

Twenty-Seventh Sunday In Ordinary Time

By Fr, Bala Kommathoti

God Calls Us To Bear Good Fruit And To Be Good Stewards Of His Vineyard.

Dear brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ,

Today's first reading and Gospel present to us similar parables about a landowner who takes great care in setting up His vineyard, only to be deeply disappointed by the results. In both cases, the landowner is clearly meant to represent God, but there are distinct differences. In the first reading God asks, "What could I have done for my vineyard that I have not done? I expected my vineyard to yield grapes. Why did it yield sour grapes instead?" (Is 5:4)

Two things are clear in the above words of Prophet Isaiah.

- 1.) The GOOD (God has done)
- 2.) The EVIL (Man has done)

Both the first Reading and the Gospel focus on the Lord's vineyard, which represents God's chosen people. God chose Israelites to be His own people. He delivered them from the Egyptians bondage, He was with them on their wanderings in the desert on the way to a land flowing with milk and honey. In spite of all the love He has shown them, all He gets in return is utter ingratitude. A look at the first few chapters of Isaiah yields the following harvest: God looked for **peace** from His people, and got war; for **true worship**, and got idolatry; for **justice** in their dealings with one another, and exploitation of the poor and the weak; for **goodness**, and got evil; for **caring and sharing**, and got greed and acquisitiveness; for **temperance**, and got excessiveness and snobbery; for **humility**, and got pride; for **wise and Godly living**, and got a pagan lifestyle. This is our story too. Which

of us would be so bold as to claim that we have made a full and adequate response to God's love, shown in and through Christ?

Let us take a look further in the Gospel, just as in the parable, the owner sends his servants to collect the harvest. Instead, the tenants seized, beat, stoned and even killed the owner's messengers. Similarly, God had sent His prophets to remind His people of their duty to serve one true God and to fruitful people. Yet one by one God's messengers were rejected. For the good done by God, man returned with evil. The same words of the prophet ring aloud in our innermost being reminding us of what God has done and is still continuing to do in our lives. And all the more should awaken us to realize our own faults. Because God expects good from us but, at times we fail to live up to the expectations of God.

Are we yielding SWEET grapes which God expects from us? Or are we yielding SOUR grapes of evil life? Which St. Paul proposes to the Christians of Philippians in today's Second Reading: "Fill your minds with everything that is true, everything that is noble, everything that is good and pure, everything that we love and honor, and everything that can be thought virtuous or worthy of praise."

God wants us to be fruitful in His vineyard, even when we sin against God, He is patient with us. Because He expects that we will change. Hence, He makes every attempt to bring us back. But if one still remains unrepentant, it only proves hard heartedness on his part and taking the goodness and patience of God for granted. St. Peter says, "The Lord does not delay His promise, as some regard "delay" but He is patient with you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). Let us bear good fruit in our lives.

Prayer: Lord, give me wisdom and discernment. Give me also the courage I need to be strong and forceful with Your will. I give my life to you, dear Lord, use me as You will. **Jesus I trust in You. Amen**