

The Rev. Jay Lawlor on “Bearing Good Fruit” sermon for 18th Sunday After Pentecost October 8, 2017

The Rev. Jay Lawlor preached and presided at Grace Episcopal Church, Muncie, Indiana.

INDIANAPOLIS, IN, US, February 23, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Rev. Jay Lawlor](#) joined the people at Grace Episcopal Church in Muncie, IN as supply priest on October 8, 2017. He preached a [sermon](#) titled "Bearing Good Fruit" and led worship of the Holy Eucharist. An excerpt of the Rev. Lawlor's sermon follows:



The promise is open to everyone. Jesus is saying that lineage no longer matters, it is about who wants to bear fruit for God.”

The Rev. Jay Lawlor

This week we have another vineyard parable from Matthew's Gospel. Jesus tells of an absentee landowner and violent, murderous, tenants. While this parable has a tendency to be read as an allegory about God's dealings with Israel, the earliest stage of the Gospel tradition was not understood this way. It was, as the ending of the Gospel actually states, Jesus' rebuke of the chief priests and Pharisees – not all of

Israel.

In fact, parables are more about invitation than doctrine. They have more to do with how God wants us to live, than any particular prescription for what will or will not happen. The question to ask is: How is God inviting us to live vs. how humanity sometimes lives? The point of the parable is not to label some people good and some people evil. That is far too simple. Rather, the parable invites us all to consider where we find ourselves.

What is clear is the parable's claim that Jesus is the Messiah. He is God's promise to introduce God's kingdom. Or, as it is sometimes referred, a kin-dom. A community of kinship of God's people ushered in by Jesus. A community of God's people who pray for, and bear witness to, God's vision for the world. The Good News of justice and peace made possible through God's reconciling love for creation.

So in inviting all, Jesus presents a contrast between those who accept the invitation to work for God's kin-dom and those who work to oppose it. Jesus applies the parable directly to his opponents – the chief priests and Pharisees – those particular groups opposing and plotting against him – not all of Israel.

This is not meant as a rejection and casting out of all God's people. The invitation to participate in God's kin-dom is available to all. The promise is open to everyone. Jesus is saying that lineage no longer matters, it is about who wants to bear fruit for God. It is about who is willing to have their lives changed by the love of God, and who choose to participate in transforming the world more into God's vision. [...]

Readers can find the Rev. Jay Lawlor's full sermon at <https://www.therevjaylawlor.com/bearing-good-fruit-sermon-rev-jay-lawlor-18-pentecost-year-oct-8-2017/>

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