

## Reflection Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October

### **Matthew 21: 33-46 The Parable of the Wicked Tenants**

'Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watch-tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, "They will respect my son." But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance." So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?' They said to him, 'He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.'

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 amazing in our eyes"?

Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.'

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

As I read the parable in this passage I was reminded of Nathan telling a story to King David after he had an affair with Bathsheba and then found a way for Uriah, her husband, to be killed. Read 2 Samuel Ch.11-12:1-7. It ends with these verses.

**"5 David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, 'As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this must die! 6 He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity.'**

**7 Then Nathan said to David, 'You are the man!'**

David, without realising it pronounces judgement upon himself. It is believed that Psalm 51 is a result of this realisation.

In the Parable Jesus told, recorded above, the chief priests and Pharisees realised they had pronounced judgement on themselves too. Jesus asked them how they thought the story would end and they said **"He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.'**" Jesus normally ended his own parables and the ending was a shock for he showed how different the way of God was to the way of the religious leaders of his day.

Often when we "sit with" and read the Scriptures they can speak into our own lives and reveal truth about the situations we are in. It can be that they point us towards a sin that needs confessing – ok confess it and find forgiveness – or it could guide us in a decision we are to make or an action we are to take. Read the scriptures carefully and prayerfully and see the written word come alive with relevance.

This is best done using a pattern of reading either using a daily reading guide or through a steady reading of the Bible passage after passage I do not recommend the "open the Bible and see where it falls open method".

Not everyday will this necessarily happen, don't give up, persevere with the scriptures not a word read will be wasted. (Is: 55:11)