

These people questioned the authority of Jesus, and He answered them with a parable. The vineyard is the world. The two sons are the people surrounding Jesus (and in our world today.) To refuse to go into the vineyard is rebellion against God. But which son actually did what his father asked? Not the one who pretends to honor his father with his words, but disobeys with his actions, but the one that appears rebellious, yet turns and does the work. The kingdom of God was taken from those who were first called. From the temple, the "chosen people" called to God but refused to believe in the Son. The kingdom has been taken from them and given to we who at first refused but in our Baptism were allowed to repent and believe.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

© O Lord God, You are ever faithful. We see that You have not failed in one word of all Your exceedingly great and precious promises. We thank You for the wondrous gift of Jesus Christ Your Son, and for all the promised grace we have received through Him. In the brightness of His glory we have received knowledge of Your glory. In the truth, goodness, and tenderness embodied in Jesus we have learned Your will. In His obedience unto death on the cross we have been granted cleansing pardon for all our sins. In the Resurrection of Jesus we have the promise of life everlasting. In His Ascension to the Right hand of Your majesty we have the assurance of His intercession for our every necessity.

Preserve Your Church, dear God, from false or faithless teachers, and keep us obedient and steadfast in all that You have made known to us in the Holy Scriptures. Give us the refreshing of Your Holy Spirit, that in fellowship with Jesus Christ we may proclaim Your truth with living power, preach Your Gospel in all the world, and be of service in love to the needs of all people. Grant peace to all people so they will live without fear. Enlighten them by the light of Your Love, and preserve them in the midst of oppression, wrong and cruelty.

Support our country in righteousness and overthrow all wickedness. As there is no strength in material prosperity, preserve us from the decay of moral corruption. Raise up men and women of holy courage and conscience to warn and admonish all people everywhere. Protect us against every peril from within and without, and give us Your blessing. Send Your will among all the nations of the world and fill them with a desire to seek peace in Jesus.

As You are the strength of the sick and the weary, visit the tears of the sick, troubled and sorrowful with Your divine comfort.

Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. (Time of silent prayer.) All this we are bold to pray in the name of Jesus Christ.

© Amen.

PROPER TWENTY-ONE

Chant Tone



Introit	
The Lord lifts up the — humble;*	Great is our Lord, and abun dant in
He casts the wicked to the ground.	power;*
Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing	His understanding is beyond
praises to our God;*	— measure.
for it is pleasant, and a song of	Glory be to the Father and to the Son*
praise is — fitting.	and to the Holy — Spirit;
The Lord builds up Jerusalem;*	as it was in the be — ginning,*
He gathers the outcasts of Israel.	is now, and will be forever. — Amen.
He heals the broken — hearted*	The Lord lifts up the — humble;*
and binds up their wounds.	He casts the wicked to the ground.
He determines the number of the stars;*	(Antiphon, Psalm 147:6;
He gives to all of them their names.	Psalm 147:1-5)

Collect of the Day

Almighty God, You exalted Your Son to the place of all honor and authority. Enlighten our minds by Your Holy Spirit that, confessing Jesus as Lord, we may be led into all truth; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

Gradual

For He will command His angels con | cerning you*
to guard you in | all your ways.
Bless the Lord, | O my soul,*
and all that is within me, bless His | holy name!

(Psalm 91:11, 103:1)

ENTRANCE PRAYER: Lord God, heavenly Father, to You we lift up our souls, in You we put our trust. We are mindful of Your mercies; throughout our lives You have shown us Your steadfast Love. You have provided for our eternal salvation by sending us Your Son Jesus Christ. For these countless gifts of Your Love and mercy, accept our adoration, praise, and thanksgiving. Empower us by Your Holy Spirit to show true love and empathy. Give us the Spirit of Christ, Who humbled Himself and became obedient unto death for our sake. Give us the will and the discipline to fulfill our promises. In the name of He Who is our salvation and strength. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

DISCERNING THE WILL OF GOD IS THE MOST DIFFICULT THING WE CAN ATTEMPT. We try to live up to the expectations of God, because of the great Love He showed for us in sending His Son to be our Savior. We try to honor Him simply because He is God. We know that His will for the world is that all would come to a saving knowledge of His Son. We have trouble discerning His will in the small things. (Which career path should I follow? To whom shall I go today, with the message of salvation?) A friend once compared God to the rudder of a ship. He said that if we simply get going, then God will direct us in the way we should go. He said our biggest problem is sitting still waiting for some great sign. Well, as we have come to worship today we must be involved in the will of God, for we are moving about in the kingdom.

THEME OF THE DAY:
Doing The Will of God

INTROIT—(Antiphon: Psalm 147:6;) Psalm 147:1-5
Psalm 147 is a song of praise written after the occupying and building of Jerusalem. David understood that the temple would be in Jerusalem, because God promised to dwell in the city of Jerusalem. David knew that the Messiah would soon come to that temple in that city to take His rightful place. We sing, because the Messiah has come to our church in our city.

COLLECT

Without God we can only do the wrong things. With God's enlightenment we are able to do the right things. The right things are presented to us in the work and person of Christ.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

Why oh why do we split-up these lessons? In this case we end up with a proverb, spoken by the people, with which God is disagreeing. Guilt is a powerful emotion. Ezekiel presented the problems of self-pity, fatalism and despair. The people were asking the question, "Whose fault is it that we suffer?" They wanted to blame everyone but themselves. After a fashion they were correct. By following the sins of their forefathers they were far from God. But the only One God ever punished for the sin of another is the Christ. Allowing people to feel the consequences of their disobedience and lack of repentance should draw us back to God.

GRADUAL—Psalm 91:11, 103:1 Psalm 91

Psalm 91, written by David, encourages us to take God as our keeper, our ever present help in time of distress. Psalm 103 (also David) is a wonderful song of praise.

EPISTLE LESSON—Philippians 2:1-18

The reading schedule suggests that the verses 5-13 are optional, which is curious as we formerly read verses 1-11. Someone decided that we should not read the Gospel message while reading only the Law message that surrounds it. Curious. Being of, like-mind, has advantages. There is a common ground or base in those who are like-minded. The common ground for like-mindedness among Christians is Christ. He is the One Who unites us to Him through Baptism, and gives us the same attitude that He had (which brought Him to the cross of Salvation as the obedient, Suffering Servant.) As we are in Christ and He is in us, we are not only like-minded Christians, we are like-minded with Christ.

GOSPEL LESSON—Matthew 21:23-32

Surprise!! verses 28 to 32 are optional. In years past those were the entire Gospel Lesson. Sigh! We add the reason for the parable to our reading today.