

The 19th Sunday after Pentecost
“The taking away and giving of God’s Kingdom”
Matthew 21:42-46
October 4, 2026
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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 19th Sunday after Pentecost is from
our Gospel reading, Matthew 21:42-46.

**“42 Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:
‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.
This was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?”
43 “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to
a nation bearing the fruits of it. 44 And whoever falls on this stone will be broken;
but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.”
45 Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that
He was speaking of them. 46 But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared
the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet.**

So far our text:

Today’s Gospel picks up immediately after last week’s Gospel, the parable of the two sons who were asked by their father to go work in the vineyard. Jesus is speaking on Holy Tuesday of Holy week in the temple, His last day of preaching before He goes to the cross on Good Friday. And the Psalm which Jesus quotes, Psalm 118, will be fulfilled on Good Friday by the chief priests and Pharisees who are rejecting Jesus as the Chief Cornerstone.

Though Jesus is rejected by the very people that He so lovingly called out of Egypt, cared for, protected, sent prophets to teach them the way of the Lord, His work is not in vain. For Jesus says that the Kingdom of God will be taken from you, people of Israel, chief priests and Pharisees and be given to a nation who bears fruit in God’s vineyard. God’s church, His believers of the New Testament will include Gentile believers who see the work of Jesus on the cross as marvelous in their eyes!

God’s church, the Holy Christian church will continue, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it!

The chief priest and Pharisees perceived that Jesus was talking of them in these vineyard parables of the two sons and now the wicked tenants. They knew the Scriptures. They had the same Scriptures that we just read earlier, our Old Testament lesson from Isaiah 5 and Psalm 80. God had impressed on their minds the spiritual imagery of the vineyard He had so graciously given to His chosen people.

Psalm 80 reminded the people of how God brought them out of Egypt into the promised land.

“You have brought a vine out of Egypt; You have cast out the nations, and planted it. You prepared room for it, and caused it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with its shadow, and the mighty cedars with its boughs.”

God did everything for them for their physical and spiritual well-being. He gave them His covenant, His word of promise, to be faithful to them with all they needed for body and soul...building a hedge around them to protect them from unbelieving enemies with His word, giving them a wine press of the sacrificial system that ever kept them believing in the coming Messiah who would be the final sacrifice for the sins of the world, building a watch tower of His prophetic word to keep watch over their souls.

This was all so familiar to them as we read in Isaiah 5 earlier.

**“My Well-beloved has a vineyard on a very fruitful hill.
2 He dug it up and cleared out its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine.
He built a tower in its midst, and also made a winepress in it;”**

The Beloved Son of God graciously did all this for His people, giving them the choicest vine of His Word. And then, came to His dismay a very bad harvest. Expecting the best grapes He got wild grapes.

“So He expected it to bring forth good grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes.”
What went wrong? What could God have done differently He asks Himself in Isaiah 5?

**“What more could have been done to My vineyard that I have not done in it?
Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes did it bring forth wild grapes?”**

So God gives a prophecy of what will happen in the future.

“And now, please let Me tell you what I will do to My vineyard:

**I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned;
And break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.
6 I will lay it waste; It shall not be pruned or dug,
But there shall come up briers and thorns.
I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain on it.”**

It reminds us of the past two months of drought that we’ve had in the valley here before all the rain that we received this week. September is usually a month that we get rain, but it was bone dry.

Now comes the explanation of the vineyard so that there can be no doubt who the Lord is talking to.

**“For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. He looked for justice, but behold, oppression;
For righteousness, but behold, a cry for help.”**

The chief priests and Pharisees well knew this imagery of the vineyard that spoke of the fruitlessness of the house of Israel. Now Jesus directs this imagery specifically to these leaders of the house of Israel who were rebellious against God, desiring to seize the vineyard and make it their own according to their own whims and beliefs and rejecting the landowner of the vineyard, the Well-beloved, who stood before them speaking to them in the temple.

Yes, they would kill the Prince of Life as Peter reminded them in Acts 3. God sent His servants, the prophets, over and over again to them, up unto and including John the Baptist. What did they do? They rejected them, beat them, killed some of them and gave no fruits of repentance and faith in God.

The story that Jesus tells of these wicked vinedressers seems unbelievable to us as we hear it? What business owner would keep doing the same thing over and over and expect a different result? And then to top it off, after his servants were beaten and killed, put his very son in harm’s way, believing that they would respect his son.

It seems like a made up fantasy story, but it was reality. That is exactly what God did. He sent His only begotten Son to the house of Israel, and the chief priests and Pharisees, plotted against Him. They sought to lay hands on Him and finally did, stirring up the people against Him. Crucify Him! Crucify Him!

To Jesus' disciples it seemed like all had been lost. Jesus was thrown out of the vineyard and killed on Mount Calvary, buried in a tomb. Yet, this was all God's doing according to His marvelous plan. It had to happen. Jesus had to become sacrificial Lamb, the wine press, for the salvation of the world. And it is marvelous in our eyes.

**'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.
This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?**

And God brings His Word of life to you this morning, that you would see that it is marvelous in your eyes. That God has taken away the vineyard from those who rejected Him, ultimately destroying the temple in 70 AD and given His vineyard to a nation who bear fruits of it, the New Testament Church! This church includes believing Jews and Gentiles! It includes all who bring fruits of repentance of their sins and belief in Jesus as one's Savior.

Guard us from being crushed in unbelief, O God! Guard us from eternal judgment of being ground into powder by rebelling against Your Son!

Is it not marvelous in your eyes too? The Lord has planted you in His vineyard when He called you out of your darkness of sin into His marvelous light in your baptism! He washed you of your sins and made you the choicest vine by giving you Jesus' righteousness by faith. It is all a free gift. By grace you are saved. This is the message of the Reformation that we continue to celebrate this month and every day!

Is it not marvelous in your eyes that the Chief Cornerstone has placed you in His church of the New Testament and watches over you with His Word and Sacraments? He gives to you His very body and blood for your forgiveness. And He calls you to now produce fruits of repentance, love and the gifts of His Holy Spirit.

God calls each of us to be His vinedressers and comes to you to receive your fruits of faith in our season, in our generation and our time! Oh, how gracious is our God to have given His Chief Cornerstone, Jesus, for you and me, and all people! Indeed it is marvelous in our eyes! Amen.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Amen. (Philippians 4:7)