瀬田の丘



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Today's Word
The Twenty-seven Sunday, Year A (4 October)

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First Reading: Isaiah 5:1－7
Second Reading: Letter to the Philippians 4:6－9
Gospel Reading: Matthew 21:33－43

From these three readings
Let us reflect on the phrase "good grapes" found in the First Reading. The owner of the vineyard planted "select" grapevines. However, what he truly desired were ordinary grapes—enough to make "wine." Contrary to the owner's hopes, what bore fruit were "rotten, sour" grapes.
Please note the sequence of verbs in verse 2: "plowed," "tended," "planted," "fenced," "dug," and "waited."
These verbs express how the "Beloved One" is carefully tending the vines. A vineyard seems to be quite labor-intensive. The repetition of these verbs likely serves to emphasize this point. Furthermore, since the "Lord's" "vineyard" unquestionably refers to Israel, the Lord God's love for Israel is clearly expressed here. "Planted good vines" is said to literally mean "the very best, select vines." "That they might bear good fruit" is said to mean "grapes suitable for making wine or grape juice." Therefore, what the "beloved" planted and hoped for were simply ordinary grapes. However, what grew were "sour grapes." This is said to mean "rotten grapes," an expression derived from the fact that they "give off a foul odor."

The words from the Second Reading—"what you have learned from me, received from me, heard from me, and seen in me" (verse 9)—resonate deeply. What Paul demonstrated was a way of life based on the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ's way of life and character serve as the standard by which we live. Christians are to live as Christ lived.
Please take note of the words in verse 8: "truth," "honor," "justice," "purity," "love," and "reputation." This is a list of virtues. These are not specifically Christian virtues, but rather virtues that were held in high regard in

Greek ethics at that time. Paul urges us not only to cherish our union with Christ but also to value these general virtues.

When we view society and the world from the perspective that Christ “became like us” (Chapter 2, verse 7), we must respect and keep in mind these worldly virtues in order to be “perfect” (Chapter 3, verse 15).

The master’s words in the Gospel reading—“If he is my son”—are heartfelt. They convey the vineyard owner’s desire to build a relationship with the farmers, even if it means sending his beloved son.

Let us explore the rhetorical structure evident in today’s Gospel reading.

A(21:33-40) “Listen to another parable” (21:33) (παραβολὴν)

B(21:41) “He leased the vineyard to other tenants” (21:41) (ἐκδώσεται)

C(21:42) The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone (21:42)

B’(21:43-44) It will be given to a people who will bear fruit worthy of it (21:43) (δοθήσεται)

A’(21:45-46) When they heard this parable (21:45) (parabolas)

This follows the pattern of A, B, C, A′, B′, and C′. The common keywords are “parables” in A and A′, and “given to others” in B and B′. In the middle section, C, the “quotation from the Old Testament” is crucial.

It takes tremendous effort to bring grapes to fruition (First Reading). Moreover, the master generously lends his resources to the farmer without hesitation (Gospel Reading). Here we see the image of God the Father, who engages with humanity and entrusts things to us. Furthermore, in both the First Reading and the Gospel Reading, we see the assumption that “we ourselves will be saved.” Isn’t it precisely this kind of assumption that prevents us from truly encountering God?