

Sermon 19 July 2026

Trinity 7

Hymns:

311 Lord Jesus Christ;

55 Be thou my guardian;

541 What a friend we have in Jesus;

111 Do not be afraid;

553 When we walk with the lord.

Sermon

I've been tracking a lot of what is happening in the USA recently. And what Israel is doing in the Middle East. And watching the war between Russia and Ukraine. I see some horrific events. Utterly appalling treatment of other human beings. I hear those who protest shouted down or threatened. I see children shot in cold blood as they seek food for survival. And I really struggle with what is happening.

It seems to me that there are three men who are enabling each other, and being enabled by shadowy wealthy figures whose agenda couldn't be more at odds with Christ's agenda. Yet many of them claim to be doing God's will, fulfilling what God wanted. I feel sickened when I hear people claim to be a Christian Nationalist: isn't that an oxymoron? Nationalism is about oppression. Jesus is about liberation from oppression. How dare these people who treat others with contempt call themselves Christian?

These three key powerful men are all in cahoots with each other. There is something in America called Project 2025, a plan put together by very wealthy people to divide the world up between them. It is about power and ownership. About domination. Ordinary people are simply there to do what they are told, or perish. One particular group within Project 2025 calls those who are outside the power group 'unhumans'. What??!!

This is nothing new. We watched how the Nazis dehumanised those they did not like. They built a

society on hatred, scapegoating Jewish people, Romany, Gypsy, homosexual, disabled people and killing them on an industrial scale. We watched Joseph Stalin kill and destroy the lives of millions of people in Soviet Russia, simply because he or his cronies didn't like them. And now we are watching Netanyahu and Trump do the same kinds of thing. Kill the Palestinians/Hamas/Hezbollah. Kill or dehumanise immigrants, and those whose skin colour is not the same as ours.

When we see such things happening in the world, when we see and hear such levels of hatred and contempt, it is often hard to believe that there is a God who loves the world. Who wants us to thrive and live in love and peace with each other. How then can we reconcile what we see with what we believe? How do we answer people who tell us that they cannot believe in a God who allows these atrocities to happen?

It's not easy. But I think today's parable might help us. God creates good things. He sows good

seed. The good seed grows and grows well. But then 'an enemy' – the antithesis of God – comes along and tries to thwart the work that God is doing. He plants obstacles in the way of the good seed. God's servants are horrified. They want to go and pull up the weeds so that the good seed can thrive. But God says no: let the weeds stay put, because in trying to rid the land of the weeds, some of the good plants will be pulled up and thrown away, and that is not what God wants. He feels it is better to let things be, and let the good seed battle it out with the weeds. It will strengthen the good seed, and prevent loss.

When it is harvest time, the fruitful crop will be garnered and the weeds can then be destroyed.

It is very hard to be fruitful seed in the face of opposition. It is very hard for us to continue to grow in God as Christians when we see such destructiveness and hatred. But that is what God wants us to do. Knowing that the weeds will ultimately be destroyed can give us hope and determination not to be defeated by them. We

know that we will be taken into God's kingdom if we keep battling the evil. If we are steadfast in our faith and don't allow ourselves to be swamped by those who are so full of hatred. Our work is to love. To be watchful and pray. How do we love some of the people who are presently in power? I don't know. I find it increasingly hard to find that spark of the divine in them. But Jesus commands us to love one another. So we must work at that and trust and pray with all our hearts that those who do not understand love of people will eventually be destroyed, while we are welcomed into God's barn.