



74th Year

August 30, 2026

Pamphlet #35 (3822)

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (Matthew 21:33-42)

The parable of the vineyard

The Lord said this parable, "There was a householder who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge around it, and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to tenants, and went into another country. When the season of 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. Afterward 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 cast 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 very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?'"

THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED TENANTS

The present parable refers to the plan of Economy, to God's Providence for man's salvation. Therefore, it is a narrative that speaks about the mystery of the Kingdom of God, which is already "within us" (Luke 17:21) and will be fully revealed at the

end of historical reality, when the Lord of the Church will judge “the living and the dead.”

The Master of the household in the narrative planted the vineyard, surrounded it with a “hedge” (a fence) to protect it, dug a “winepress” for the processing of the grapes, and built a “tower” for overseeing the area. Into this vineyard he placed farmers to work until the season of harvest, when his servants would come and render an account.

The appropriation of the vineyard’s fruit

However, the farmers, thinking with malice, seized the first servants of the Master and mistreated them – they “beat” them, “killed” them, and “stoned” them. Wicked farmers, of course, are those people who refuse to recognize that “the vineyard,” the world, life itself, the gift of existence, has been given by God for one purpose: so that man may partake in the Kingdom of God, may come to know and acknowledge the Incarnate Lord of Glory as his Savior and Redeemer, and may be filled entirely with the life, grace, holiness, glory, and immortality of God – both in the present age and in eternity. The first stage of the Lord’s sending involves His Prophets, the Patriarchs, and the Righteous of ancient Israel, whom the world stubbornly refused to accept and instead put to death. The farmers of the parable wanted to keep – to appropriate – the fruits for themselves; that is, they wished to live from the gifts, the graces, the richness of God’s goodness, however, without accepting the One who offers these blessings. But the Lord, who “wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4), does not abandon His creature. He continually shows paths of repentance, salvation, and return.

The Lord works the salvation of the world

The Master of the household, although saddened and angered by the unjust behavior of the vine dressers, sends new and greater persons – those active in the era of the New

Testament: the Disciples and Apostles, the Saints and the Fathers. To them the farmers did the same things: they persecuted them, stoned them, and killed them. Finally, the Lord of the vineyard decides to send His own Son, hoping that the farmers might feel shame before His dignity and respect Him. Yet their behavior becomes even more brutal: they lead Him outside the vineyard and crucify Him. And here lies the mystery of God's love. His Son, being crucified, offers Himself as a sacrifice for the life and salvation of the world. To hatred, injustice, and malice He responds with love, forgiveness, and tenderness. He never ceases to send forth His grace, His light, the Holy Spirit, and the people of God – the good farmers – for the transformation of man and of the world; for the Kingdom of God to prevail, the overcoming of death, and the victory over evil, sin, and the devil.

Jesus Christ, the cornerstone

The narrative concludes with the reference to the fact that the Lord Jesus is the “cornerstone,” that is, the head of the building, the stone which the builders may have rejected as unsuitable, yet upon Him the entire structure of life is supported. For Christ unites the peoples into one Church and transforms the world into the Kingdom of God. The Lord assures us that He is the vine, and we believers are “the branches,” the shoots of the vine. Whoever remains united with Him will bear abundant fruit, for without Christ no one can accomplish anything (John 15:5). God knows how He will deal with the ungrateful farmers and how He will address their wickedness, a wickedness that in every age resists the will of God and refuses to render to Him what is owed from the cultivation of His vineyard: repentance, faith, hope, and love. Let us pray that we may always remain united with Christ and offer Him the fruits of our spiritual struggles with a spirit of gratitude and thanksgiving.

Archimandrite N. K.

August 30, 2026: 13th Sunday of Matthew

Leave-taking of the commemoration of the beheading of the precious head of John the Forerunner.

Alexander († 340), John († 595), and Paul († 784),
Patriarchs of Constantinople.

4th Tone – Eothinon: 2 – Epistle: 1 Corinthians 16:13-24
– Gospel: Matthew 21:33-42

NEXT SUNDAY: September 6, 14th Sunday of Matthew
Epistle: 2 Corinthians 1:21-2:4 – Gospel: Matthew 22:2-14

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by Saint Justin Popović
Translated by George Avramopoulos

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