

Sermon for Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost LWML Sunday

Date: October 11, 2020

Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

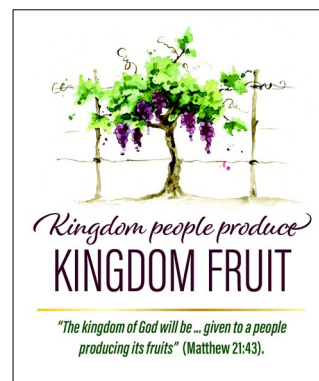
Old Testament: Isaiah 5:1-7

Epistle Reading: Philippians 3:4b-14

Gospel Reading: Matthew 21:33-46

Sermon Text: Matthew 21:33-46

Sermon Title: Kingdom People Produce Kingdom Fruit



Introit: Psalm 118:1,22-24

Hymns:

LSB 901 – Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty

LSB Praise, Love, Serve *Tune: LSB 361*

LSB Serve the Lord with Gladness *Tune: 662*

Liturgy:

Divine Service I, p. 151

Songs:

Thy Word

Brothers Sisters let us Gladly

That's Why We Praise Him

Worthy is the Lamb

Liturgy:

Creative Worship



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Text: Matthew 21:33–46

[Jesus said:] “Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.’ And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” They said to him, “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 said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:

“‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?”

Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.

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Based on a sermon by: Rev. Larry Krueger, “*Kingdom People Produce Kingdom Fruit*”

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Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Many states are known by the fruit they produce. Georgia is well-known for the delicious peaches that the state's people produce. The state of Washington is known for its apples. Similarly, Florida would bring oranges to mind. In fact, all 50 of the United States have an official fruit associated with their state. They range from pears, blueberries to strawberries, even huckleberries. In Minnesota it is the Honeycrisp™ Apple. The point is that each state is known for the fruit its people produce.

Just as states are known by the fruit each produces, the kingdom of God is recognized by the fruit its people produce. People who are truly Kingdom people produce Kingdom fruit. Those who are not Kingdom people don't. Jesus said:

Whoever is not with Me is against Me,
and whoever does not gather with Me scatters.¹

The production of Kingdom fruit is a very special task given to Kingdom people by God. The importance of this task cannot be over-stressed. This is what is taught in the Gospel reading you heard today today.

Those fruits are defined by God as:

The fruits of the Spirit are: love, joy, peace, patience,
kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-
control.

In 1 Corinthians 12 you will see that all of these gifts are given to share the Gospel with anyone and everyone. These gifts are given to reach out to others with the love of Jesus. Most especially those, living right around you, who do not yet know Him.

Let's take a closer look at the Gospel reading. Jesus is teaching the people. It says there:

When [*Jesus*] entered the Temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to Him as He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority?"²

Jesus answered, "I also will ask you one question, and if you tell Me the answer, then I also will tell you by what

1 Matthew 12:30
2 Matthew 21:23

authority I do these things. The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?”

And they discussed it among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ If we say, ‘From man,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet.” So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.”

He said to them, “then I will not tell you by what authority I do these things.”³

Jesus’ lesson was directed at their refusal to acknowledge and believe in Him as the promised Messiah. He teaches in the parable, as follows:

“There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.’ And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” They said to him, “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.”

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The Gospel reading records:

3 Matthew 21:24-27

4 Matthew 21:33-44

*When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parable, they perceived that he was speaking about them.*⁵

Their perception was correct. The chief priests and the Pharisees had not been producing kingdom fruit. Now, they were rejecting the very Son of God and would be the ones who would be responsible for His death. They were following the pattern of their forefathers who had rejected the prophets and their message, which prophetic message was now being fulfilled in Jesus.

The result of their actions was stated very clearly by Jesus. He stated in no uncertain terms:

Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits.⁶

These words of rejection spoken to those who denied Jesus also carry special emphasis for those being given the kingdom of God. The emphasis of His message is just as strong to the new tenants. Simply stated *The kingdom of God will be ... given to a people **producing its fruits***. What does this mean? Fruit production is expected of Kingdom people.

