

Bible study notes

In Matthew 21:33-46 Jesus directs the “parable of tenants” (one of three) towards the Pharisees and chief priests (spiritual leaders). Jesus sets out how the spiritual leaders were seeking to keep the fruit of the vineyard (Israel) for themselves, instead of giving it to the rightful owner (God). They killed the owner’s son so they could become the landowners, instead of remaining the tenants. Jesus ends by describing how the future Kingdom of God will be given to people who produce its fruits. How can we produce fruit for God and not, like those spiritual leaders during Jesus’ time, seek to keep it for ourselves? How do we not fall into the same sin those spiritual leaders were guilty of?

- Read Isaiah 5:1-7 “the song of the vineyard” and Matthew 21:33-46 “the parable of the tenants”. What similarities are there between these two Scriptures? Do you think the Pharisees might have had this song in mind when they heard Jesus’ parable? Or perhaps Jesus had it in mind when he told them the parable?

- What does the owner (God) do to set the vineyard up to flourish (v.33)? What can this teach us about the Kingdom of God today?

- Verses 34 & 38 describe the tenants (spiritual leaders) as desiring to keep the fruit for themselves and even to become the landowners (they wanted the son’s inheritance). What might the “fruit” that the spiritual leaders were keeping for themselves be?

- How might this relate to Genesis 3:5? “For God knows that when you eat from it (the fruit of the tree of knowledge) your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil”.

- This temptation is still alive today, although it is perhaps very subtle in our lives. What are some present day examples of how we desire to “keep the fruit” for ourselves? Or how we desire to be the “landowner”?

- How can Galatians 5:16 guide us in our lives so that we produce and give all fruit to God?

- What does Matthew 21:43 mean for us as St. Thomas Methodist Church?
