

Bible reading Matthew 13:24-30,36-43

Grow where you are planted

THIS WEEK WE EXPLORE TRUSTING GOD IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES.

Jesus gives us another seed-related story to help us think about the difficulties and struggles we endure while seeking to live as God intends us to. Through it we have our gaze lifted to contemplate God's power and reminded that God is worthy of our trust.



Pray



Draw a line down the middle of a sheet of paper. Top left, write, 'Blessed this week by...'; and top right, write, 'Struggled this week with...'. As the week progresses, add things that happen in your life (to you or around you, or further afield) to the appropriate column. Use the sheet as a focus for daily prayer, and when it is full, look back a week (or more) of blessing.

LISTEN



Listen to the track 'Be Thou My Vision', Audrey Assad on *Inheritance*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dXDhCEnM-bQ>
When we focus on God, we stop worrying about judging other people. What are the things that help each of us to focus on God? How can we make more time for those things?



Play a game of pick-up sticks. You may have these as a children's game, or you can make them from wooden skewers. Mark (with pen or tape) half of the sticks; leave half unmarked. The aim is to see if you can pick up all the unmarked sticks (representing the wheat of Jesus' story) without affecting/moving any of the marked ones (the weeds). Think about how the weeds in our lives affect us, even when we don't want them to. And also about how our actions might be weeds in someone else's life.

Bible notes



It's a simple story: a farmer has sown wheat in a field. At night a rival, wanting to gain an advantage in the marketplace, sows weeds. The wise farmer knows that as the weeds grow, their roots and those of the wheat will intertwine, so he can't risk pulling them up ahead of the harvest because he'll lose everything. So, he waits.

At harvest time, the weeds – now easily identifiable – are cut first, then the wheat. The focus of the parable is not on the difference between weeds and wheat but their fate. Jesus says that a good harvest is a certainty, the wheat – the children of the kingdom – will shine through.

Everyone wanted the kingdom to come now. The disciples were excited because Jesus had told them that it was here now. They wanted it in all its glory, but Jesus says that we'll have to wait and live (for an unspecified time) cheek by jowl with those who do not share their view of the world, who are often hostile to it. But this waiting is the flipside of the coin of God's mercy. God doesn't want to swiftly judge people. God wants everyone to repent, and waits patiently for them to respond to the good news. Our lives in the present are lived in the light of this future and lent some urgency by that. So, all we've learned about mission over the past weeks needs to be heard in the light of this solemn reminder that we don't have all the time in the world.

First impressions

- Where are you planted right now?
- And how are you growing?
- What does it mean to you to trust God in everyday life?



A prayer of adoration

Almighty God, all-seeing and all-knowing, with confidence we accept your power and authority, knowing that we can always trust in your judgement; for your loving nature pervades creation, and all shall be well – all shall be well. **Amen.**

REFLECT

What helps and sustains you in your faith? Cut a sheet of paper (ideally, yellow) into rectangular strips to represent wheat. Write or draw as many blessings as you can think of to thank God for. These could be material things, but think also of (e.g.) relationships and circumstances. What are the rewards of faith? What makes it easier? Use the strips as bookmarks or put them in places where you will see them regularly, as a reminder that, although we all have difficulties in our lives, God has given us much to be grateful for.