The Church—The Vineyard Of The Lord

Intro: *Husbandry* is found only one time in the Bible; 1 Cor. 3:6-9 “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. 8Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. 9For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, *ye are* God’s building.” Later translations use “God’s field.” It is defined as “an area of land used for cultivation (opp. Pasture land), cultivated land, field” (BDAG), or “a farmer, A tilled field, farm” (Zodhiates). This describes the work and care of Paul and others to plant and nurture the work (the church) at Corinth. Jesus also likened the kingdom to a vineyard in Matthew 20:1-6. We thus see the church as a place of labor and fruit bearing. How is the church like a vineyard?

I. **Vineyards Must Be Planned.**

A. A person does not just simply end up with a parcel of land that is cultivated.

B. God planned the church.
   1. Eph. 3:10-11 “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. 11According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:”
   2. 2 Tim. 1:9 “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,”

C. The church was not an afterthought or a substitute plan as is taught by Premillennialism.

II. **Vineyards Must Be Purchased.**

A. Jesus paid the purchase price; Acts 20:28 “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”

B. Thus it is His; He owns it.
   1. Mat. 16:18 “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
   2. Rom. 16:16 “Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.”

C. We are laborers or stewards, not owners.
   1. Paul and Apollos planted and watered—they worked in the vineyard; 1 Cor. 3:6-7 “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.”
   2. We are nothing but stewards—not owners.
      a. 1 Cor. 4:1-2 “Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”
      b. Too many want to hear what the preacher (elder, deacon, etc.) has to say instead of God’s Word.
III. VINEYARDS MUST BE PLANTED.

A. The planting of the church took place at Jerusalem on Pentecost.
   1. Isa. 2:2-3 “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”
   2. Luke 24:46-49 “And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”
   3. Acts 2

B. God is the husbandman with the good seed.
   1. Luke 8:11 “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.”
   2. Rom. 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

C. Those who are good stewards will evangelize and edify.
   1. Evangelize
      a. Mark 16:15 “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”
      b. Each Christian recognized his own personal responsibility; Acts 8:4 “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.”
   2. Edify
      a. 2 Tim. 2:2 “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”
      b. Eph. 4:11-12 “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:”

IV. VINEYARDS MUST BE PROTECTED.

A. Walls and/or fences were build around vineyards
   1. They were to keep out things such as foxes, wild pigs, thieves.
   2. Sometimes through slothfulness the walls were neglected.

B. God's vineyard is always in danger.
   1. Mat. 7:15 “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.”
   2. Acts 20:29-30 “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”
   3. 2 Pet. 2:1-2 “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.”
C. God has a wall around His vineyard.
   1. His Word guards the flock.
   2. God set elders in the church to watch.
      a. Acts 20:28 “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy
         Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own
         blood.”
      b. Tit. 1:9-11 “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound
         doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. 10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers
         and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: 11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert
         whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake.”

V. Vineyards Must Be Pruned.
   A. For crops to grow and produce like they should, there must be constant pruning.
   B. God has had to destroy a vineyard previously.
      1. Rom. 11:20-23 “Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not
         highminded, but fear: 21 For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.
         22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee,
         goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou shalt be cut off. 23 And they also, if they
         abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.”
      2. Mat. 23:36-38 “Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. 37 O Jerusalem,
         Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I
         have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!
         38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”
   C. For the church to remain productive, pruning must take place.
      1. 1 Cor. 5:4-7 “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the
         power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the
         spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven
         leaveneth the whole lump? 7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are
         unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us;”
      2. Rom. 16:17-18 “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to
         the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. 18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus
         Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”
      3. 2 Thc. 3:6, 14 “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw
         yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us....
         14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he
         may be ashamed.”

VI. Vineyards Must Be Productive.
   A. This would be the righteous expectation of the owner/husbandman.
   B. We can only be productive if we are in Christ.
      1. John 15:1-8 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2 Every branch in me that beareth not
         fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.
         3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the
         branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5 I
         am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for
         without me ye can do nothing. 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and
         men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in
you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. \(^8\)Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

2. **We must bear fruit:**

a. **The fruit of the Spirit;** Gal. 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, \(^9\)Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

b. **2 Pet. 1:3-11** “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: \(^4\)Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. \(^5\)And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; \(^6\)And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; \(^7\)And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. \(^8\)For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. \(^9\)But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. \(^10\)Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; \(^11\)For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

c. **Rom. 1:13-15** “Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. \(^14\)I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. \(^15\)So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.”

**Conclusion:** Those who are productive in the Lord’s vineyard will receive a reward of eternal life. Those who fail to produce will receive a pruning with eternal consequences. If you are not a part of God’s vineyard you can become such today by obedience to the Gospel. If you are no longer productive in that vineyard, then repent.