

## Homily - Year 27 A - October 4, 2020

Isn't it most annoying when we hear about human drama and, all of a sudden, realize that we are actually living that human drama. Today's gospel, a parable meant to give a lesson, intends to teach this lesson to the chief priests and pharisees, just like last Sunday's. The parable is not lost on them and, after hearing it, they plot against Jesus.

Well, today's parable abounds in lessons about God, about humanity, and about Jesus. So, perhaps we might find ourselves in this drama.

What do we learn about God? First of all, God trusts us. The landowner in the parable did not micro manage the operation of the vineyard. He found responsible people to take charge. God has placed us in charge of our lives, our property, our resources, our whole being.

Secondly, we learn God's patience. He sends messenger upon messenger. He did not exercise vengeance when the first messenger was killed. So, too, God is patient with us. So to speak, he lets us make our own mistakes. Some would say that he lets us dig our own graves.

Then, we learn that God does judge. In the parable the owner removed the vineyard from the cultivators and gave it to others. So, too, in our situation, if we do not produce, we will be subjected to the same judgement and have the vineyard removed from us.

Then, in the parable we see some lessons about humanity, about us. The vineyard boasted the latest in the known technologies of the time: the hedge to protect the vines from invasion, the winepress to produce the wine after harvest, the tower so that guards could survey the area to avoid attacks. They had everything they needed. So, too, with us and our lives, God gives us all that we truly need, especially his grace, to be productive and fruitful with our lives.

The story tells us also about God's great gift to us: human freedom. As I said, God does not micromanage. He has put us in charge and gifted us with human freedom. Unfortunately, as in the parable, we sometimes squander that freedom with bad choices.

We also witness the nature of sin in the parable. We often correctly attribute our sins to human weakness. But, as in the story, we are very capable of planning to sin. The men in the story plotted against the landowner. Often in sin, we declare to God that we want our way, not his way.

Then, we learn about Jesus, his mission to save us, to make things right in the kingdom of God, to save us from ourselves, perhaps despite ourselves.

So, life comes down to accepting Jesus as a cornerstone or seeing Jesus as a stumbling block that we trip over when we want our own way. Jesus is the cornerstone on whom we can build our lives. We sometimes keep stubbing our toes on this stone rather than building our lives on it.

Perhaps our prayer today should be the words from psalm 62 that we often sing: Only in God is my soul at rest. From him comes my hope and salvation. He alone is my rock of safety, my strength, my glory, my God.