

Sunday, October 4, 2026 - 19th 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 be 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 – The Unfaithful Vineyard

1 - 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.

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

5-6 - And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard.

I will remove its hedge, break down its wall, and make it a waste.

It shall not be pruned or hoed but shall be overgrown with briars and thorns;

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

Psalm 80:7-15 – The Unfaithful Vineyard

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.

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.

14-15 - Turn again, O God of hosts; look down from heaven and see; have regard for this vine,
the stock that your right hand planted.

Philippians 3:4b-14

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

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

4b-6 - If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: 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; 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 so valuable and worthy.

7-9 - Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. 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 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.

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.

13-14 - 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, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Focus – "This one thing I do" - Where do you need more focus?

Forget – "Forgetting what lies behind" - What do you need to forget and leave behind? "I distinctly remember forgetting that."

Forge ahead – "Straining forward to what lies ahead" - Where do you need to forge ahead? Could focusing and forgetting help you forge ahead?

Matthew 21:33-46 – The Unfaithful Tenants

1. God has called us to do His work

33 - There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. . . Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country.

2. God has equipped us to do His work

33 – He put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower.

The landowner gave them everything they would need in order to succeed. Just as God has given each one of us as individuals and as a congregation everything we would need in order to succeed in doing what He wants us to do. The tenants never had it so good.

3. God holds us responsible to do His work

34-39 - When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Finally he sent his son, saying, "They will respect my son." But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance." So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

The tenants did not want to just pay no rent. They wanted to own the entire estate – without having to pay anything for it.

40-41 - Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants? He will put those wretches to a miserable death and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.

43 - Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom.

The Kingdom of God will be taken away from those who do not do the work of the Kingdom and will be given to those who do.