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There is a generation growing-up to whom the **HARVEST** has become unreal. We are walking through life in our modern technological age, face down, and we miss the harvest which requires us facing up and looking at the horizon.

There are **SO** many lessons to be learned from the Harvest, and our Bible offers us a range of images to work with, each to help us appreciate God, and His message to us.

Very briefly, I want to draw on an image in our reading from Matthew 13 a few moments ago.

It is stating the obvious that both "good" and "evil" exist together in our world. Our good friend Helen used to say, *Kalyan, why is there so much bad news all around? Where is the good news?* Many of us feel the same, *Where **IS** the good news?* Magazines like the Reader's Digest and Guideposts are no longer popular, but they were collections of good-news, heart-warming stories that inspired faith in the human race.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, the Russian author who yearned for regime change reminded us, the line between good and evil runs through our own hearts.

Jesus gives us a picture of this tension, the tension which starts as the difference between right and wrong, which morphs into a war between good and evil.

There are two lessons to draw from Matthew 13. The first is that it is not for us to determine good and evil. In the parable, when the farm-hands ask if they should pull out the weeds planted by the enemy, the farmer is very clear, ***NO! The harvesters will sort out the weeds. They know to identify the weeds, and they will do it.*** Note the sequence: ***First the weeds will be sorted, tied together and burnt, THEN the wheat will be collected and put in the barn.***

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Too often, it starts with **us** defining the good and the evil, and we make mistakes - *we uproot the good with the evil*. Several weeks ago we noted, our past experience, our preconceptions, our world view, together **conditions** how we read and understand God's Word. In our zeal to root out what **WE** think is the evil, we are prone to make mistakes, and root out the good with the evil.

The first lesson from this passage is, it is not for us to act on our feelings, our thoughts, our understanding of what is good and that which is evil.

The second lesson from this passage is a small phrase which passes us by. The farmer says to the eager farmhands, *let both grow together until the harvest*.

Two things to note: we cannot change the weeds by letting them grow beside us. Weeds are weeds and they will not change (please don't take this metaphor any further than what it is intended to say in this passage!).

What is noteworthy is that the wheat stand together even as the weeds grow beside them!

In this parable, Jesus calls us to stand together, to support each other, be there for each other, feed and nourish each other, while the menacing weed grows beside us.

Note also, when the **wheat is ripe**, not the weed, the harvester swings into action and knows what to do - first get rid of the weeds, then harvest the wheat into the Farmer's barn.

Two lessons: first, we do not possess the perfect knowledge to know the difference between good and evil.

Very often, that which offends **us**, we consider evil; in Truth, evil is that which offends God!

Second, until the time for God's Harvest, we are to stand together, to support each other, to be there for each other, not just our friends and

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whom we know and are fond of, but the whole Church! We should get to know, acquaint ourselves with, support, encourage, build up, look after those who sit across the room from us, who live a few streets from us, our ***neighbours*** in every sense of the word.

It is my experience, evil fights its own battles and never wins, but good triumphs over evil, because in good, there is **HOPE**, and hope is in for the long haul.

The Lord of the Harvest knows when the time for the harvest is ripe; its for us to trust His judgement and wait for the day. **AMEN.**