

On behalf of my brothers and sisters, I desire that the grace of our beloved God be with all of you. May the love of the beloved Son, Christ, accompany you all in every moment of your lives, and the blessing of the Holy Spirit enlighten and guide you in life to do good.

Brothers and Sisters, the reading of today's Gospel is, St. Mathew 21, vs 33-46, in which the following is told.

“Listen to another parable”, Jesus said. “The landowner planted a vineyard and put a fence around it, dug a hole for the wine press, and built a watch tower. Then he rented the vineyard to tenants, and went on a trip. 34 And when the time of the harvest drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants, to reap the harvest that belonged to him. 35. But the tenants grabbed his slaves, beat one, killed another, and stoned another. 36 The master sent again more servants than the first time, and again the tenants treated those servants in the same way. 37 Last of all he sent his own son to them, thinking: “No doubt my son will be respected by them.” 38 When the tenants saw the son, they said among themselves, “This is he who is to receive the inheritance of the Master, let us kill him, and let us keep the land he will inherit.” 39 So they grabbed him, took him out of the vineyard, and killed him. 40 “And now when the vineyard owner comes, what do you think he will do to these tenants?” 41 They said to him, “He will kill these wretched tenants without mercy, and will rent the vineyard out to other tenants, who will give him his share of the harvest at the right time.” 42 Jesus said to them, “Have you ever read the Scriptures?” They say: “The stone that the builders rejected as worthless turned out to be the most important of all. This was done by the Lord. What a wonderful sight it is!” 43. Therefore I say unto you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and given to a people who will produce the fruits. 44. Whoever falls on this stone shall be broken; and if the stone falls on someone, it will crush him to dust. 45 The chief priests and Pharisees heard the parables, they understood that he was speaking of them. 46. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they were afraid of the people, because they considered him a prophet.

Brothers and sisters, we have heard the reading of the gospel of the day and we are going to try to make a reflection. But not so much to reflect on it to that time and this moment. We want to transcend time, to see this Bible text as a lesson for today.

We can observe that this parable is in the middle of two other parables in what the first one tells us about the two sons, in which the father tells one of them, “Son, come work with me”, to which the son responds, “Uh no, Dad, not right this minute”. But the son stops for a moment and then gets up and starts to work.

The dad then tells his other son, “Come, son, and work with me”. The second son responds immediately, “Yes dad, of course”. He begins to work but then he cannot finish.

The second parable that follows the parable tells us about a wedding and the important people who are invited to the wedding, but who don't pay any attention to the invitation. And the person who invited them gets a bit angry and says, "Fine, we are going to invite people who care about coming to this wedding."

Yet, when these folks come to enter the wedding, one man is not dressed for a wedding. The host of the wedding says, "How is it that you come this way for this wedding? Didn't you prepare yourself to come?" And then, the host asks the servants to take him out of the wedding, to stand out on the street in the dark.

Why do I speak of these two previous parables and what follows? Because it is necessary to see how this parable talks to us about the Kingdom of God and those who are charged to maintain God's kingdom. And these folks who are responsible, yet who do evil. In this parable it is made clear, the capacity that we have as human beings, to make bad decisions or to hurt one another by taking that which does not belong to us. Then we let ourselves be possessed by greed, and do whatever we can to be in control of that which belongs to us.

So, what does the text mean to us today? I imagine all of us pastors have a task at hand. And God gave us this task, did he not? To take care of this vineyard, or better yet by taking care of the sheep and caring for this flock if we are to do God's work in its highest form. Or as Martin Luther said of this principle to impart to all believers, that we are all, not just the priests, charged with taking care of the flock.

Are we doing our job well? Or not? It is difficult to think how many times we have closed the doors of the church to the people who need us and we act like these evil people. Are we acting like the tenants at the vineyard that do harm to the servants or the messengers that merely went to collect the master's share? Are we like the King who turned away the guest who dressed poorly if we use the bible to turn people away? Are we like the Pharisees who wish to condemn the messenger when the message incriminates us?

We must do the work as pastors as well as priests that are called to action that God has commanded of us. That is why, brothers and sisters, whenever we go to church we pray, yes, we pray, but also let us act, so that we are symbols of life and of change and that the church is a church which opens its doors for everyone and there will be no distinction of the Kingdom of God if we act this way in the Kingdom on Earth. And if we are not doing well, we must rethink so that we can act in a different way. The parable teaches us it and, above all, to repent from the bad things that we are doing.

Then, brothers and sisters, when we go to our homes let's be evangelists when we go out into the communities again. Let's call our brothers and sisters so that they come to church and accompany us and gather here like us, together, at the side of God and following all of God's plans for us by being signs of love, peace, and compassion.

My brothers and sisters, may this word be the living word for all of us to do good.  
Amen.

