

**THE KINGDOM OF GOD FOR ALL**  
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Today we follow Jesus as he enters Jerusalem on the way to his death and resurrection. Let us see and listen to the proclamation of his words and actions on the way to the cross. This is a breathtaking journey in his last days, and a real eye opener for some.

Jesus enters Jerusalem in a triumphal entry, as a King. Leaving behind all of his miracles as a testimony and witness of God's glory, God's might, majesty and command over all. Jesus cleans the temple and drives out salesmen, money changers and profiteers, declaring, "My house shall be a house of prayer, not a den of robbers." (Luke 19:49).

In the days following, he heals the sick and lame. He enters the temple and is confronted by Chief Priests, Saducees, Scribes and members of the Sanhedrin ( the supreme Jewish Council) with a demand, "By whose authority do you do these things!" (Luke 19:47-20:20).

Jesus answers with parables (simple stories that illustrate spiritual messages). The leaders took the stories personal. They understood! The messages of the parables continue to inflame them with vengeance and hatred. They wanted to kill Jesus, but not yet. They were afraid of the people that also were listening to Jesus' message.

In the parable of the tenants Jesus told how God's Kingdom (vineyard) was planted and put in the care of the people of Israel, God's chosen people. The renters didn't share the harvest or give the owner his due...The harvest fruits.

What are the fruits that were to be given or shared? Here are a few that we would want to consider:

1. A thankful offering of service and love to God.
2. Thankfulness for looking and getting past all of our wants and recognizing the blessings that are rained down upon us each day.
3. Living a life of generosity in thought, word and deed.
4. Having joy, freedom and happiness knowing that we are living and are citizens in God's Kingdom where we are safe and secure.

But, what is exciting about God's Kingdom; is it just spiritual words of ... whatever?

God's Kingdom is a spiritual, invisible "nation" of believers. It is a gathering of the elect, living their lives in a secure, faithful "gathering" of life forever. It is ruled by Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. Jesus does not "rule" with dominant power and might and self-made glory, but rules your heart with love that is shown in all activities. The soul is that "Spiritual Essence" of God in each of us. It is the home of the Holy Spirit in each of us. This Spirit is a gift of God that guards, leads and cares for us in our actions, in our decisions, and in the application of God's word and love in all we do. The Holy Spirit creates a faith to bring about faithfulness to a God who loves us. And I ask, Where is our faithfulness in the honor, thankfulness and praise we give to God?

There are different “aspects” to the Kingdom of God. Jesus Christ is Lord and Ruler of them all. He has been given authority by God, over everything in heaven and on earth. Therefore our world, plagued with ruin, sin and rage, Jesus rules with power and comforts us with his care. All things whether they are good, bad or ugly are governed to the benefit of God’s people. God does not forget or forsake his people. We are to look, see and learn of God’s work in our lives with an understanding of “God is with us”, not what in the world is he doing?

Jesus is Lord and Ruler of Grace. The gathering of the faithful...those with the rule of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit in their heart that generates a personal relationship with Jesus. This is established with faith. So, that by grace we believe His Holy Word and lead a Godly life. And, this Kingdom of Grace FEEDS the Kingdom of Glory. A kingdom where a purchased and won child of God, through the suffering and death of Jesus Christ remains righteous in God’s Glory forever...and ever. And this Kingdom was extended to all people of all nations. And Jesus gives a warning to those who do not produce and share these fruits with God.

Jesus said, “the ones that do not share the harvest and do not believe or oppose my Son, Jesus the Christ will be crushed...pulverized by God’s judgement. Nice warning, but it is a struggle staying faithful in this world. I can lose so much. Then we turn to St. Paul as he speaks to the church of Philippi.

“The value of gaining Christ is more valuable than any earthly loss. Struggling and suffering is nothing compared to gaining Christ. Righteousness from God comes from faith. I want to know Christ and the power of the resurrection that I may attain the resurrection from the dead. “ (Philippians. 3:4b-14).

Yes, and God answered the cry of the psalmist.

“Turn now O God of Hosts. Look down from Heaven. Behold and tend the vine. Preserve what you have planted.” (Psalm 80: 14-15).

The tenants in our parable rejected the prophets and messengers of God. They mistreated and killed some. Then God sent his Son...and they murdered him...fulfilling scripture...as God planned for the benefit of his people. This suffering and death ushered in the forgiveness of all sins, even to the perpetrators, the righteousness of God’s acceptance. Salvation now and forever.

Just as we proclaim in the beautiful hymn:

The church is one foundation is Jesus Christ our Lord... elect from ev’ry nation, yet one o’er all the earth.

Yet she on earth hath union with God, the Three in one, and mystic sweet communion with those whose rest is won: Oh, blessed heav’nly chorus! Lord, save us by your grace, that we, like saints before us, may see you face to face.

Oh, happy day, when Jesus washed our sins away....Amen