

Sermon Summary
5th After Pentecost
17th July 2011

- The parable of the Wheat and the Tares has two meanings. Firstly, when preached to the crowd, it asks people to make a choice about where they wish to find themselves: as children of the Kingdom or of the evil one. Secondly, when interpreted as an allegory to the disciples, it stresses perseverance.
- It also includes a whole worldview, with choices between good and evil, and a final resolution
- This is very different from the understanding of the world demanded by the new Atheism which would see the world as a creation from the chance movement of matter.
- By logical extension this implies a world with no purpose, and with no values. Even if one chooses a set of values, the choice is purely arbitrary.
- Most people instinctively have a set of values. We think that the phone-tapping of the victims of violence is wrong. We understand suffering in the Horn of Africa. In theological terms, I might say that the promptings of the Spirit encourage such feelings even in those who are not yet counted “believers”.
- Without such values, it is easy to make choices purely centred on self-interest. Indeed, Christians often do this if their faith is motivated solely by their concern for salvation. It’s a kind of spiritual insurance policy at worst. George Lucas’ first Star Wars films were an attempt, in part, to present a selfless Christian morality, unencumbered by the crippling burden of self-interest. But we should be concerned with the healing of the whole of creation, not just our own salvation (Rom. 8)
- We are in the middle of a debate about carbon tax. I do not pretend to understand all the issues, not even to separate the truth from the politicians’ propaganda of the moment.
- In last Monday’s papers, tables showed how well different households might fare under the proposed legislation: a loss or a profit. I know one thing- it would be disastrous for us to make choices about such a complex and significant issue purely on the basis of how it would affect my household purse.
- The complex worldview presented by the parable reminds us of a world with a telos, an end, or an omega point: a final healing and resolution. It also reminds us that we need to work in harmony with the flow towards that end. It asks us to do what is right, simply because we believe that there is a right, and we need to move towards it.
- It gives us a positive message to share with that instinctive sense of justice: that, in Jesus of Nazareth, we have a sure guide through the maze or right and wrong.

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