

Our Sabbath Scripture Stories



FAMILIES RECLAIMING SUNDAY

Read aloud: Isaiah 5:1-7
Philippians 4:6-9
Gospel: Matthew 21:33-43

What a glorious fall day! It was such a treat to see the autumn sunshine beaming through the windows this Sunday morning. There was a crispness in the air, and the trees were adorned in golds, oranges, and reds.

“God is so good!” Mom sighed as she stood by the window. “On days like today, life is such a gift!”

“You’re right, Therese!” her husband agreed. “You appreciate every day of your life when you see perfect days like today!”

Soon the kids were all around the living room anticipating the reading of the Gospel for this morning. The sun continued to pour into the room as Dad began the reading from Matthew, Chapter 21.

When Dad was finished, he looked at the faces of his family.

“Who has the first thought about our reading this morning?” he asked.

“Well, there were parts of it that really bothered me,” Mary Clare said. “It seemed like this reading had a lot to do with killing. The tenants killed the servants, then other servants, then more servants, then they killed the householder’s son!”

“Yeah,” Vincent agreed. “Kill, kill, kill!”

“That’s very true, Kids,” Dad commented. “The tenants were evil. They were entrusted with the vineyard but chose to keep the fruit of the vineyard for themselves. Now, why do you think we are hearing this parable? What do you think we can learn from this story?”

The kids all looked at each other with questioning faces. Finally, Mary Clare said, “I suppose you could say that the householder who planted the vineyard is God. God gave the land and the fruits of it to His people for their good.”

“That’s great, Mary Clare, and that’s exactly true!” Dad added. “Our Lord was comparing the choice vineyard to Israel and put the kings, scribes, and elders of the Church in charge as the tenants. But then what happened?”

“Well, I guess, they don’t do things right?” Lucy volunteered.

“Right, Lucy!” Dad said. “The prophets of God are like the servants who went out and

are killed and mistreated by the tenants. So what happened next?"

"That's when the son with the inheritance is sent!" Vincent exclaimed, catching on.
"And that son is like Jesus!"

"Absolutely correct!" Dad agreed. "Jesus is sent out just like the son in this parable is sent. And the son in the parable is killed by the tenants, and what do they do to Jesus?"

"They kill Him too," Lucy sadly said. "They put Him on a cross to die."

"You kids amaze me how well you see the parallels of this parable to what happened in Israel and to Jesus," Mom smiled. "Then the whole story comes together in the last lines of today's reading, doesn't it?"

"What were those lines again, Mom?" Vincent asked shyly.

"They're the lines about Jesus saying, *'The stone that the builders rejected has become the corner stone.'*" (Matthew 21:42)

Vincent smiled and, in his unique humble way, asked, "Can you explain that one, Mom?"

"Sure, Vincent!" Mom said. "For any building to be well built, it needs to rest on a foundation stone. Now the *stone* that the Bible talks about is Jesus. He is the foundation. But the architects of Israel, whose position it is to build up and rule the people, chose not to use this *stone* of Jesus in the building. In fact, they had Him put to death"

"Indeed!" Dad added. "So Christians see this parable as exhorting them to build faithfully upon Christ as their foundation. That is when the vineyard will yield its fruit."

"I get it now!" Vincent stated.
"Architecturally speaking, we, as Christians, stand on the *foundation* of Jesus, and *build up* his kingdom!"

"From our birth to our natural death!"
Mom added.

Then, together the Paulines gathered their things for Mass to praise and worship the Lord, the foundation of our existence. As they headed out into the bright, autumn sunshine, you could hear Mom loudly remark, "Ahhh ... life is beautiful!"

