

The grain harvest has not been great. Nonetheless, the farming community appeared not to go looting the showrooms of Massey Ferguson or burn down the Great Yarmouth offices of Bunn's Fertilisers.

In fact I remain impressed with the perennial pragmatism of our farmers (at least the ones with whom I've spoken): the sentiment that there's little we can do about the downturns of life except making the best of it and strive for better times.

Perhaps it's the loss of immediate contact with the land and its produce that has given rise to the sort of selfish, mindless, criminal response we saw last month. But whatever the cause, that shouldn't become synonymous with excuse. There was no excuse.

We seem to be always looking for someone else to blame, forgetting that bad things happen to good people as well as to bad people. That is the world of chance and free will in which we live. Jesus refers to this in passing: a building in Jerusalem falls on and kills some people, who were no better or worse than anyone else. He makes the point that we need to repent - to make sure we're squared with God - while we have the chance because you never know what's around the corner.

Repentance, is not enough, however. A farmer clears his field, then plants in it. Does he then leave it, expecting that he has done enough? It still needs tending.

Repentance is not enough without tending the new life we subsequently have. That can quite simply be a bit of hoeing to keep out the weeds. That is, keeping a check on a few simple rules. The ten commandments. They cover everything (for those marauding moronic mobs, particularly numbers six, eight and ten).

Sometimes the interim harvest of our life might not seem much, but there is a final gathering-in...