

Pick N Mix Family Activities

The seventeenth Sunday after Trinity, 4th October 2020

The Parable of the Tenants in the Vineyard - Read Matthew 21.33-46

You may like to use this material as a basis for discussion in your family.

The people listening to this story of Jesus would have responded in a number of different ways. He uses an image of God as a landowner of a vineyard. The chief priests and elders knew that the vineyard was often used as an image of the Kingdom of God. They realised that Jesus was talking about them and the Jewish people.

The landowner has done a lot of work to ensure that this will be a good and productive vineyard – he planted the vines, put up a fence, dug a pit for a wine press, and built a watchtower to help supervise the land and the crop. The people listening to Jesus would have recognised how much work went into setting up the vineyard and would have had sympathy for the owner. But then he went away and let out the land to tenants.



Vineyards were very important at the time of Jesus and the grapes would have been used to make wine which would be sold for a good price. The people listening to Jesus would have been familiar with all of this. They would also know all about absentee landlords and probably had little sympathy with a landowner who went away and didn't seem to be interested in the vineyard until the crop was ready.

If the landowner represents God what does this parable tell us about God's care for the people of Israel, for the chief priests and elders (the tenants), and for us? Is God an absentee landlord?

What happened to the landlord's slaves when he sent them to collect his share of the crop? Did they do anything to deserve this treatment? What happened to the landlord's son when he went to the vineyard? Who do you think the slaves represent? Who do you think the son represents?

The tenants don't seem to be thinking logically. Do they really think that their violent actions will result in the owner giving them the vineyard? Surely not. Jesus asks the chief priests and elders to give their opinion on what will happen to the vineyard. They say that the owner will give the vineyard to someone else – to tenants who will give share the landlord his share of the harvest. Jesus is telling them that the Kingdom of God will be open to other people if they don't respond to God and God's son.

What is Jesus telling us? How does this parable relate to us today? Can we recognise ourselves in the vineyard? We may not react so violently but are there ways in which we fail to respond to God's generosity? Are we good tenants of God's kingdom.

Activities

- Plant some seeds and care for them as they grow so that you can think about the way in which God takes delight in everything he has created and how he wants us to respond with the same delight in his kingdom. You could plant a herb like Basil which is easy to grow and delicious to eat.
- Draw a large bunch of grapes and label each grape with one of the “Fruits of the Spirit” to remind you of how you can grow to be a good tenant in the kingdom of God.
(The Fruits of the Spirit are listed in Galatians 5.22-23: love, happiness, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control)

Prayer

Lord of all creation and time, forgive what we were yesterday, renew what we are today, and bless what we will be tomorrow, in Jesus’ name. Amen.