

## THE LORD'S SERMONS

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Septuagesima Sunday

### **The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard**

*Mt 20, 1-16: "For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and said unto them: Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good-man of the house, Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen."*

(January 1872)

**T**his parable, like many of the others, was meant to help the Jews of that time to gain a better understanding of spiritual truths in the form of comparisons and illustrations from practical life. The metaphorical language was then - as still today in the Orient - used much more than nowadays, where straightforward statements are

preferred. There is always a deeper spiritual meaning in these parables which applied not only for those times, but will have the same value for all future times.

Let us now throw some more light onto the spiritual meaning and look at its significance since this is its essence, its core, whereas the parable is only its shell or cover.

Now listen. In that parable I said: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a vineyard." The spiritual meaning of these words must be traced back to the actual concept of a vineyard. What then is a vineyard?

It is a plot of land out of the soil of which - by way of planting vines - the ethereal of the earth is transformed into spiritual, in the grape to wine. Through the decomposition of the elements, coarser substances are changed into finer, more spiritual ones.

What else besides the soil is specifically needed for the maturation of the grape? It is the light of the sun, for without the awakener from above no spiritual product can develop on earth. The sun with its rays of light must awaken the elements dormant in the soil, help to spiritualize them with its warmth and, by the circulation in the vine through roots, branches, leaves and blossoms, deposit the most refined substance which, finally, after its process of decomposition, clearly reveals what an abundance of the spiritual was latent in the grape. However, this becomes apparent only after the grape has ceased to be a grape.

So here you have the vineyard where three things - soil, water and light - must work together in order to produce, on a higher level, something spiritual.

Now the comparison of My Kingdom, or the Kingdom of Heaven, with a vineyard will be better comprehensible thanks to the above mentioned explanation. Also in My Kingdom the highest is only spirit. However, this spirit, embodied in spiritual beings, can be obtained only from the lower, subordinate products of creation. Just as the entire formative process of the wine, beginning with the sucked-in sap of the roots of the vine right to the cider fermenting in the barrel, is a continuous changing, purifying and refining of substances, thus all steadily progressing created things in My entire creation are being purified and refined until - when they have ceased to be matter after the disintegration of their substance - the spiritual *can* emerge with a light, ethereal cover. As the root of the vine draws from the soil the elements it needs for the structure of the plant, the root of the future spiritual lies buried in the material.

These are the first beginnings, from which proceeds what is capable of a higher level, rising from the darkness of the earth's crust into the finer air. Then light, air and water contribute their part towards completing the process of spiritualization, changing solid elements out of the earth's components into fluids which can more easily contain spiritual and nobler substances because, having outgrown the lower regions and having been permeated by light and warmth, they can more easily submit to influences from the higher regions.

The process of educating entities to become dwellers in My spiritual Heavens takes place in a similar way. By the rays of light and truth from

above, that which is sleeping in the grave must be drawn from the coarse matter, purified and an urge awakened within it to keep rising higher and higher. You can see it on your earth how everything is struggling from the coarsest matter to a lighter existence, through all the kingdoms of nature and, finally, to the human state, which represents the first spiritual level on the way to My Kingdom. It may be compared to the grape within which are contained all the elements in preparation for the delicious wine.

Within man, too, everything is so arranged that the influence from above is more powerful than that from below. At least, that was how I meant it to be; but man's degeneration and deviation from the road I prepared for him will be discussed at a later point of this parable.

Through decomposition of the mortal body man enters the realm of spirits where the same process is repeated spiritually. As the lowest spirit, bound within solid matter, originally progressed to the highest possible level on earth, namely, the state of man, he must, in the realm of spirits, once again start as a simple human soul in order to advance to the state of a high angelic spirit, yes, even up to Me.

In this respect, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a vineyard because there, too, a purifying process takes place from the coarsest to the finest, from the solid to the most flexible, from matter to spirit. For this Kingdom of Heaven, as a vineyard, - so the parable says - a householder was seeking labourers to work for him.

What the owner of a vineyard seeks in the *worldly* sense, I seek in the *spiritual*. I likewise seek souls who, comprehending themselves and My creation, are prepared to fulfil My commandments of love and, through their teaching and example, are to contribute to the liberation for the spirits still bound in matter, in order to lead back to Me, purified, refined and spiritualised, that which once had gone forth from Me.

