



Northside Proclaimer

Proclaiming The Word Of The Lord

1 Thessalonians 1:8

Northside Church of Christ Welcomes You!

July 10, 2016

The Lord's People: Part 4

Bob Myhan

Jesus was a master at using the things in the material realm, with which everyone is familiar, to illustrate the things in the spiritual realm, to which no one has direct access through the physical senses. He used a variety of figures to illustrate various features of the spiritual relationship that is possible between Him and us. Among them are "the church," "the family of God," "the kingdom of God and Christ," "the body of Christ," "the building of God" and "the vineyard of the Lord." The following is a continuation of a study of the Lord's people. To view the previous articles, please visit our website.

Jesus the Master teacher also used a variety of figures involving vineyards: the parable of the laborers, a tale of two sons, a parable of wicked vinedressers and the metaphor of a vine and its branches. Before we briefly analyze those figures, let us consider some basic principles of viticulture.

First, there are the laws of plant propagation, which God established on the third day of creation week (Gen. 1:11-12), and the conversion process. Each original plant created by God contained its own seed, and each plant reproduced after its own kind. Agriculturists apply this science by sowing the seed of the plant they wish to reap. Because it is unconscious, vegetable life has only a passive role in procreation. Meteorological and geologic forces [rain, wind, gravity, etc.] must be brought to bear for vegetation to reproduce "after its own kind." In certain cases, animal or insect intervention is necessary [hence, "the birds and the bees"].

That which is sown in "the vineyard of the Lord" is the word of God (Luke 8:11), which is "the doctrine of Christ" or "the gospel" (2 John 9; Mark 16:16). The soil in which the word of God is planted is the human heart (Luke 8:12); not the physical but the spiritual heart, consisting of mind, emotions, conscience and will. God's word must be planted in the heart because obedience is "from the heart" (2 Thess. 1:8; Rom. 6:17).

Just as some soil is unsuitable for producing physical fruit, some hearts are unfit for producing spiritual fruit (Matt. 13:19-22; Luke 8:12-14). The heart represented by the "way side" soil is slow to understand, giving Satan the time to remove the word before he or she can "believe and be saved." Those hearts signified by "stony places" and "thorns" initially believe but do not endure to the end, apparently because each fails to count the cost (Luke 14:25-33).

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Announcements

- Remember the shut in's.
- Pray for the church and one another.
- Remember the spiritual sick among us.
- Call or email Bryan to add announcements, thanks.
- We need volunteers for door knocking. Please see Bryan.
- We need volunteers for picking folks up. Please see Bryan.

Five Day A Week Reading Plan

Mon: Song 5 - Isaiah 1
Tues: Isaiah 2-6
Wed: Isaiah 7-11
Thurs: Isaiah 12-16
Fri: Isaiah 17-21

The good and honest heart, however, not only hears the gospel, initially, but also bears fruit with patience. Having counted the cost of discipleship he is ready for the challenge presented by the various tribulations, persecutions, temptations, cares, riches and pleasures of life, rises to the challenge and overcomes (Luke 8:15; Matt. 13:23; Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21).

Second, we reap what we sow, both in the physical and spiritual realms (Gal. 6:7). In the parable of the tares, Jesus pointed out that a man who sowed good seed in his field had an enemy who sowed tares, which appeared together with the wheat (Matt. 13:24-30). Tares were reaped because tares were sown. The word of God, sown in the human heart, will produce only Christians. Likewise, denominational doctrine will produce only a member of that particular denomination. Methodist doctrine, for example, will never produce a Baptist, a Presbyterian, a Catholic or a Christian. Similarly, the word of God alone will never produce a member of a denomination. The doctrines and commandments of men are necessary for that, but they will always and only result in vain worship (Matt. 15:9).

The child of God must be careful what he sows in life, because "he that soweth to his flesh shall...reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall...reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:8). One sows to the Spirit by seeking "those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" and by setting his "affections on things above, not on things of the earth" (Col. 3:1-2; Rom. 8:1-6).

A third law that applies equally to physical and spiritual vineyards is that reaping is proportionate to sowing; the more you sow the more you reap (2 Cor. 9:6). If we diligently sow the word of God, we will reap, not only an increase in our faith, but also the seven "Christian graces:" Virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity, or love (2 Peter 1:5-11). If these things abound in us, we will receive an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom.

In the parable of the laborers (Matt. 20:1-7), Jesus is pointing out that it does not matter at what point in time one becomes a laborer; he will receive the same pay, which is illustrative of eternal life. In the tale of two sons (Matt. 21:28-32), Jesus shows that eventual actions are more important than initial intentions. Though one might have refused to "go work" at first, he might afterward repent and go. And one who might have, at the outset, given lip service ("I go, sir") might never begin to labor.

In the parable of wicked vinedressers (Matt. 21:33-43), Jesus is warning the Jews who had rejected Him that the privilege of being the people of God was soon to be taken from them and given to others.

Finally, in the metaphor of a vine and its branches (John 15:1-8), He is pointing out that His disciples cannot accomplish anything of a spiritual nature apart from association with Him, and that those who try will be eternally separated from Him.