

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

October 8, 2023

10:15 am

Prelude

Welcome

In today's gospel reading, Jesus tells a vineyard parable, which serves as an image of Israel, the prophets' mission, and Christ's death. For Christians, the vineyard also speaks of God's love poured out in the blood of Christ, given to us for the forgiveness of sin. Grafted onto Christ the vine at baptism, we are nourished with wine and bread so that we may share Christ's sufferings and know the power of his resurrection.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be God, the one who forms us, + Jesus who bears the cross, the Spirit who makes our joy complete. **Amen.**

Let us bow before God in humility, confessing our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Steadfast and faithful God, **you have revealed the ways of justice, yet we fail to follow you. We are overwhelmed by the world's violence and suffering. We are afraid to risk what we have for the sake of others. For the harm we have caused, known and unknown, forgive us. For the unjust demands we place on others and your creation, forgive us. For the ways we turn away from you and our neighbor, forgive us. Lead us back to you and set us on the right path; in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.**

Beloved in Christ, God's justice stretches beyond all understanding. God's compassion is beyond compare. In Jesus, God is always making a new way for us. In + Christ, you are already and always forgiven. **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn: ELW #803 "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"

- 1. When I survey the wondrous cross on which the prince of glory died, my richest gain I count but loss and pour contempt on all my pride.**
- 2. Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast save in the death of Christ, my God; all the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to his blood.**
- 3. See, from his head, his hands, his feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down. Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown?**
- 4. Where the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small; love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.**

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Prayer of the Day

Beloved God, from you come all things that are good. Lead us by the inspiration of your Spirit to know those things that are right, and by your merciful guidance, help us to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Readings and Psalm

First Reading: Isaiah 5:1-7

The prophet sings a sad, parable-like love song about the relationship between God and Israel. In this song Israel is compared to a promising vineyard. Despite God's loving care, the vineyard that is Israel has brought forth "wild grapes" of injustice and distress, when fine grapes of justice and righteousness were expected.

¹Let me sing for my beloved
my love-song concerning his vineyard:
My beloved had a vineyard
on a very fertile hill.

²He 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.

³And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem
and people of Judah,
judge between me
and my vineyard.

⁴What 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?

⁵And 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.

⁶I 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.

⁷For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts
is the house of Israel,
and the people of Judah
are his pleasant planting;

he expected justice,
but saw bloodshed;
righteousness,
but heard a cry!

Psalm: Psalm 80:7-15

⁷Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

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

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

¹⁰**The mountains were covered by its shadow
and the towering cedar trees by its boughs.**

¹¹You stretched out its tendrils to the sea
and its branches to the river.

¹²**Why have you broken down its wall,
so that all who pass by pluck off its grapes?**

¹³The wild boar of the forest has ravaged it,
and the beasts of the field have grazed upon it.

¹⁴**Turn now, O God of hosts,
look down from heaven;**

¹⁵behold and tend this vine;
preserve what your right hand has planted.

Second Reading: Philippians 3:4b-14

Paul reviews some of his supposed credentials, which no longer have any bearing in comparison to the right relationship he has been given through the death of Christ. The power of Christ's resurrection motivates him to press on toward the ultimate goal, eternal life with Christ.

[Paul writes:] ^{4b}If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: ⁵circumcised 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; ⁶as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

⁷Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. ⁸More 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 that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, 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. ¹⁰I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

¹²Not 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. ¹³Beloved, 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, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. Jesus says, I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will last. *Alleluia.* (John 15:16)

The Holy Gospel according to the book of Matthew, beginning with the Twenty first chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Gospel: Matthew 21:33-46

Jesus tells a parable to the religious leaders who are plotting his death, revealing that their plans will, ironically, bring about the fulfillment of scripture.

[Jesus said to the people:] ³³"Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. ³⁴When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. ³⁵But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. ³⁷Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ³⁸But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.' ³⁹So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" ⁴¹They said to him, "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."

⁴²Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures:

'The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord's doing,
and it is amazing in our eyes?'

⁴³Therefore 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. ⁴⁴The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls."

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

The Gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day: ELW #342 "There in God's Garden"

- 1. There in God's garden stands the Tree of Wisdom, whose leaves hold forth the healing of the nations; Tree of all knowledge, Tree of all compassion, Tree of all beauty.**
- 2. Its name is Jesus, name that says, "Our Savior!" There on its branches see the scars of suff'ring; see there the tendrils of our human selfhood feed on its life blood.**

3. Thorns not its own are tangled in its foliage; our greed has starved it, our despite has choked it. Yet, look! It lives! Its grief has not destroyed it nor fire consumed it.
4. See how its branches reach to us in welcome; hear what the Voice says, "Come to me, ye weary! Give me your sickness, give me all your sorrow, I will give blessing."
5. This is my ending this my resurrection; into your hands. Lord, I commit my spirit. This have I searched for; now I can possess it. This ground is holy.
6. All heav'n is singing, "Thanks to Christ whose passion offers in mercy healing, strength, and pardon. Peoples and nations, take it take it freely!" Amen! My Master!

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or ELW #727 "Lord Christ, When First You Came to Earth"

1. Lord Christ, when first you came to earth, upon a cross they bound you, and mocked your saving kingship's worth by thorns with which they crowned you. And still our wrongs may fashion now new thorns to pierce that steady brow, and robe of sorrow round you.
2. O awesome Love, which finds no room in life where sin denies you, and, doomed to death, shall bring to doom the pow'r that crucifies you, till not a stone is left on stone, and then the nations' pride, o'er thrown, will never more defy you!
3. New advent of the love of Christ, will we again refuse you, till in the night of hate and war we perish as we lose you? From ancient doubts our minds release to seek the kingdom of your peace, by which alone we choose you.
4. O wounded hands of Jesus, build in us your new creation; our pride is dust, our vaunt is stilled; we wait your revelation. O Love that triumphs over loss, we bring our hearts before your cross; come, finish your salvation.

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Apostle's Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

Offering

Offering Hymn: ELW #686 "We Give Thee I Own" 1st verse

- 1. We give thee but thine own, whate'er the gift may be;
all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.**

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Offering Prayer

God of power, God of plenty, all things belong to you. We bring your gifts to the table, that all might be fed. Form us into the body of your Beloved, Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

God of grace, hear our prayer.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Blessing

The God of glory, ✠ Jesus Christ, name above all names, and the Spirit who lives in you, bless you now and forever. Amen.

Sending Hymn: ELW #832 "My Lord of Light"

- 1. My Lord of light who made the worlds, in wisdom you have spoken; but those who heard your wise commands your holy law have broken.**

- 2. My lord of love who knew no sin, a sinner's death enduring: for us you wore a crown of thorns, a crown of life securing.**
- 3. My Lord of life who came in fire when Christ was high ascended: your burning love is now released, our days of fear are ended.**
- 4. My Lord of lords, on Trinity, to your pure name be given all glory now and evermore, all praise in earth and heaven.**

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Dismissal

Go in peace. God is at work in you.

Thanks be to God.