As the landlord sets out early in the morning and hires for work the first men the vineyard goes out at different hours to find new labourers, thus do I seek in different age levels - the age of youth, adulthood and even old age - to win back those who, until now lost to Me, did not know their mission in this world or their destiny in the beyond.

Just as My children are on different age levels, thus - on a larger scale - are the nations at the age level of either childhood, youth, adulthood or old age. They follow the he finds standing around idly, so do I set out to exert My influence on human souls already in their earliest years in order to make them fit for My Kingdom. As this lord of same course of development as each individual in his phases of life.

The first beginnings of a teaching for My Kingdom were the times of belief which correspond to the age of childhood. Then came the times of doubt and questioning - the age of youth. Later followed the times of knowledge and awareness - the age of adulthood and, finally, that period which precedes the imminent transformation - old age.

My first advent took place at the time of mankind's youth when the awakened minds began to criticize and seek explanations of what had been given them as religion, which led to the establishment of different confessions. In order to prevent mankind from being completely deprived

of his spiritual existence during this time of questioning, I came to this earth at that specific time, thereby preserving the good things gained by mankind during his childhood, removing that which had been contracted through sophisticated reasoning, thus giving back to man his spiritual dignity which otherwise would have been lost in his worldly, selfish activities. In this age of youth where both enthusiasm and great debasement are found side by side, I sought labourers for My heavenly vineyard. To accomplish their mission many died as martyrs at the stake - where others would rather have belonged. In this wavering between great ideas, between spiritual teaching and materialism, the age of adulthood was maturing for mankind. The seed I had sown in the age of youth bore fruits, although in many places degenerate ones. Again I set out to seek fighters for My Kingdom and found only few. Some again risked to separate the wheat from the chaff, so that in the ripe age of adulthood, in spite of awareness, the entire spiritual seed would not once more be suppressed because of worldly interests. The religious wars and persecutions began, and men tried to combat with fire and sword, with hate and vengeance what could have been conquered solely through love and tolerance. Also this age of adulthood with its more earnest character passed. Those who had wanted to stupefy the world in accordance with their own ideas and to smite it with blindness, fell into the pit they had dug for others. They are going towards a reform which will turn out quite different from what they had imagined. Thus My labourers, although they had not yet accomplished everything, had at least contributed to save from destruction and decay the plant of the spirit that contains the purest wine of heaven. Now I am coming again in mankind's old age when he has matured toward a spiritual transformation. Again I am looking for labourers and am finding already quite a number. Although in the old age of mankind - just as in the old age of the individual - there are many habits which are not easy to root out, the power of circumstances will considerably contribute towards stamping out all that refuses to make way for something better with gentleness and love.

Thus I hired and sent out My labourers. And when they once arrive in My Kingdom, they will be joining those who have gone before them, celebrating with them the feast of victory and sharing the crown of merit.

I had called all men to walk this road to purification but only few succeeded in becoming the elect who - triumphant over misery, grief, worry and struggle - kept holding high My banner of faith. Some have also suffered and endured in their pious but misconceived thinking that had degenerated into fanaticism. These will be the grumblers in the beyond when they see *first* rewarded those on whom, during their life on earth, they had looked down upon with contempt. True, they too were chosen ones but lacked the strength to become the elect. Hence, they will have to watch the last become the first and the first the last.

Yet Eternal Love, Who evens out everything, will know also there how to heal the wounds of self-pride which were based on false notions.

You, My children, and all mankind have now entered the period of old age. The time of dissolution - in the spiritual sense - and of My last advent is approaching. Therefore the restlessness in the hearts of people because they sense the imminent change of temporal and spiritual things. Therefore the

hurry to eradicate the evil still *before* that time, so as not to be surprised by events in which the beliefs of today will not suffice. Therefore the zeal of the labourers in the evening in order to catch up in these few hours of spiritual life with the things that have not yet been accomplished.

Thus the lord of the vineyard will soon be occupied with paying the wages and I shall soon be distributing the crowns and palms of victory among those who - whether late or early - were the true representatives and propagators of My teaching.

Therefore, make sure that you not only belong to those chosen to hear My Word but that you may be counted among the *elect* who, like diligent labourers in a vineyard, have in mankind's old age contributed most to win from the hard and loveless dealings of the world as much spiritual as possible which one day in the Kingdom of Heaven, after the process of fermentation, will be bearing spiritual fruits.

Amen.