Sunday 4 October 2026

For further Contemplation

Rev Thresi Mauboy Wohangara shared today from Matthew 21:33–45 and Philippians 3:4b–14, which speak of God's will for His people: **"Direct Your Life Toward Jesus"** These scriptures encourage us to bear tangible fruit of faith and to live a life directed toward Jesus. Matthew serves as a scathing critique of the faith of the chief priests and Pharisees. Although they appeared righteous on the outside, they failed to produce the fruit of faith that God desired. Read Matthew 23:27,28 for here Jesus speaks very directly. Be careful not to be critical of all the Pharisees, note Nicodemus in John 3 & John 7 and Paul himself Philippians 3:4b-6.

In Matthew the tenants were entrusted only with cultivating the vineyard, not with owning it. Yet the opposite occurred. Driven by greed, ambition, and selfishness, the tenants' motives turned to wickedness. Through this parable, Jesus emphasizes that rejecting God's will leads to judgment. Because of the tenants' unfaithfulness, the Kingdom of God would be taken from them and given to those who produce the fruit God desires. And what is that fruit, read Galatians 5:22,23.

A life that bears good fruit is exemplified by the Apostle Paul. Although he possessed every form of "religious capital", such as status, education, and legal observance, he counted it all as loss and rubbish compared with knowing Christ. Paul emphasizes that true righteousness comes not from human effort but from faith in Christ. His life's goal was to know Christ deeply, experience the power of His resurrection, and share in His sufferings, thereby becoming increasingly conformed to Christ. Remind yourself of this supremacy of the Son of God by reading Colossians 1:15-23. Use the lectio divina method we have spoken about before i.e., slowly and meditatively read it about three times noting things that occur to you as you read. Write in a journal your thoughts.

These two passages therefore invite us to consider the direction of our own lives. The tenants became focused on what they could possess and control, while Paul came to regard everything as secondary to knowing Christ. To **"direct our lives toward Jesus"** is to recognize that our lives ultimately belong to God, to seek Christ above our own status or achievements, and to bear the fruit of faith through our words, choices, and actions. Like Paul, we are called to keep pressing forward toward Christ and to allow our lives to be increasingly shaped by Him. Last week from Philppians 2:12 Paul was telling the church in Philippi and us to **"work out your salvation"**. Paul was not suggesting salvation comes through works, the things we do for God, salvation is by grace and grace alone. Paul is saying how we **live** in response to what Jesus modelled is how we "workout" our salvation. In this way, directing our lives toward Jesus is not simply a matter of where we look, but of **how we live**.

Shalom,
Rev Thresi