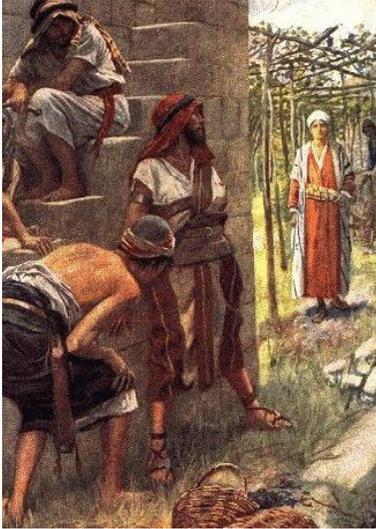




ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY April 7 & BEYOND”

"A New Life from the Debris of the Old”



This Sunday in San Diego, you would probably find only one congregation in the entire city reading the story of the Parable of the Tenants, from Luke 20. The rest of the ecumenical world have moved on to a different schedule of readings. We are using the Book of Common Prayer.

Anyway.....You probably will recognize it when you hear it, this teaching of Jesus by allegorical parable, where the absent owner of a vineyard sends several

delegations of servants to collect the rent and portion of the harvest, all of whom are beaten up and sent away by the tenant farmers. When the owners' son was sent, they decided to kill him, too, and claim the inheritance. No responding mercy in this story, though, like last week. Last week in the story of the Prodigal Son, the Forgiving Father recognizes repentance, and Mercy is applied. Here there is not one hint of repentance, and as Jesus tells the parable, the owner has all the tenant farmers killed.

One little phrase, though, somewhat unexpected to those whom Jesus is telling the parable.

"What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others."

When the people heard this, they said, "May this never be!"

They do understand the judgement is justified for the horrible crime. They get that. Rather, they are responding ("May this never be!") to the unexpected: **"and give the vineyard to others."** The crowd listening understands this is a parable about the People of God, and although still scratching their heads about Jesus as the Messiah (and thus the son of the vineyard owner!) they cannot wrap their heads around how God would give up the Promised Kingdom to some OTHER PEOPLE!

So Jesus looked directly at them and asked, "Then what is the meaning of that which is written:

" 'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone'?
Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces,
but he on whom it falls will be crushed."

This is a very powerful part of the story, of the purpose, the mission, of the Messiah. He has come to provide salvation for a People lost in the darkness of their lives attempting but failing to fulfill the Law of Moses, and the Ten Commandments. He has also come to save those who are lost in the darkness of the World. So Jesus becomes the capstone, or the CORNERstone, of a new building. This building is not only the People of the Promise to Abraham any more. It is the new building, made up of ALL those who will believe in him as the Son of God, the Son of the Father who is now redefining the Kingdom of God on earth.

There's an old adage in the rebuilding and remodeling of homes: keep at least one wall, and you won't have to apply for a new building permit. You may have experienced something of the same when your life has fallen apart, but you step up to start something new: same person, new life. And now you find yourself and your new life flourishing. These kinds of rebuilds usually come from disaster and tragedy. But for Jesus the Son of God, for God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit, the use of the Messiah to be killed but to become alive and the new cornerstone was in fact the plan .

I'm sure you get that point that the Kingdom of God will eventually mean the destruction of all of God's enemies, including those who refuse to believe in His Son. But here is another.

If you've lived very long and are blessed with just a bit of self-perception, then you know how possible it is to resist God's desire to be in your life, to rebel against God. You can love God on the one hand, but stand adamantly against his will on the other. Your reasoning and justification can rise to heights of presumption and twisted confusion. Thus, you end up fooling yourself (mostly) into believing your own rationale. But in the end you are a rebel, and more -- a rebellious unbeliever -- who loves God, or purports to. Crazy? Yes. But possible. Quite possible.

We begin looking at this passage by talking about our own tendency to resist God and his will. We want our own way, prefer our own way, and resent it when we can't get it. Too often there are issues we war with God about -- an untimely death, a financial reversal, a loss we can't seem to recover from. Sometimes we openly voice our bitterness in prayer, and sometimes speak it to family members and other Christians.

If we allow ourselves to stumble over Christ's will, then we call upon ourselves the awesome punishment of being crushed to powder by the Stone.

Here is the other: at the same time, being enemies, God is willing to provide mercy, and a new life in Him. The cry from our hearts should be just a bit different than the Jewish leaders. It should be, “Can this possibly be true? Can we find new life even if we once were enemies bound for destruction?”

Yes. Because the Capstone, even having been rejected, can be the New Cornerstone of our WELCOME of Jesus Christ into our lives; to believe and respect the Owner’s Son. This is also part of God’s desire for us.

Father, forgive me for my resistance and rebellion. Help me to accept you and your direction as from your hand instead of resisting you at each step. Help me always to follow your Son, Jesus. Amen.

Father Robert Eaton, Interim Rector

Readings for this Sunday – The Fifth Sunday in Lent

Isaiah 43:16-21 Psalm 126, Philippians 3:7-14 Luke 20:9-19

CALENDAR

SUNDAY: The Fifth Sunday in Lent

8:30a Low Mass (Church)

10:30a Solemn High Mass (Church)

5:15pm Evening Prayer (St. Mary’s Chapel)

5:45pm Soup Supper (Parish Hall)

6:15pm Lenten Study “All in Prayer, and A Place for Everyone and Everyone in Their Place (Parish Hall)

—*The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue—*

Note: Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary’s Chapel)
Lenten Study follows Mass “Why Luke in Lent?”

WEDNESDAY: Noon Stations of the Cross (St. Mary’s Chapel)

FRIDAY: 6:15pm Stations of the Cross (St. Mary’s Chapel)

AA Meetings

8:00p Ladies’ Group (Fireside Room)

8:15p Men’s Group (Parish Hall)