

Year A - 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Matthew 21:33-43

A landowner leased his vineyard to other farmers.



Jesus told the chief priests and leaders to listen to this story:

"A land owner once planted a vineyard. He built a wall around it and dug a pit to crush the grapes in. He also built a lookout tower.

"Then he rented out his vineyard and left the country.

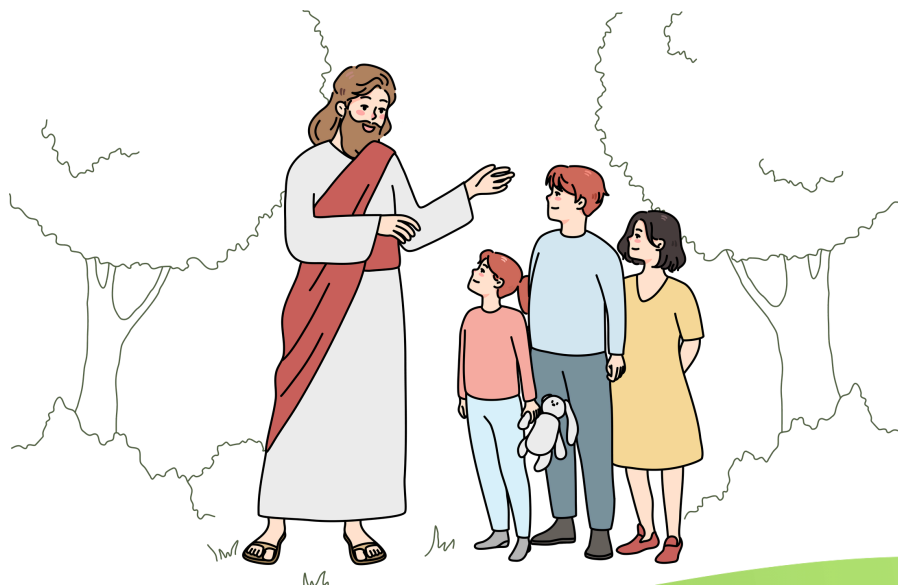
"When it was harvest time, the owner sent some servants to get his share of the grapes. But the renters grabbed those servants. They beat up one, killed one, and stoned one of them to death. He then sent more servants than he did the first time. But the renters treated them in the same way.

"Finally, the owner sent his own son to the renters, because he thought they would respect him. But when they saw the man's son, they said, 'Someday he will own the vineyard. Let's kill him! Then we can have it all for ourselves.' So they grabbed him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him."

Jesus asked, "When the owner of that vineyard comes, what do you suppose he will do to those renters?"

The chief priests and leaders answered, "He will kill them in some horrible way. Then he will rent out his vineyard to people who will give him his share of grapes at harvest time."

Jesus replied, "Surely you know that the Scriptures say, 'The stone that the builders tossed aside is now the most important stone of all'. This is something the Lord has done, and it is amazing to us. I tell you that God's kingdom will be taken from you and given to people who will do what he demands."



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Listen to Jesus



Introduction • This week Jesus tells us that if we choose not to listen to him, he will give his message to others.

Message

- The focus of today's gospel is on the importance of listening to God's word.
- The image of the vineyard has been used throughout the Old Testament. The vineyard is the people of Israel. God is the loving keeper of the vineyard. Jesus tells the parable of the tenants and invites the people to consider its meaning.
- Just as the prophets were rejected by the people, so, too, Jesus is "the stone the builder rejected." Two sets of servants (the major and minor prophets) are sent by the owner of the vineyard (God) to get the harvest. They are beaten, stoned, and killed. Finally, the land owner sends his only son (Jesus). He, too, is taken outside the vineyard and killed.
- In the loving care and protection of God, our landowner, we are asked to produce good fruit in our life by doing God's will in love and service to others.

Discussion

- Begin by checking with the children if there are any words or phrases that they don't understand, e.g. vineyard; renter/tenant. Also check if they are any words or phrases that stood out for them.
- I wonder who/what the different parts in today's parable represent: land owner (God); vineyard (God's kingdom); renters/tenants (the religious leaders who wanted to keep the vineyard for themselves); servants (prophets); son (Jesus).
- What happened to the owner's son?
- I wonder what Jesus was telling us in this story (we should obey God's wishes and accept Jesus, God's son into our lives).
- I wonder how we can show that we are people who listen to God's message today.

