



Faith - Fellowship - Service

Friday Devotional from Rev. Tom Groome

Matthew 21:33-46 narrates the closing portion of Jesus' dispute in the temple with the chief priests and Pharisees that began in Matthew 21:23. Although this wasn't the first clash between Jesus and the religious leaders after his arrival in Jerusalem. The altercation began when the priests and elders approached Jesus and asked, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" In response, Jesus agreed to answer their query provided they answer his: "Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" Despite Jesus' willingness to engage in what might be characterized as amiable, the religious leaders refused to take part. Recognizing that adverse consequences followed either choice, they claimed, "We do not know," to which Jesus said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things" (Matthew 21:23-27).

Undeterred by their evasiveness, Jesus then told a parable about a father and two sons as a way to contrast the religious leaders with the tax collectors and the prostitutes. In Jesus' estimation, these sinners were entering the kingdom of God before the chief priests and elders because they believed John and were willing to change their minds (Matthew 21:28-32). Using the imagery of the parable, the tax collectors and prostitutes were like the first son because they complied with the father's request.

Yet before his listeners could walk away, Jesus also bid them, "Listen to another parable" (v. 33). This time, Jesus tapped into a familiar text from Isaiah—the Lord's uncultivated and unrighteous vineyard. In Isaiah 5:1-7, a landowner planted and tenderly cared for his vineyard. But the vineyard produced only wild grapes, not cultivated ones. Consequently, the landowner despoiled his own property and turned his unruly vineyard into a feral wasteland.

Even though Jesus drew on Isaiah's vineyard allegory, there are a number of important differences. For one, in Isaiah there are only two principal protagonists: the landowner who represents God, and the vineyard that symbolizes Israel. In contrast, besides Isaiah's two protagonists, Jesus inserts two minor characters -- the landowner's slaves and the landowner's son. Even with this modification, the identities of the parable's allegorical allusions are unmistakable: God is the landowner, the tenants are the religious leaders, the landowner's servants are the prophets, and Jesus is the landowner's son. Another striking difference is that while the whole nation of Israel is culpable in Isaiah's vineyard fable, in Jesus' adaptation of the parable, the vineyard still denotes Israel, but it is Israel's current religious leaders who are held responsible for the nation's failings.

With Jesus' retelling of Isaiah's story in the temple, the vineyard -- that is, God's kingdom people -- is not destroyed. Instead of the entire nation being turned into a wasteland, God will come and condemn only the tenants for two reasons. First, they "seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another." Second, rather than respecting God's son when they saw him, "they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance'" -- a plot that would soon become reality (Matthew 21:35, 38; cf. Matthew 26:4).

Join us this Sunday as Rev. Groome preaches on *Committed Stewardship* using this text from Matthew

Team for Sunday

Thank you to Michael Anne Lynn for being our Worship Assistant.

Thank you to Kevin Burke for providing today's Life of the Church.

Thank you to our worship team this morning: Eric Owsley - Moderator, Jessica Willett- Waiting Room, Doug Caldwell - Cameras

Stewardship Opportunities



Peace & Global Witness Offering (This Sunday, October 4th):

Give in 3 ways:

Text "LexPresVA Peace \$<dollar amount>" to 73256 to give using your mobile device.

OR

Give Online at:

<https://onrealm.org/lexpres/give/Peace>

OR

Starting today: Bulletin inserts and offering envelopes are in boxes on the front porch of the sanctuary. Your offerings will be gathered on or around next Sunday.



4¢-A-Meal Offering this Sunday, October 4th

Our 4¢-A-Meal offering (sometimes known as "Cents-Ability") is a small first step in the battle against hunger and poverty. Every member — of all ages — is invited to contribute a few cents at every meal. This simple act is an expression of thanks for what we have received. It is also a commitment to share with others in response to Jesus' command "You give them something to eat."

Always the 1st Sunday of the Month

Give online [HERE](#)

OR

Write "4¢-A-Meal" in the memo of your check and send to the church

OR

Text "LexPresVA 4Cent" to 73256

Fellowship Opportunities: Thantastic Thursday!

With the arrival of fall, we are gearing up for some great new Thantastic Thursdays.

Thursday, October 8th, 7:00PM:

"Name that Tune" hosted by Ginna and Dennis Cropper. Music over a broad range of time and types will be represented.

This program will take place via Zoom and will last approximately 30 minutes.



Invites will come through REALM

Our Youth in Service

On Sunday, October 4th the Youth Group will be doing a service mission at RARA.

The group will be meeting at the RARA location at 5:30pm that Sunday. We will be stocking shelves and bags to help with drive through services on Monday.

All youth are welcome to join.



October Monthly Newsletter

Our October Monthly Newsletter is available [HERE](#)

You can find previous 2020 newsletters on our [Website: HERE](#)



Lexington Presbyterian Church
120 South Main Street
Lexington, VA 24450
Phone: 540-463-3873



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