EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST JULY 22-23, 2023

IN THE NAME OF JESUS, WELCOME TO ST. PAUL'S!

Saturday - 5:00p.m.; Sunday - 10:00 a.m.

HHH

THE ENTRANCE RITE

PRELUDE (5:00)

(10:00) Praise, My Soul, The King of Heaven Setting: Jacob B. Weber

WELCOME

ENTRANCE HYMN

Praise, My Soul, The King of Heaven

LSB 793

- Praise, my soul, the King of heaven; To His feet your tribute bring; Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven, Evermore His praises sing: Alleluia, alleluia! Praise the everlasting King.
- 2 Praise Him for His grace and favor To His people in distress; Praise Him still the same as ever, Slow to chide and swift to bless: Alleluia, alleluia! Glorious in His faithfulness.
- 3 Fatherlike He tends and spares us;
 Well our feeble frame He knows;
 In His hand He gently bears us,
 Rescues us from all our foes.
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 Widely yet His mercy flows.
- 4 Angels, help us to adore Him;
 You behold Him face to face;
 Sun and moon, bow down before
 Him,
 All who dwell in time and space.
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 Praise with us the God of grace.

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the

♣ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the aid of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that, attentive to your Word, we may confess our sins, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Kneel. Silence is observed for reflection and self-examination.

Gracious God,

have mercy upon us. In your compassion, forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone. Uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

Amen.

KYRIE (Stand) LSB 944

For the peace from above and for our salvation; and for the peace of the whole world, and the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord:

Kyrie Eleison; Christe Eleison; Kyrie Eleison.

For the well-being of the Church of God; and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord:

Kyrie Eleison; Christe Eleison; Kyrie Eleison.

Help, save, comfort and defend us, gracious Lord.

Kyrie Eleison; Christe Eleison; Kyrie Eleison.

- Splendor and honor, majesty and power Are Yours, O Lord God, fount of ev'ry blessing, For by Your bidding was the whole creation Called into being.
- Praised be the true Lamb, slain for our redemption, By whose self-off'ring we are made God's people: A priestly kingdom, from all tongues and nations, Called to God's service.
- To the Almighty, throned in heav'nly splendor, And to the Savior, Christ our Lamb and Shepherd, Be adoration, praise, and glory given, Now and forever.

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. O God,

so rule and govern our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that, ever mindful of Your final judgment, we may be stirred up to holiness of living here and dwell with You in perfect joy hereafter; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST LESSON (Be seated)

Isaiah 44:6-8

Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: "I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.

Who is like me? Let him proclaim it.
Let him declare and set it before me, since I appointed an ancient people.

Let them declare what is to come, and what will happen. Fear not, nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? And you are my witnesses! Is there a God besides me? There is no Rock; I know not any."

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 119:57-64 (Sung responsively)

The LORD is my portion; I promise to keep your words. I entreat your favor with all my heart; be gracious to me according to your promise. When I think on my ways, I turn my feet to your testimonies; I hasten and do not delay to keep your commandments. Though the cords of the wicked ensnare me, I do not forget your law. At midnight I rise to praise you, because of your just and righteous decrees. I am a companion of all who fear you, of those who keep your precepts. The earth, O LORD, is full of your steadfast love; teach me your statutes!

SECOND LESSON Romans 8:18-27

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

(10:00) CHILDREN'S SERMON

ALLELUIA VERSE (Stand)

LSB 952

Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, alleluia!

GOSPEL Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 13th chapter. **Glory to You, O Lord.**

[Jesus] put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his 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 master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So 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.'" . . .

Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed is the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will

be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ

SERMON (Be seated)

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus. Amen. Dear friends in Christ:

For the second Sunday in a row our Gospel reading has been a parable of Jesus in which he compares his kingdom to a field where seed has been sown. Last Sunday's parable is commonly called the Parable of the Sower. Today's is commonly called the Parable of the Weeds.

As you might imagine, there are some connections between the two parables. One of these is that both parables have an explanation by Jesus as a follow-up. Another is that the second parable builds on the first by addressing a question that arises from it.

As you may recall, the first parable speaks to why some people hear the Word of God and become followers of its message while other people do not. The parable answer the question by explaining that the Word needs to be heard by people who have good hearts and who allow their faith to become well-rooted and who can look past the cares and temptations of the world.

This Sunday's parable builds on that teaching by addressing the follow-up question: what then should be done about those who don't follow the word's message?

We'll get to the answer to that question in a little bit. But first let's point out how these two parables are different.

Last week's parable encouraged Jesus' disciples – you and me – to be sowers of God's seed. In today's parable, Jesus is the one who sows the seed.

