

Summary of the sermon

Jesus explained very few parables. The disciples needed an explanation of the parable of the sower, and they asked Jesus to explain it to them. But that is not the case with this parable. It was first addressed to the chief priests and scribes gathered in the temple and they understood it right away. This parable is about the relationship between Father and Son. Who is He? From where does his authority come from? From the devil? On what grounds is he acting? It is in such an atmosphere of curiosity that the parable of the evil tenants is told.

The farmer is seen to be caring, as he looked after and guarded his vineyard, fenced it in and built a watchtower. But here we shouldn't imagine an old man with a long beard, who doesn't care what happens to the vines he has rented out. No, the situation is very different. The farmer - God has entrusted his vineyard - his people - to the church, to those whom he has called to care for his people's vineyard. The harvest came - the time of reckoning and this distant master sent his servants- the prophets to gather the harvest- the praise of the master, a life praising God.

Last, of all, he sent his son to them, thinking he would be appreciated. After so many servants were sent away, did this master have no better idea? Didn't he think they would eliminate his son like they did his servants? It's very interesting to us – to see the Father's behavior. To see his love? He gives the most valuable, he gives his son for the harvest of his vineyard, thinking well of the wicked, thinking that perhaps they will appreciate his son.

Two kinds of thinking can be noticed in the parable: 1. A selfish way of looking at the world in which the whole world is mine; 2) The world belongs to God, I am only in possession of some things in it for some time.

[The world belongs to God, I can merely have some temporary possessions](#)

When I follow this mindset, I kind of look at everything the same as that little girl who wrote in her book: „Possession of Kovács Piroska, property of God”

For now, it's my property because the Lord gave it to me. But it is His property, and I will give it back to Him one day. And there's no tragedy in giving it back. He knows why He gave it, and He knows why He's taking it back. I would be an unfaithful steward, stealing from God, if I were to usurp what is not mine, what He has only honoured me with by entrusting it to me. So thought the farmer of his vineyard, the Creator Father of his. And we can think of our lives, our possessions, and our loved ones all gifts from the Father.

The whole world is mine

In this parable teaching of Jesus, this is represented by the tenants who gave the glory belonging to God – for the harvest, for the inheritance itself – to themselves. And it all starts with a certain mindset. A mindset in which if I had toiled and worked for it if I had cultivated this land – it is considered to be my own property. There is no master over me, no God – the whole world is mine, or to put a twist on the interpretation: it is not the Master - God who has gone far away from us – it is us who have deliberately left him.

In the whole world is mine mindset, it is only the inheritance I need, more than that I want to have everything. What I don't want are obedience, accountability and responsibility. The evil tenants grabbed the farmer's son, the heir, threw him outside the vineyard and killed him there for the inheritance. The chief priests, to whom the parable was first spoken, condemned the evildoers to destruction for their deeds. And you know, these same people in the high council could have easily recalled this story when they condemned Jesus since the role of the son of the master in real life is played before them by Jesus. He, the Son, was sent by the Father to redeem us. Yet, at his crucifixion, when they go with him outside the city, they do not remember what the evil tenants do to the son of the farmer: " they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him."

At the end of the parable, when the chief priests pronounced the accusation against the wicked tenants and said: " He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.", Jesus reveals his true nature, implying that he would be the one condemned within days. He says to them: „Have you never read in the Scripture?“ Have you not understood the psalm: ““The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes”“?

A play on words is used by Jesus in this sentence with the words stone and son of someone being used interchangeably in the original Aramaic speech. Really what Jesus is asking is: He was made of the Lord, wonderful in our eyes.

Dear congregation dear brothers and sisters! To whom do our eyes look? Let us look at the Christ on whom we are built, the cornerstone on whom we can build our life, our Church. It is then that the fruits we have received are not our own, it is then that we start to become more entrenched in the idea that the world and we are in is the property of God with our whole life, and in it, we only possess some gifts for some time. Let Christ be wonderful in our eyes, for in him God has given us more than we could ever imagine. Amen.

Sermon by Dávid Kis Kendi. Originally spoken at the Lutheran Church, Zwolle, 11 september, 2022