Pentecost 7 – Proper 11 – Year A 2017

One of the wonderful things about being able to celebrate Eucharist here at Emmaus weekly now is that we begin to establish our own customs. One of those customs I see emerging is a dialog homily – meaning I or one of us will certainly prepare some reflections – a homily, if you will – but there will also generally be a time for us all to share whatever may have come to us in our own reflection on the readings. So – here is what came to me this week about our readings, and then I invite you to share what has come to you.

Two weeks ago we heard an earlier portion of the letter to the Romans – and there Paul was lamenting that he seems always to do the things he doesn’t want to do, and not to do the good he wants to do. He goes on into a lengthy discussion of sin and the law and grace, which Tom wonderfully explored this morning in Sunday School for Everyone!

One of the things I struggle with in Paul is his “dichotomization” of things. Tom said this morning that for Paul everything is black and white. Paul sets up this discussion of the law and grace as two things in opposition. And in today’s reading, we have the same pitting against each other of two “opposites” for Paul: the flesh and the spirit. The flesh is evil and the spirit is good.

It could seem as if we have the same struggle laid out in the gospel parable for today: The wheat seed, sown by the “good farmer” is sabotaged by the “evil one” who sowed weeds in the same field. But I think the gospel gives us something more than black and white – the weeds and the wheat grow up together and get sorted out in the end.

I looked at this passage not as Good People in the World versus the Bad People in the World – but in the sense of the mixture of weed and wheat in my own life.

In one of my college theology classes – we talked about heaven, purgatory, etc. And the professor floated the notion that when we die, there will be no ‘places’ like heaven or hell or purgatory. Rather, we will come fully back into oneness with the Presence of God – and all that is not God will simply fly away, be burnt off by the brightness of the Light, simply cease to be. And what is left will be all of us that is of God… because God is all that really remains.

For me, that’s the consolation of today’s gospel. I am a mixture of wheat and weed… all entangled into the mystery of who I am and have come to be. But in the end, this God who loves me will sort it out – and harvest the wheat, while the weeds will simply go into oblivion.

There is a quote from Dinah Maria Craik that speaks this for me…

“Oh, the comfort — the inexpressible comfort of feeling *safe* with a person — having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but pouring them all right out, just as they are, chaff and grain together; certain that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and then with the breath of kindness blow the rest away.”   
― [Dinah Maria Mulock Craik](https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/166852.Dinah_Maria_Mulock_Craik), [A Life for a Life](https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/884170)

Thank you, God. Amen.

[Isaiah 44:6-8](http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearA_RCL/Pentecost/AProp11_RCL.html#ot2)[Psalm 86:11-17](http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearA_RCL/Pentecost/AProp11_RCL.html#ps2)[Romans 8:12-25](http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearA_RCL/Pentecost/AProp11_RCL.html#nt1)[Matthew 13:24-30,36-43](http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearA_RCL/Pentecost/AProp11_RCL.html#gsp1)