And while the seed in last Sunday's parable represented God's word, in today's parable the seed represents "the sons of the kingdom." That's what Jesus specifically tells us.

Moreover, while the seeds in last Sunday's parable either grow to maturity or don't, in today's parable the distinction is made between good seeds growing into good plants

and bad seeds growing into bad plants. The good plants are wheat; the bad plants are weeds.

Finally, last Sunday's parable concluded with the plants growing to maturity and bearing fruit. Today's parable concludes with a harvest – one that involves the separating of good plants and bad.

Among these differences between the parables, I find it especially interesting that Jesus says the seeds he plants – which he calls "good seeds" – are the sons of the kingdom. This connection definitely demands some further thought.

One thing it most certainly tells us is that we followers of Jesus have an important vocation. We, like good seeds, are placed in the world, very intentionally by God, to be a source of health and nurture to others. Just as wheat is planted to be an important source of food, so also are we planted to be an important source of help.

And we need reminding of this. Because sometimes we forget how important our service to the world is. We get caught up in looking after our own needs and issues and get distracted from our calling. What's more, sometimes we think we have very little to give.

God uses us to be salt and light to the world – which means that we help preserve the world and help shine God's light on it by serving as good examples. Jesus stated this very directly in an earlier sermon – the one he gave on the mount.

But even more than forgetting our vocation, sometimes we also doubt it. And that's because we wonder how it is that we – or anyone – can really be considered good.

I'm guessing you've heard the statement "one person's weed is another person's flower." I remember seeing a sign with that statement on it once while walking through Meadowlark Gardens in Vienna. I have to say, seeing that sign there seemed a little odd to me, since I've always assumed those gardens were dedicated to flowers and plants which are beautiful. But maybe the sign reflects the times, for now we like to say: "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." And with such thinking, who are we to decide whether a plant is a weed or a flower?

In today's parable from Jesus there is no question about the label of the plants. The plants are either wheat or weed. And there's no question about their worth either. Wheat is good, and the weeds are not.

The parable is meant to teach us about people, of course. And according to its message, people are either children of the kingdom or children of the evil one. They are either fit for God's kingdom – good and helpful, like wheat – or they are not.

Such binary labeling draws quick protest in our world today, for many people believe that everything is subjective instead. They don't like things being forced into distinct categories, and they feel that those who do this are uninformed about life's complexities and judgmental in their ways.

We, too, have a certain discomfort with the division Jesus is using here. For we know that it's hard to label people correctly. And we recall that Jesus warns us against judging others. Such labeling and judging, we know, can lead people to do bad things.

Still, at the end of the day, the parable clearly teaches that a person is either wheat or weed – one or the other. And that means that a judgment as to a person's worth is being made.

According to God, people's attitudes and actions are either beautiful or ugly. And to this, most of us would readily agree. Therefore, since attitudes and actions come from people, should people not then wear these labels accordingly?

In his explanation to the parable, Jesus says a few things that indicate how people are to be identified. First, people are either "sons of the kingdom" or "sons of the evil one." These labels speak to a person's alignment. People are either aligned with Jesus or aligned with the Devil.

More on this distinction can be found in a verse from the book of First John (3:10). There it says: "By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother."

This verse definitely points to attitudes and actions as reflections of our identity. And as such, this parable gives a strong call for us to live rightly according to God's word. We are to follow his commandments. We are to be generous towards others and show mercy as befits God's righteousness. We are to put away all evil. And if we don't, we are aligned with evil's forces.

In light of this message, we should be asking ourselves today: what kinds of evil do I need to put out of my life? Is it lying? Theft? The hurting of others? And who am I

aligning myself with these days? Is it those who speak and practice righteousness? Or is it those who promote selfishness and lawlessness?

In the parable, Jesus mentions that someday he will get rid of "causes of sin and all lawbreakers." These things Jesus strongly stands against. And as his followers, we should stand against them too.

As the parable concludes, Jesus gives one more indicator about the ones who are "sons of the kingdom." He calls them the "righteous," saying that someday "the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father."

As we've seen, these righteous are the ones who follow God's ways. And yet, how can that be? Who among us can say that what we do is always right?

The scriptures make it clear that no one is righteous in and of themselves. "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God," says one particularly direct verse (Romans 6:23). Righteousness eludes us even when we are giving our very best effort.

Thankfully, God has seen this predicament of ours and done something about it. He has sent us Jesus to be our Savior. Jesus made our salvation possible by dying on the cross to pay the price of our sins. And because of this, all who now repent of their sin and look to him in faith will be forgiven.

