

Sunday, October 4, 2020 - 18th Sunday after Pentecost

The First Reading, Psalm, and Gospel all talk about vineyards.

The First Reading and Psalm both speak of God's people as like a vineyard.

The Gospel speaks of all the areas in our lives where we as God's people need to faithful caretakers of God's vineyard.

The First Reading describes the exile as a time of future judgment.

The Psalm describes the exile as a current experience.

In the First Reading and Psalm the problem is with the unfaithful vineyard.

In the Gospel the problem is with the unfaithful tenants of the vineyard.

Isaiah 5:1-7 (NRSV) The Song of the Unfruitful Vineyard

¹ Let me sing for my beloved my love-song concerning his vineyard:

My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.

² He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines;

he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it;

he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.

³ And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah,

judge between me and my vineyard.

⁴ What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it?

When I expected it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?

⁵ And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard.

I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured;

I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.

⁶ I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed,

and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns;

I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

Psalm 80:7-15 (NRSV)

⁸ You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it.

⁹ You cleared the ground for it; it took deep root and filled the land.

¹⁰ The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches;

¹¹ it sent out its branches to the sea, and its shoots to the River.

¹² Why then have you broken down its walls, so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit?

¹³ The boar from the forest ravages it, and all that move in the field feed on it.

¹⁴ Turn again, O God of hosts; look down from heaven, and see; have regard for this vine,

¹⁵ the stock that your right hand planted.

Philippians 3:4b-14 (NRSV)

Those who would seek salvation by works rather than by grace will end up going in one of two directions – either towards pride or despair.

Martin Luther is an example of despair; the apostle Paul is an example of pride.

^{4b}If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

But Paul now views as “loss” and “rubbish” what he had once considered as so valuable and worthy.

⁷ Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order to gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him.

Righteousness = perfection, perfect conformity to a standard

Not a righteousness we achieve, but a righteousness we receive

Examples of when 90%, or even 99%, is not enough – only 100% is acceptable

⁹ Not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith.

Outreach through Music – Press On

¹² Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

¹³ I do not consider that I have made it my own but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Focus – where do you need to focus?

Forget – what do you need to forget? “I distinctly remember forgetting that.”

Forge ahead – where do you need to forge ahead? could focusing and forgetting help you forge ahead?

Matthew 21:33-46 (NRSV) The Parable of the Wicked Tenants

1. God has called us to do His work
2. God has equipped us to do His work
3. God holds us responsible to do His work

⁴⁵ When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶ They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.