

MATTHEW 21:33-42

33. Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country:

34. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.

35. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.

36. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.

37. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

38. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.

39. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.

40. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

41. They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

42. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

Well, what is the Lord's other message? As taught by the Church, through the image of the vineyard, the Lord is talking about our individual souls. Your soul, my soul. Each one of us is the husbandman, the cultivator of his own vineyard/soul. The hedge around the vineyard is the Law of God which protects our soul from sins. The winepress is our body which receives into it the wine of the All-pure Blood of our Savior through Holy Communion. The tower overlooking and protecting the vineyard is the Grace of God found in the Church which confirms in our hearts faith, love, and other virtues.

A vineyard is established for the purpose producing good fruits and collecting from it an abundant harvest. The Householder (God) planted the vineyards (created us,) and supplied us with everything (the Law of God, Grace, the Sacraments of the Church) that enables us to produce a bountiful harvest of good fruit, the good fruits being faith, love, humility, meekness, mercy, forgiveness, repentance, etc. This is what we were created for.

But, is this what my vineyard is producing? What kind of husbandman am I? Am I giving the Lord a life that is full of these kind of fruits? Or, am I growing the fruits of sin: greed, envy, hatred, disobedience, lust, etc? If we look around us, sadly we see an overwhelming amount of bad fruits and a great scarcity of good ones. Well, if I am this last kind of husbandman, producing these kind of fruits, what will the Householder say to me when He comes to collect the fruits of the harvest? I will hear from Him the condemning words that we heard pronounced

by the Jewish leaders on themselves: He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, through this parable the Lord is mercifully asking us to examine ourselves before it is too late. If we are bad husbandmen, we can immediately, through repentance, correct ourselves. But it is vital not to tarry. The Grace that God generously gives us, that enables us to be good husbandmen, can be taken away at any time. We can then become so confirmed in our sins that we will lose salvation and perish eternally. May God strengthen all of us to do everything that we can to prevent this from happening to us.

With Much Love in Christ,

Archpriest Serge Kotar