Just to be clear: that repentance on our part must be sincere. And it will involve effort. God's grace is not cheap.

But God's grace is also extremely merciful. In fact, we are saved by that grace through our faith alone. A true and sincere faith makes one a "son of the kingdom" for certain.

"Fear not" said God to his people in today's Old Testament lesson. And looking through that text we see that he said this because he was the people's "king," their "redeemer" and their "rock." With the strength and compassion these words indicate he would not let his people be overcome – either by the forces of evil or by their own sin.

At the beginning of the sermon today we noted that this parable of Jesus builds on the one before it by addressing the question: "What should be done about those who do not take the message of God's word to heart?" Now we are ready to examine the parable's answer.

In the parable, the landowner's servants wondered if perhaps they should go and gather up the weeds. That would seem a logical thing to do, because weeds can do great harm to good plants.

In the same way, we wonder if perhaps those who align themselves with evil should be rounded up and disposed of. After all, they do great harm to those who stand and work for what is good.

But the parable tells us that this work is not to be done by us. Rather, it will be done by God at the end of the age when he comes again in glory to judge the living and the dead.

As such, this parable is not a call for us to figure out who is wheat and who is weed. Sometimes we will know, yes, but other times we won't. Rather, the parable is a call for us to be patient and to understand that although God may seem to tolerate evil, he really doesn't. He will judge it. As Jesus said, "The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all lawbreakers and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

God will do this in his good time – when he knows it to be best. And since that time could be any time, we should make sure that we are prepared.

This parable points out that judgment is God's burden to bear not ours. The servants asked their master asked if he wanted them to go out and pull the weeds, but the master said "no." Our task as God's servants is to instead be patient and wait.

And in the parable, this point about waiting is made by explaining that pulling up a bad plant may accidentally cause a good one to be uprooted too, which is the way it works with plants. With people, however, things are different. God waits with people because he wants the bad ones to turn to him and repent. The point of comparison in this part of the parable is simply the waiting, not the permanence of the condition. In this life there is still time for people to turn to God. Thankfully, when it comes to people a weed may yet become wheat.

This is good news that we will want to remember as we look at our sad and faith-starved world. And it is good news as we look at ourselves too. For sometimes we find ourselves being a weed more than wheat.

When we put our faith in Jesus, someday we will "shine like the sun in the kingdom of [our] Father." What a beautiful promise this is!

Until that day, our task is to stay strong in faith, endure the presence of evil and unbelief around us, according to what God allows, and know that God will bring these to an end someday. It is enough for us to know that when we place our faith in Christ, we are children of the kingdom forever.

He who has hears, let him hear. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY (Stand) The Lord, My God, Be Praised

LSB 794

- 1 The Lord, my God, be praised, My light, my life from heaven; My maker, who to me Has soul and body given; My Father, who will shield And keep me day by day And make each moment yield New blessings on my way.
- 2 The Lord, my God, be praised, My trust, my life from heaven, The Father's own dear Son, Whose life for me was given, Who for my sin atoned With His most precious blood And gives to me by faith The highest heav'nly good.
- The Lord, my God, be praised,
 My hope, my life from heaven,
 The Spirit, whom the Son
 In love to me has given.
 His grace revives my heart
 And gives my spirit pow'r,
 Help, comfort, and support
 In sorrow's gloomy hour.
 - 4 The Lord, my God, be praised, My God, the ever-living,
 To whom the heav'nly host
 Their laud and praise are giving.
 The Lord, my God, be praised,
 In whose great name I boast,
 God Father, God the Son,
 And God the Holy Ghost.

APOSTLES' CREED LSB, Back cover

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life
→ everlasting. Amen.

OFFERING

Offerings support the church's mission work – both here and through our many partners. Offerings may be placed in the box at the sanctuary entrance or sent to the church through our website or the mail. **Fellowship Cards** help us welcome new people and track participation. Please fill one out and place it in the offering box following the service.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Let us pray. Redeemer and Lord of hosts, the future is in Your hands. Remove all fear from us, and keep us mindful that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, You are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. Be patient with those who do not repent or believe. Send Your Holy Spirit to bring them into saving faith and turn the hearts of all who do evil. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of heaven and earth, we give thanks that Your Son, Jesus Christ, died to redeem the world and restore creation. Until new life supplants the groanings of this age, lead us to steward Your creation well, not in waste but in wise and diligent use with thanksgiving. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, pour out the blessing of Your Holy Spirit on the Church, and especially be with the delegates of our Synod who will assemble in convention this week. Give wisdom to those who propose, deliberate and decide for our work and welfare. Guard all who speak and all who listen. And let all plans and actions be worthy of the Gospel of Christ. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

