

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time -A 2020
Isa.5.1-7///Phil.4.6-9///Matt.21.33-43

→a young man pays off his final car payment....48 long months after the new car smell has long since dissipated....

→he looks at the title document proudly and says to himself... *“now it is mine...all mine!”*

→a child’s parent asks her to share her cookie with her younger brother but the thought of sharing a portion of her sweet dessert makes her wrap her little fist tighter around the cookie... *“I don’t want to share,”* she protests *“it’s mine”*

→a high school football player is enshrined in his school’s Hall of Fame...his accomplishments and statistics etched in stone and bronze....he arises to accept his award saying... *“it just goes to show you what a kid can do if he works hard and gives it all he’s got...no one gives it to you...you have to grab life and earn your way to the top.”*

→and finally...a man looks at his financial statement and his investment portfolio...he has finally reached his *“number”*....that magical threshold of wealth that sets him free from the worry about his future...he thinks to himself... *“well done...all this earned and saved the old-fashioned way...now I can do with it whatever I want...I am the master of my own destiny.”*

→[so] what do these vignettes all have in common....[well] when you think about it...they are all about **mistaken ownership**....

→the young man who paid off his car overlooked that it was his father who co-signed the car loan...and who put money into his college bank account while he was paying for that new car.

→the child forgot that only moments before her mother asked her to share her precious cookie that it was her mother who gave her the cookie in the first place

→the football player...forgot about all the other players, the coaches, trainers, parents, and everyone else who helped him play the game that would define his life...

→and finally, the financially secure man easily forgot that he did not get to this point all by himself...if not for his intelligence, his parents who mentored and paid for him to go college, and his wife and family who stood by his side as he climbed the ladder of success he would not be as financially secure as he is now.

PAUSE

→**it's mine....all mine.....**

→these are the words and thoughts of many of us...who often think that by holding on to something long enough...it makes possession equivalent to ownership....

→forgetting the real truth that none of us are truly the owners.....but rather....the real owner of everything we have, everything we will ever accomplish, and everything we will ever possess is God...always has been...always will be.....

→and in reality....we are all just the caretakers, the tenants, the stewards of the **real** owner.

PAUSE

→today Jesus tells a story about some tenant farmers who make this very same mistake

→they worked hard in the vineyard...toiling in the heat of the day to help bring about a fine harvest of grapes...

→when the time came to gather the bumper crop, they were overjoyed at the abundance, and considered it the fruit of their own labor, their rightful possession

→somewhere during the hot growing season these tenant farmers forgot that the entire vineyard actually belonged to someone else, someone who had invested in the land, planted the vines, provided for water and everything else needed long before the first worker arrived in the vineyard to work.

→they forgot that they would not have had a job at all were it not for the generosity of the vineyard owner hiring them in the first place

→[and] so when the owner came to collect the harvest, out of which he would pay the laborers their fair share....these workers consider it unfair, even robbery, that this man, absent during their hard months of toil should now demand part of **“their”** abundance.

→[and] after the rebellious workers mistreat the owner’s messengers, he decides to send his own son...and the workers then do the unthinkable....instead of respecting the owner’s son...they kill him thinking this horrible act will somehow strengthen their claim to the land.

PAUSE

→Jesus uses this parable to illustrate that this is precisely how God relates to his creation and his people.....and I believe the message is quite simple and straightforward for you and me today.

the world that we live in and the lives we have

all belongs to and comes from the goodness of God

→and we have been merely entrusted with all of this for the benefit of others and ourselves.

---in essence we are the tenant farmers....

→we are all a part of this beautiful vineyard...our world...but we don't own it and nor should we misuse it

→we have been given the best vines...our lives...but that doesn't mean we can abuse it or not take care of it

--[and] we have been entrusted with the choicest fruits...each another...but that doesn't mean we can take advantage of one another

PAUSE

→by our baptism we have agreed to work in God's vineyard

→through the Eucharist we share that agreement with each other

→and in our confirmation we carry that mission out to others

and that is the challenge J. presents to you and me through this parable

→in the end...the bottom line is quite simple

→we have all been blessed with many advantages in our lives and in our world

→and now....our task is to use and live out those advantages remembering that we are [simply] the tenants and not the owners

---that we are here for self-giving rather than self-seeking

---that we are here for stewardship rather than ownership

---and we are here to take care of one another no matter how often that might be

→you see the people hearing this parable today in the gospel did not realize this----and that is where they went very wrong

---and....perhaps we need to ask ourselves this day....if at times we make the very same mistake....