

Sermon – October 7th 2018- Our Saviors Lutheran Church
Text- Matthew 21: 33-43- Theme- Stewardship/ Talents

Who has Talents?

Grace and peace to you and from our Lord Jesus Christ. What a coincidence! It's amazing. Here we are about to embark on a three week process of enlisting more volunteers in the life of Our Savior's and we have the Gospel of The Tenants in the Vineyard. What a coincidence, or not.

It's a parable of Jesus. He loved to teach using the method of the parable, or telling a story. If people listened carefully enough, they could figure out what he meant, who they were, and what it meant for their lives. To the casual listener, that's all they were, just stories. You know yeah, I heard the story but I have no idea what it meant! But, to those who listened carefully, who saw themselves in the parable, they identified. The parable becomes a mirror which reflected who they really were, and very often the hearers did not like what they saw.

The Gospel I just read is one of these parables, actually an allegory. It's about a gracious landlord who created a lovely vineyard and then allowed a group of tenants to care for it in his absence. When the time comes for the harvest, the landlord sends people to collect the produce. But the tenants refuse. It's their stuff. They did all the work.

He sends the people three times. The tenants refuse all three times. Then Jesus asks the question, "When the landlord comes back to these tenants, what do you think he will do?" The people hearing the story yell, "he will give the vineyard to someone else who will produce the fruit and give it to the landlord. I love how the parable ends. The chief priests and the Pharisees realized he was speaking about them. Duh! Of course he was speaking about them.

Kind of funny, we sit here in our pews, and shake our heads in disbelief. How could the people be so self-centered, so ungrateful, so selfish that they could keep all the produce, the fruit for themselves. But we also know that the parables are timeless. Yes, written 2000 years ago, but very appropriate for today. You see, Jesus is speaking about us. We have met the selfish tenants and they are us. Wow!

For the next 3 weeks during the worship services we will be doing what the committee calls, Show and Tell. A glimpse of what's possible for you to use your fruits. We know what Show and Tell means. A cute story. A teacher was doing Show and Tell in the classroom to emphasize different religions in the community. Benjamin comes up and says 'I am Jewish and this is a Star of David.' Mary comes up and says she is Catholic and this is a crucifix. Tommy comes up and says he is Lutheran and this is a casserole. Ha. Hopefully we will be filled with the spirit so that we can share more than a casserole.

God has placed us in the vineyard, the world. He owns it. He allows us to live here. God has also gifted us with certain skills and abilities that we are to put to use in the vineyard. Every one of us. You know that's true. Singers, teachers, business people, carpenters. I used to use a guy named Dan the Handyman. Was always hard to get a hold of, he was always volunteering for Habitat for Humanity.

In these next 3 weeks you will have an opportunity to sign up to use your gifts, to return the produce with volunteering your talents. A short story. A number of years ago I organized a golf outing to benefit children on the autism spectrum. It was, and is still called Golf for Kids. All the money raised was to go to a camp called Camp Awesum where children on the autism spectrum would attend a week long camping experience.

About 40 children aged 14-17 with about 25 counselors and support staff. I decided that it would be good if I went up to the camp for a few days and saw for myself what the camp was all about. So, Cathy and I went and spent a few days. We ate with the children, played with them and even went fishing with them. One night we attended a talent show, put on by the children. Frankie got up and did a comedy sketch. He laughed at every one of his jokes and actually he was very funny. A girl sitting next to us was not watching. She had headphones on - blocking out the noise - typical for someone on the autism spectrum. Someone tapped on her shoulder, an indication that she was next. She takes off her headphones, goes up in front, and sings like a nightingale. Comes back, sits down and puts her headphones on. Here they were, severely disabled youngsters all willing to share their talents. On the ride home, Cathy and I talked about the

experience. How sharing our talents is what it is all about. Probably why I continue as an Interim Pastor even at my advanced age.

So, you have the opportunity as well. There is a bulletin insert you can fill in and place in the offering plate. Share your fruits, your talents here at Our Saviors. You will be blessed.

I mean really - if those autistic children can do it - can't we?
Amen- let it be so.