



**Orthodox Church of the
Entrance of the Theotokos
into the Temple**

306 W. Main Street Emmitsburg,
MD 21727

<http://EntranceMission.org>

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Qualities of God
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Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Today's gospel lesson has a clear meaning which all of the fathers and commentators agree on. The owner sending his slaves to the vineyard is God sending His prophets to His people. The tenants persecuting and killing the slaves is the leaders of the Old Testament Church killing and persecuting the prophets of God. The tenants killing the son is the leaders of the Old Testament Church killing God's Only-Begotten Son, Jesus Christ. The owner coming back, killing the tenants, and leasing the vineyard to others is God replacing the leaders of the Church with the apostles and their successors. Although this parable was preached by Christ as a judgment against the Jewish leaders of His time, it contains many lessons from which we can learn and benefit from today, such as what God is like.

God is patient with us. The owner of the vineyard didn't destroy the tenants right away after they had beat or killed the first slave. Rather, the owner sent many slaves to the vineyard with the hope of the tenants' repentance. Just as the owner of the vineyard was patient with the tenants, so is God patient with us.

God gives us privileges. When the owner leased his vineyard to tenants, they had everything they needed to make the vineyard run smoothly. So too does God give us the tools to do His will. We have the Sacraments, the Church, Holy Scripture, the saints as exemplars of the faith, and most importantly, the Holy Spirit which was given to us at our baptisms.

God gives responsibility to fallible people. The owner of the vineyard wasn't a micromanager looking over the shoulders of the tenants. The owner leased his vineyard to the tenants while he was in a far country. Just as the owner gave the tenants responsibilities, so does God with us. He has given us His commandments and He has given us the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, expecting us to follow His will and grow ever closer to Him.

Most importantly, God loves us. Although the tenants had persecuted and killed the owner's slaves, the owner thought to redeem them by sending his son, thinking that this would put an end to their persecution. In the same way, God the Father sent His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to redeem His people who had gone astray, and all of humanity, to Himself. He has done this because He loves us. Similarly, we are called to love those who hate us and persecute us.

Let us contemplate on these qualities of God, knowing that we are called to be God-like ourselves.

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