

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The True Vine Redeems the Vineyard of the LORD of Hosts



***Parable of the Wicked Tenants, by Marten van Valckenbroum,
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earned by how much we do to please God or look righteous before men, but by letting Christ live in us and control our lives. Living with Christ, we can't help produce good works or produce fruit as expected by the vineyard master—Our God. Our focus remains pressing on to claim the prize to which Christ has called us: “everlasting glory in heaven.”

Background: The Old Testament lessons and the gospel continue from Isaiah and Matthew and use the analogy of “vineyard” management. In both cases we see the Vineyard owner (God) going to extraordinary lengths to create a productive vineyard. In both cases, the vineyard owner receives no fruit, first because the fruit was no good (Isaiah) and second the vineyard operators rebelled against the owner and killed the servants sent to collect the rent. They even killed His son, thinking if the owner has no heir, the vineyard would be theirs! The point is made by Paul in his letter to the philippians. Our salvation is not

The Lessons: Isaiah 5:1–7, Philippians 3:4b–14, & Matthew 21:33–46

“The vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel” (Is. 5:7), which He planted “on a very fertile hill” (Is. 5:1). He did everything for His vineyard, not only clearing it of stones and planting it with “choice vines,” but also building the “watchtower” of His prophets and hewing out the “wine vat” of His priesthood in its midst (Is. 5:2). But when “he looked for it to yield grapes,” there were only “wild grapes” of bloodshed and unrighteousness (Is. 5:2, 7). The Lord Jesus likewise described the unfaithfulness of those who were called to care for His vineyard (Matt. 21:33–35). But in this He also describes His cross and Passion (Matt. 21:38–39), by which He has redeemed the vineyard for Himself. He is the true Vine, planted by death into the ground, and in His resurrection He brings forth “the fruits in their seasons” (Matt. 21:41). Among those good grapes of the true Vine is the apostle Paul. Once a zealous persecutor of the Church, he “suffered the loss of all things” in order to “gain Christ and be found in him,” to “know him and the power of his resurrection” (Phil. 3:8–10).