always planting weeds among good seeds.

Jesus, using this parable, said to the people, "*The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. "The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?'*"

"An enemy did this," he replied.

"The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'

“No,” he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn’” (Matt 13:24-30).

Later, when one of Jesus’ disciples inquired the meaning of the parable, Jesus told them that he was not talking about vegetables. He was talking about God, God’s people, and the devil. Jesus explained to them that God’s plan was for His children is to love one another, enjoy life on earth, and be happy. But Satan comes around and plants seeds of greed, lies, lust, stealing, violent, murder, envy and hatred among God’s people. But the Good News is, the God we worship is a loving, gracious merciful and patient God. He gives an opportunity to repent.

In Psalm 145: 8-9, King David tells us that " The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all He has made." And in Psalm 30:5 David again says: "For his anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a life time. Weeping may last for a night but a shout of joy comes in the morning."

So, brothers and sisters in Christ, even amidst this pandemic, and the rush to reopen the country despite the increasing new cases of COVID-19, God is calling out to us. He is asking us to be patient, as He is still being patient with us.

During the time of the prophet Isaiah, the people of Israel experienced something similar to what is happening now. And this is what the Lord God said to His people: “Come, my people, enter into your rooms and close your doors behind you; Hide for a little while until indignation runs its course” (Isaiah 26:20).

So, I wonder what God is saying to us today about this global pandemic? And all the calamities that are happening. And about the evil in the land? If you read Nehemiah 9:17, you will notice how after many years, Nehemiah reminded the people of Israel how their forefathers suffered when the evil one planted evil seeds in their hearts. “They refused to listen and failed to remember the miracles [He] performed among them. They became stiff-necked and, in their rebellion, appointed a leader in order to return to their slavery. But [He] is a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love.” For His loving kindness endures forever.

This makes me wonder: are we even seeking to listen to God? When I think about what is happening today, I ask myself, do we want to return to those dark days? Days of Jim Crow laws? Because if you look at the evil things that are done to God’s children, you’ll realize that even the Civil Rights Act of 1964 has not helped uproot the evil weed in the land. The devil and his fallen angels continue to plant evil seeds in people’s hearts. These are suffocating weeds of discrimination, hatred and violence.

We forget that we’re on this earth for a season, with a purpose of loving and caring for each other knowing that God will hold us responsible for our actions. In Matthew 12:37, Jesus said, “I tell you, on the day of Judgment, people will give an account of every careless word they have spoken.”

I know this is where some people get confused about God and ask: “What about God’s grace and mercy?” Really? You want a God who doesn’t care when your fellow human beings are oppressed,

discriminated against?, Despite the Bible telling us we are all created in God's image?, you want a God who doesn't care when innocent people, mostly people of color, are dying in prisons, while the most dangerous criminals are set free? A God who doesn't care the gap between the poor and rich is widening every minute? You want a God who ignores that not everyone in this world is treated equally? Such a God would be a very useless God.

I believe in a God who loves justice. I believe in a merciful and forgiving God. As the Psalmist put it, a God who "defend the cause of the weak and the fatherless, maintains the rights of the poor and oppressed." (Ps 82:3).

This was Jesus's Christ mission on earth. Saint Luke reminds us in Luke 4:18 of Jesus' words that echoed the prophet Isaiah: "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of the sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed*" (ESV).

These are the kind of seeds that Jesus came to plant on earth: seeds of love, care, compassion and mercy, and he continues watering these seeds with the rain of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus himself explains the meaning of the seeds and weeds by saying, "*The field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age*" (Matthew 13:38-39).

So, knowing that, my prayer is that we may not pass judgment on anyone or else we may destroy some good plants. Instead, in the words of the apostle Paul in Gal 6:9-10, "*Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have the opportunity to do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.*"

Sisters and brothers in Christ, God planted us on this earth for a season; and we may feel like the pressure of the things surrounding us is taking every breath away from us. Don't give up or give in. Instead, trust in the Lord. Have faith, for this too soon shall be over. **Amen.**
Peace and Grace to you all. And stay Safe.