Through Word and Sacrament, by God's grace in Christ Jesus, we are made the new people of the Kingdom. We do not deserve this honored position. The Scriptures declare, we were enemies of God, but God reconciled us to Himself. As the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Rome, "*While we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.*"⁷ Through the death and resurrection of our Lord, we receive this reconciliation through the forgiveness of sins. In the waters of Holy Baptism, sins are washed away and faith is given.

By faith we believe in Jesus. By faith we are tenants, care takers, of God's kingdom. By faith we bear fruit for the Kingdom. Paul to the Romans:

Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.⁸

Let there be no doubt. To be Kingdom people is a gift. The words of Jesus are clear. The Kingdom of God is "given." At the same time, it should be equally

5 Matthew 21:45

6 Matthew 21:43

7 Romans 5:10a

8 Romans 7:4

understood, the production of Kingdom fruit is expected by Kingdom people. As Jesus taught in the parable, the master will, “let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.”⁹

This isn’t something new, nor is it only a New Testament directive. It was declared by the prophets, like in Isaiah 5:

My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.¹⁰

As people of the Kingdom, we are in a new state of righteousness, a state of the Kingdom of God. In this new state, the production of our holy lives is Kingdom fruit, recognized through fruits of righteousness, namely, repentance, faith, good works, and in the making of disciples. The good news is that we are not left to this task without God’s help.

We are people of the Kingdom of God. He has graciously nurtured us and generously gives us everything we need to produce fruit for the Kingdom. The words from the Gospel reading remind us of what the master has done:

*The master ... **planted** a vineyard and **put a fence** around it and **dug a winepress** in it and **built a tower**.*

All this he did before turning over the vineyard to the tenants. The master supplied everything the tenants needed to produce fruit. The Lord supplies all we need. The Holy Spirit calls us by the Gospel and enlightens us with His gifts.¹¹ We are connected to Jesus, who is our lifeline for bearing fruit. Jesus said:

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit ... I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit.¹²

He empowers us through Word and Sacrament for this very purpose. Being fully nurtured by God:

we walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him: bearing fruit in every good work.¹³

9 Matthew 21:41b

10 Isaiah 5:1–2

11 Luther’s Small Catechism: Meaning of the Third Article of The Creed.

12 John 15:5a, 16b

13 Colossians 1:10

The question is, “Does the fruit of your service match the generosity of His nurture?¹⁴” Jesus declared:

Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.¹⁵

God has been abundantly generous to us. We lack nothing for the work of His Kingdom. Yet, we all too often find ourselves making excuses instead of producing fruit. We even fall into the trap of the original tenants in the parable. We believe that what we possess is ours! Scripture reminds us: *The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.*¹⁶

We have the warning of what happens to those who do not respond to His generosity, those who reject His Word and His Son, and those who do not produce. The Kingdom will be taken away. Therefore, with repentant hearts and forgiven lives, we would do well to heed the words of God:

Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.¹⁷

For those to whom the Kingdom has been given, it is fruit production season. This is what Kingdom people do. By God’s grace, this is what the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League (LWML) does.

From churches to communities, to the world, the LWML are well known for gathering of mites for mission grants in their home districts and around the globe. Their labors expand from congregation to community to the world. The LWML is a blessing to many. Their motto for the year, “Kingdom people produce kingdom fruit” fits well into the description of their purpose and mission.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “*Every healthy tree bears good fruit.*¹⁸” As followers of Jesus, God makes us healthy through Jesus. We are in the right state – His kingdom. We are in the right season – the fruit-producing season. So, Kingdom People, “Produce Kingdom Fruit!” Bear the fruits of repentance, faith, and good works. Go make disciples. May the kingdom of God be recognized by our fruit!

To God alone be the glory, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

14 The Lutheran Study Bible – Isaiah 5,, page 1096.

15 Luke 12:48

16 Psalm 24:1

17 Colossians 3:17

18 Matthew 7:17

**Proclaim God's Word,
Encourage one another in faith,
Witness to God's love and
Serve all people**

