



8th Sunday of Pentecost

19th July 2026



Whatever you do for the least of them

Greetings!

It's great to be here as part of our church family, as we enter into the 8th Sunday after Pentecost. May I welcome all who are watching via 'Livescreen'.

Today's readings, again challenged me, especially our Gospel reading from Matthew, and some good insights into the parable of the wheat and the weeds!

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, as we gather together as living stones, part of your Church, we ask the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts, kindling in them the fire of your love. Almighty God, speak to us through your Holy Spirit, and as we walk in the light of your Spirit may we grow in wisdom, always rejoicing in the comfort He brings, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Today's reading from the book of Romans is part of a long and not always easily understood discussion on life and death, slavery and freedom. In Chapter 6 Paul has been explaining that our Christian baptism means choosing Jesus' death and life rather than our own. On the whole, this choice is wonderful for us! It means we are no longer tied to sin and bound to do what sin tells us and pay the terrible price that follows. So, it is freedom and life!

But there are ongoing consequences from our previous life which sometimes makes it hard for us to remember our new-found freedom.

Sometimes we still act like slaves instead of free people!

Then in Chapter 7, Paul gives an illustration which is supposed to show us, what a good thing the death of the old life is. Paul argues, once someone is dead, the duties and debts you owed them are cancelled, Paul argues. So when you choose the death and life of Christ as your own, you are free of the things that bound you in the old life.

Then, finally, in Chapter 8, Paul is looking at means or answering questions, like...

- how does Jesus' death and life free us,
- and what does our freedom mean in practice?

Paul's simple and compelling answer is that our freedom means life.

When we 'belonged', body and soul, to the old life, that meant we had to pay all the old bills, fulfil all the demands of that life, and the final payment was our death. Now we belong to God, body and soul, and God has a different way of demanding payment. Instead of asking us to pay, God gives us things!

We thought we were being bought as in a slave market by a new master, though admittedly one who would be nicer than the old. Now instead, we find that God has bought us so that He can share us his children, giving us equal shares in His property with His own Son. And what's more, the Son doesn't mind, and isn't jealous, and is the one who has actually gone out and done the buying, expressly so that He can share what should have been His.

Most of the time we can hardly believe it!

- We still keep looking over our shoulders, waiting for a beating!
- We still have the furtive, scared, selfish habits of the slave.

But the 3rd member of our new family, the Holy Spirit, is coaching us, gradually, teaching us the language of our new household, persuading us that it is really alright to speak to our owner as the son does!

But if this is a wonderful new life, which it is, it does, unfortunately, carry some responsibilities with it! If we are going to talk like the son, ***we also have to act like the son.*** And until we do, the rest of the world cannot be free!

The problem is that when we set out to try, we often return to our old slave mentality! Can you relate to that??

Isn't it interesting in today's Gospel from Matthew it is the slaves who want to uproot the weeds. The slaves have never owned anything themselves, but they are sure that if they did, they could not stand to have it contaminated with weeds. The slaves would be prepared to put in any amount of back-breaking labour to uproot the weeds, even if it did mean damaging some of the crops at the same time.

They are anxious, indignant, perhaps even a little fearful that the master will blame them for what has happened. In other words, they are acting like the slaves they are.

But the master's attitude is completely different. The master's main concern is to preserve the crop. Sorting out good and bad growth is more easily done when the crop is fully grown. It's not that he doesn't mind about the weeds, or that he has any intention of pretending that they are anything else; it's just that he can take the long-term view, and the slaves can only worry. They are used to small, everyday tasks, with immediate results, they are not used to long-term responsibilities.

So, what happens when the slaves suddenly become children, and the crop they are talking about suddenly becomes their own inheritance, and just doesn't belong to someone else? Will they panic and try and grow a weed-free field, whatever the cost? Or will they have lived with the Master long enough to learn to think like Him, and to even trust His strategies more than their own?

With creation still wrapped in the chains that we can still remember and feel around us, can we learn to act like children, not slaves?

That's why I love Kairos inside so much. What some in our society may refer to as the weeds in our parable, they are all God's children, and I have no right to judge them, but a command to love them, help them, clothe them, visit them.

As Peter spoke to us last Sunday, words taken from Matthews Gospel, Chapter 25:

³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

Amen