We give You thanks, O Lord, for all who serve as instruments of Your compassion, including those who care for the elderly, those who work to lift up the poor, those who assist with mental and physical health, and all who work to contribute to the common good. Grant that each of us may serve as Your hands, feet and voices to give comfort and company to those in need. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Guide the leaders of all nations, that they would work for peace and justice in the face of conflict and discord. And bless their efforts to protect the weak and defenseless. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

We commend to You all who endure the bondage of decay through infirmity and weakness, especially all on our prayer list, all we name in our hearts, and all who mourn – especially the family of dear Trey. Deliver them according to Your will, and strengthen and preserve their faith, that they may rejoice that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed in us. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord God, You have called us according to Your purposes and you cause all things to work together for our good. Keep us safe until that day when You gather us with the saints into Your kingdom which has no end; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

OFFERTORY Create in Me (LSB 956)

 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
 Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
 Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free spirit. Amen.

SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is truly good, right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord...

Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify your glorious name, evermore praising you and saying:

SANCTUS (LSB 961)

Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth; heav'n and earth are full of Your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessèd, blessèd, blessèd is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth. In mercy for our fallen world you gave your only Son, that all those who believe in him should not perish but have eternal life. We give thanks to you for the salvation you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Send

now your Holy Spirit into our hearts, that we may receive our Lord with a living faith as he comes to us in his holy supper.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **Amen.**

AGNUS DEI (LSB 962)

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world;
grant us Your peace,
grant us Your peace,
grant us Your peace.

THE COMMUNION (Be seated)

The Communion Assistant will come forward to receive first, then those from the pulpit side – by order of pew, front to back. Communicants will come up the center aisle and return via the side aisle. When all

from the pulpit side have communed, the baptismal font side will commune in the same manner. We ask that the wine be consumed away from the tray table. Empty cups should be dropped into the receptacles.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

In Holy Conversation

LSB 772

- In holy conversation
 We speak to God in prayer,
 And at His invitation
 Our deepest thoughts we share.
 We come, His will obeying,
 As children bringing needs;
 And to support our praying,
 His Spirit intercedes.
- 2 These holy conversations
 Begin in childlike ways;
 We bring our supplications
 And words of thanks and praise.
 With care our Father listens
 To ev'ry thought expressed,
 Then answers our petitions
 In ways He knows are best.
- 3 As holy conversation,
 In silence or by word,
 In ev'ry situation
 Through Jesus, we are heard.
 So let us pray securely,
 Expressing hopes and fears
 With confidence that surely
 Our Father ever hears.

NUNC DIMITTIS (LSB 937)

Lord, bid Your servant go in peace,
 Your word is now fulfilled.
 These eyes have seen salvation's dawn,
 This child so long foretold.

2 This is the Savior of the world, The Gentiles' promised light, God's glory dwelling in our midst, The joy of Israel. With saints of old, with saints to come,
 To You we lift our voice;
 To Father, Son, and Spirit blest
 Be honor, love, and praise.

PRAYER (Stand)

BENEDICTION

SENDING HYMN

Let All Things Now Living

(LWB 557)

A song of thanksgiving

To God the creator triumphantly raise,
Who fashioned and made us,
Protected and stayed us,
Who still guides us on to the end of our days.
God's banners are o'er us,
His light goes before us,
A pillar of fire shining forth in the night,
Till shadows have vanished
And darkness is banished,
As forward we travel from light into light.

2 His law he enforces:

The stars in their courses
and sun in its orbit obediently shine;
The hills and the mountains,
The rivers and fountains,
The deeps of the ocean proclaim Him divine.
We too should be voicing
Our love and rejoicing;
With glad adoration a song let us raise
Till all things now living
Unite in thanksgiving:
"To God in the highest, hosanna and praise!"

ANNOUNCEMENTS (Be seated)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE (5:00) (10:00)

Trumpet Tune By: Jeremiah Clarke

FLOWERS: The flowers are given this week by the O'Neill family in honor of Ellie and Dave's birthdays.

FELLOWSHIP CONTRIBUTORS: Council Officers

Those serving:

Saturday, July 22, 5:00 p.m.:

Pianist: Shaw-Hwa Yang Greeter: Steve Berg

Comm. Assist. : Jim Easterly

Reader: Dede Dixon

Sunday, July 23, 10:00 a.m.:

Greeter: Aaron Siebrass Comm. assist: Judy Koucky Reader: Aaron Siebrass Trumpet: Amelia Jansen

AV Assistants: Hannes Buuck, Andreas Buuck

Acknowledgments

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