



The Mar Thoma Church Diocese of North America & Europe Christian Education Forum

Lenten Meditations

THE UNFAITHFUL TENANTS

Matthew 21:33-46

Through the parable of the unfaithful tenants to whom a landowner entrusts his vineyard, we learn that Jesus depicts the vineyard as the nation of Israel. The owner of the vineyard is God. The unfaithful tenants are the religious leaders of Israel, to whom God gives the responsibility of caring for the nation. The owner's servants are the prophets whom God sent repeatedly, only to find that the tenants rejected and killed those prophets, and the son of the owner - Jesus.

"Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"

Matthew 21: 40

The parable reveals a few characteristics of God. It tells us of the extent of God's trust in his tenants. He leaves the tenants to make the best use of His property and expects them to honor His property, His servants, and share the fruits of their labor. It tells us of the extent of God's patience. God does not spontaneously react to His tenants' repeated abuse and ill-treatment of His messengers. Instead, He keeps sending His messengers again and again. It tells of God's judgment. When God realizes that, His tenants are useless to Him and cruel to His servants He intervenes to take away their rights over His property.

The parable reveals a few characteristics of human beings. It tells of human privilege. God equips His vineyard with everything. He makes it so easy for humans to manage His property. It tells of human freedom. The people on His vineyard were free to cultivate as much as they could. It tells us of human accountability. The parable tells of a day when God's calls his tenants to give an account of how they have managed His vineyard. Finally, it tells of human sinfulness. We see that despite the privilege and freedom that the tenants enjoyed, they spontaneously rebel against the master, and disobey His servants, His son, and Him.

Life Application

In life's journey, we are also tenants entrusted to take care of God's beautiful vineyard. He has equipped our world with so many things. It is our responsibility to nurture God's provisions and to turn away from our sinfulness. When God's time to harvest approaches, will we be ready to share the fruits that we have produced, or will we be like those unfaithful tenants. How would he feel about how we kept up His property and everything else in it? How would He judge us for the way we have treated His servants and His Son. When the owner of our vineyard returns, what will he do with us? As tenants in God's world let us be faithful stewards of His Kingdom.

Prayer: Dear God, we thank you for all the bountiful blessings that you have bestowed on our family and us. Help us to remain faithful to you and do your will, so that your Son will be well pleased with us, and the fruits that we produce are for your glory. Amen.

Dr. Mathew T Thomas, Washington DC