

Patiently Waiting For The Harvest – Tori Paulin

Genesis 28:10-19a; Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24; Romans 8:12-25; Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Two weeks ago we learned from Rick that the yoke is easy. And last week we learned from Christina that laying down our burdens has no secret because the burden is light. While keeping these two themes close to us, today's passages present to us another action that may seem easy but more often than not we humans fail at... this is the action of waiting. So often we find ourselves stuck in a waiting period, whether that be between jobs, family—or, if you're like me, waiting to be transitioned from the world of homework and spring breaks and into the world of full-time jobs and paying bills.

I am not very good at waiting. I don't do well in lines, I don't do well in traffic, and I really hate waiting for dinner to be ready, especially if I'm the one cooking.

Through the Gospel narrative with many of the parables, in our Romans text today, and even in Jacob's continuing story in Genesis, everyone is in a waiting period. In our parable today from Matthew, The Parable of the Weeds, after the precious wheat has been soiled by the "evil" presence of the weeds the servants are stuck in this waiting period of "what do we do?" Thinking they can get rid of the bad things that are happening, the servants ask the farmer, "Hey, do you want us to go and pull up the weeds?" The farmer then responds by saying "No, no, the wheat and the weeds must grow together so you must **wait** for the harvest." In Jacob's story, he is running away from the wrath of his brother and he spends his waiting period with a nice nap. Smart man. In Romans we know that Paul is already tricky with his words (not tricky like we've seen from Jacob recently). Paul places God's very creation into its own waiting game, sneakily not telling us exactly what we are waiting for, but rather explaining that we are going to experience suffering, the weeds will come, and yet we too must wait for the harvest.

When bad things happen in our lives we are given the choice of how to respond. Sometimes we want to play the fixer, like the servants tried to, and other times we ignore it and forget that anything happened. I remember my mother telling me stories of when I was a baby—and I'm sure other mothers can relate to this. When their babies are crying, moms have the choice of whether or not they want to immediately pick up the baby and attempt to fix the problem or wait and see how crying (normally something bad for the infant) affects it. My mother would end her stories with, "Now at first we always wanted to pick you up." Or, "It was harder for me to wait while you just cried yourself to sleep." Like mothers, the servants wanted to fix the problem right away but ultimately had to wait.

"To wait for" can be translated to the Greek word *perimeno* meaning "to remain all around, steady" (regardless of the obstacles involved), and (my personal favorite) "to endure" (putting up with surrounding difficulty.) The waiting we are talking about in Romans and the weeds we experience in Matthew are things that are unavoidable during our participation in the Kingdom of God. Because it too is unavoidable our endurance during the waiting becomes even more prevalent in the lives of those who stink at waiting (like me). There is something special about the phrase, "the already and not yet Kingdom" because even though the **not yet** is telling us to

wait, the **already** gives us something to put our heart into while we wait for harvest, despite the weeds we are being exposed to. Paul tells us that when we hope for the things that we don't have yet we wait... not just wait, but wait patiently. This patience is something God calls us to be while faithfully responding and actively listening during the already but not yet Kingdom. Waiting patiently for something is not always easy for people, especially with the never-ending growing of the weeds.

Paul reminds us that we will easily groan and become frustrated. But seeing that the wheat and weeds must grow together for the harvest, the waiting period is inevitable. Despite its inevitability it is here that we will endure obstacles, but then experience the gentle love and grace from our God. When Jacob was napping, probably a Sunday afternoon right-after-lunch nap, he experienced the love of God in a way that made him not afraid but relaxed, knowing that God was with him in that place.

I mentioned to you some of the silly things I have trouble waiting for (like traffic and dinner). Currently I find myself in a waiting period that hits a little closer to the heart. Both of my sisters are moving to the West Coast in a month and my work environment has taken a drastic hit just this past week. But while I right now am experiencing an uncomfortable, emotional, just weird time, I have to wait...patiently at best. And in this time I also want to invite you, the Church body, to actively participate in this waiting and restful work of the Gospel Kingdom. The cool thing about this is that we can rest alone and even together. Here we can choose to either try to fix things on our own by pulling out the wheat and leaving the weeds, or we can choose to embrace the weeds and faithfully wait by napping in the arms of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.