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Saturday's Gospel: Time for the Harvest

Gospel for Saturday in the 16th Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 13:24-30*)

Another parable Jesus put before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the householder came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow

good seed in your field? How then has it weeds?’ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ But he said, ‘No; lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”

Commentary

Surely we are all strongly challenged by the existence of evil in the world. In fact, it is the reason many people put forward to cast doubt on God’s existence, since they see no possibility of reconciling his Goodness with all the bad things that

happen. In the same way, many believers witness flagrant injustices and suffering that God seems to turn his back on.

Jesus reveals the meaning of this tragic reality in the parable of the good wheat and the weeds in the world God has created good. And he himself will explain this parable to his disciples, although this passage doesn't appear in today's Gospel. Thus our Lord makes us see that God is not absent from this world or naïve. He has before his eyes all the evil in human history and is fully aware of it. And one day he is going to render judgment: "Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (*Gal 6:7*).

Jesus's parable makes clear that evil exists and is present in people's lives. At the same time, this evil cannot come from God; it is someone else

who has sown it: “the weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil” (*Mt* 13:38).

Why doesn't God uproot the weeds? Jesus tells us clearly: uprooting evil would mean taking with it the good fruit he has sown: human freedom. God does not intervene in the way we think he should partly because he wants to intervene through us: “the good seed means the children of the Kingdom” (*Mt* 13:38). Taking away our possibility to do evil would also mean taking away our freedom to do good, our freedom to love.

With great simplicity, but also with great depth, our Lord is showing us that all human history, no matter how complex it may seem, will have a definitive resolution: the wheat will be separated from the weeds. But that moment is not decided by us: it

is decided by God, who knows the time for the harvest.

Our role, despite all the suffering and evil that we see in the world, is to patiently cultivate everything beautiful and great that God has given us and leave the results in his hands. He will repay each person according to their deeds: “Because you have kept my word of patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial which is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell upon the earth. I am coming soon; hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown” (*Rev* 3:10-11).

Luis Miguel Bravo Álvarez

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