

what I can or can't do. I've just slipped into the prime position with Jesus as my slave to help me achieve what others are telling me is successful.

I don't want to live that way and I believe none of us do. Thank God he exposes Satan for the liar he is, so we can continue to enjoy working in the Father's vineyard, joyfully producing a harvest for him. A harvest of lives overflowing with his love, his grace, his mercy, his forgiveness, his peace. A harvest of celebration as we enjoy all that God the Father has done for us through his Son Jesus. A

harvest of changed lives, living with him, for him, through him, reflecting his character and nature in all aspects of life. Joyfully, once again reflecting the image of God, as we have it in Jesus. What a great life Jesus has made possible for us to enjoy with him, as together we go out sent by the Father to save a rebellious world.

Let us pray.

Jesus, thank you for coming to save us, so that we might live in your kingdom. Thank you for being our king. Thank you that we can work in the Father's vineyard bringing him a bountiful harvest to

feast on and enjoy. Show us this week who we can love in your name, who we can forgive in your name, who we can serve in your name so that your kingdom comes and your will is done. Amen.

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## Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am

Pastor: Tim 0427326553

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Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

2 October 2011

## THE PARABLE OF THE TENANTS

Matthew 21:33-46



The first thing that hits me about this parable is how it highlights the essence of sin. The tenants no doubt were good farmers. They had a crop to harvest, but they wanted to keep it for themselves. Who did they want to keep it for? Themselves.

The tenants are rebellious, they want everything for themselves, to the point they kill the son of the owner. Why did they kill the son? So that they could keep the vineyard for themselves. After all if there is no one to inherit the vineyard they believe they can keep it for themselves.

The first question in our 'Character Conversation Questions' on our 'Living It' handout is; 'Who's running the

show; Jesus of me?' Am I unintentionally or intentionally using the vineyard for myself, like those tenants?

Which of course is in essence the first commandment, which we heard this morning; "I am the LORD your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20:2,3)

Rebellion is what we need to watch out for. There is no room in a healthy relationship with God for rebellion, for living for myself.

This isn't to get us on a guilt trip, but an essential health check. I don't want to be a rebel, but it is so easy to believe life revolves around me. It's so easy to think, 'it's all about Tim'. But life is all about God. More

specifically for Christians, life is all about Jesus.

I don't want to be a rebel, but I know I'm tempted. And I know the devil is subtle, so I need to be on my guard, cause it is so easy for me to start believing life revolves around me. And then I start treating Jesus as my fix-it man, to achieve my goals, to preserve my comfort, to build my hopes and dreams. And when things don't go as I want, then Jesus is to blame!

I certainly want my life to be bearing fruit for Jesus.

The first commandment as we have it here in Exodus also reminds me of how the Pharisees of Jesus day took over the church of the day. The first

commandment was a reminder of the special relationship they had with God. He's not just someone out there; he's the one who rescued them, who brought them out of slavery to share his life with them as his special, loved people. What a special relationship God created with this people. So special he's born one of them.

The vineyard can refer to the world, but the first meaning is the church. The Children of Israel are the vineyard that God has planted so that he might reap the wonderful fruit of loving and being loved by them. He pours his heart and soul into this community. But then the love of his beloved is stolen from him. No wonder God is not happy.

The church, the community of faith, the community of Jesus' disciples, is the

vineyard. We are the vineyard, where in Jesus, God has personally poured out his heart and soul, so that we might know him, his wonderful love for us, and respond in love to him, loving each other. Even loving our enemy, as a response of love to him. That's how we love

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### We are the vineyard.

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God, by letting him motivate, shape, control our lives in Jesus, that we love all the people around us, especially Jesus' brothers and sisters.

The Pharisees took a gift from God, the Commandments, and used them to achieve their own goal. They didn't want to go into exile. They didn't want to lose their nation and their temple. That is one of the stated reasons why Jesus had

to die; "If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation." (Luke 11:48) The Children of Israel started living for themselves, preserving their national integrity, preserving their monuments, preserving their identity. To the point when Jesus, their God, comes they are exposed as rebels. He has to die so they can keep what they have worked so hard to build.

When I reflect on how the Pharisees lost their way, my prayer is that Jesus would save me from doing the same. I want to be living for Jesus, that his kingdom comes. I know the trap is to get Jesus living for me that my comfort, luxury and plans are done. It's always good when Jesus exposes the devil's lies and we can see clearly.

I believe we all want to be living for Jesus, that his kingdom comes and that his will is done. I believe we all want to live lives that produce fruit for Jesus to place before the Father to enjoy.

So like the Children of Israel we can celebrate that we have been brought out of slavery. For us we brought out of slavery to sin, by Jesus. So now we can share life with Jesus, growing as his disciples, reflecting his image in all we say and do, to his glory, honour and praise.

That's why the commandments were given. Not so we could use them to prove ourselves, but so we could once again reflect God, not only individually but as a community.

Part of the first rebellion was we lost the image of God in favour of doing our

own thing, in favour of making our own image.

The commandments were given to help the Children of Israel reflect their God's character and nature. They were never given so they could prove themselves. The commandments still today for Jesus' church

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### In Jesus we can produce a harvest for the Father to enjoy.

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are there as a gift to help us reflect God's image, not to prove ourselves. In Jesus you've got nothing to prove. You are the Father's child, whom he loves and delights in.

Give up living to prove yourself. Which I know is easier said than done. At Pastor's Conference I hear stories of how wonderfully others are doing and I being to feel inadequate, I begin to feel the need to

prove myself. Satan whispers, 'You're not as good as the rest. You need to do more or get out'. Do you ever hear Satan's whisper, getting you to feel the need to prove yourself?

Don't listen. Turn again and listen to Jesus, 'You are the Father's loved child in whom he delights.' Turn and focus on Jesus, listening to him, and then follow him as you seek to grow to maturity as the Father's child.

Follow Jesus knowing you are loved, knowing you are forgiven, knowing you've got nothing to prove, just a great life to discover and grow into as you follow Jesus as one of his disciples.

Don't fall for the lie of having to prove yourself, because that's just Satan's way of sucking you into living for yourself, to trick you into living as a rebel. All of a sudden life is about me and