

FIRST READING — OLD TESTAMENT

Song of the Unfruitful Vineyard

Isaiah 5:1–7 ESV

Isaiah tells a tragic song of God, the loving Vinedresser, who lovingly planted and cultivated His vineyard (Israel), only for it to yield worthless, sour fruit instead of justice and righteousness, prompting His judgment.

¹ Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. ² He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. ³ And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. ⁴ What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes? ⁵ And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. ⁶ I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and briers and thorns shall grow up; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. ⁷ For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!

SECOND READING — EPISTLE

Counting All Things as Loss

Philippians 3:4–14 ESV

Saint Paul discards all his impressive worldly credentials and self-righteousness as worthless trash, counting everything as loss compared to the surpassing value of knowing Jesus Christ.

⁴ though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. ⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— ¹⁰ that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. ¹² Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

The Parable of the Tenant Farmers

Matthew 21:33–46 ESV

Jesus exposes the rebellion of Israel's leaders who reject God's prophets and murder His Son, warning that God will entrust His kingdom to those who produce its fruit and establish the rejected Christ as the Cornerstone.

33 “Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. **34** When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. **35** And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. **36** Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. **37** Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ **38** But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.’ **39** And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. **40** When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” **41** They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.” **42** Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?’ **43** Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. **44** And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.” **45** When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. **46** And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.

SERMON SUMMARY • RESUMEN DEL SERMÓN

Sermon Summary

ENGLISH

In this Sunday’s Gospel, Jesus tells a sobering parable about a vineyard owner, rebellious tenants, and a rejected son. It mirrors Isaiah’s song of God’s vineyard—a tragic picture of a God who did everything necessary for His vineyard to thrive, only to find wild, sour fruit and bitter resistance.

When we look into the mirror of God’s Law, we see our own tendency toward self-reliance. How often do we live as if our time, gifts, and lives belong entirely to us rather than being held in trust from the Master? How often do we want God’s blessings without His authority?

Yet, where human rebellion peaks, divine mercy triumphs. Jesus was taken outside the vineyard walls and crucified on Golgotha—bearing the judgment we deserved. But the Stone the builders rejected has become the Cornerstone of our salvation. Raised from the dead, Christ now grafts us into Himself, the True Vine.

Resumen del Sermón

ESPAÑOL

En el Evangelio de este domingo, Jesús cuenta una parábola sobria sobre un dueño de viñedo, inquilinos rebeldes y un hijo rechazado. Refleja el canto de Isaías sobre el viñedo de Dios—una imagen trágica de un Dios que hizo todo lo necesario para que su viñedo prosperara, solo para encontrar frutos salvajes.

Cuando miramos en el espejo de la Ley de Dios, vemos nuestra propia tendencia a la autosuficiencia. ¿Con qué frecuencia vivimos como si nuestro tiempo, dones y vidas nos pertenecieran completamente en lugar de estar en confianza del Amo? ¿Con qué frecuencia queremos las bendiciones de Dios sin Su autoridad?

Sin embargo, donde la rebelión humana alcanza su punto máximo, triunfa la misericordia divina. Jesús fue sacado fuera de los muros del viñedo y crucificado en el Gólgota—llevando el juicio que merecíamos. La Piedra que los constructores rechazaron se ha convertido en la Piedra Angular.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

These questions are designed to help your small group reflect deeply on the Scriptures, connect the Law & Gospel themes to daily life, and encourage one another in faith.

1 The Loving Vinedresser (Isaiah 5:1–7)

- In Isaiah 5, God details all the careful preparation He did for His vineyard (clearing stones, planting choice vines, building a watchtower). How does this showcase God's personal care and investment in our lives?
- The vineyard yielded "wild grapes" (sour/worthless fruit) instead of justice and righteousness. What are some subtle ways modern Christians might produce "sour fruit" despite receiving God's abundant care?

2 Self-Reliance vs. Surrender (Philippians 3:4–14)

- Paul had an impressive list of worldly and religious credentials, yet he called them "rubbish" compared to knowing Christ. What "credentials" or accomplishments are we most tempted to trust in for our self-worth?
- How does relying on Christ's righteousness—rather than our own performance—change the way we view our failures, stumbles, and daily mistakes?

3 Tenants and the Rejected Son (Matthew 21:33–46)

- The tenants wanted the vineyard's inheritance without honoring the owner or his son. Pastor Jose noted that we often want "God's blessings without His authority." Where do you see this conflict in modern culture and in your own heart?
- Jesus was cast out of the vineyard and crucified, fulfilling the prophecy of the "rejected cornerstone." How does seeing Jesus as our foundational Cornerstone give us security when everything else in the world feels unstable?

4 Bearing Fruit as Grafted Branches (Application & Grace)

- The sermon reminds us that fruit is not produced in our own strength, but by being grafted into Christ through Word and Sacrament. What spiritual habits or means of grace help you stay closely connected to the True Vine?
- What is one specific "good fruit" (love, patience, forgiveness, act of mercy) that God might be inviting you to cultivate in your family, workplace, or community this coming week?

Group Prayer Focus: Close your time by giving thanks that Christ bore our judgment outside the vineyard walls. Pray that the Holy Spirit would root out self-reliance in your hearts and empower your group to bear joyful, loving fruit as beloved children of God.