

## Living Lent | Day 15

# Always Loving

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*Jesus said, “Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.’ So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.”*

*Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures:*

*‘The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone;  
this was the Lord’s doing,  
and it is amazing in our eyes’?*

*“Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom.”*

**Matthew 21:33–43 RSV**

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### Encouragement for the Lenten Journey:

Once, I got in real trouble with my grandmother. We stayed with her quite a bit when we were young. One day I saw my brother lying on the floor looking at a book, and I decided his rear end looked like it could use a good pinch with the fireplace tongs. Don’t ask why I did it, but I know I got him good – it left a mark! When he cried out, my grandmother came running. She was none too happy with me. Let me tell

you, disappointing that sweet woman was devastating. She scolded me and reminded me that my job was to love my brother. In my defense, most of the brotherly suffering was inflicted on me, the younger, smaller one. Nonetheless, I still remember how painful it was to see that I caused her pain through my actions – to see my failure reflected in her eyes.

All too often, we cause God pain when we disregard God's intentions for us and for this world. God has plans, grand plans, to build God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. We tend to think we know better. We tend to take it for granted that our time, our energy, our money – that all of it is ours and ours alone. Frequently we want more of all those things, or at least don't want to use up what we have on others. We reject God's plans and God's expectations far too easily.

Those expectations are clear to us because of the example and teaching of Jesus. It is He who first taught how to fish for people. It was He who most clearly showed us the immense power of forgiveness. It was He who came with a message of challenge and invitation to change our ways, change our life, and change the world. It is He who showed us The Way, though we tend to forget and wander astray from that Way all too easily. The truth is, though we reject it consciously and unconsciously, the way of love we find in Jesus is the cornerstone upon which our whole life finds stability and strength and produces fruit. Some days I don't want to see what's reflected in God's eyes, if I'm honest. I look anyway and looking beyond my failures and catching a glimpse of that marvelous love, I'm inspired to live into it more deeply, more grateful than ever.

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### ***Contributor and Contributing Body of Christ***

The Very Reverend Tom Purdy is the Rector at Christ Church, Frederica. Christ Church, Frederica is the oldest church in Glynn County with roots dating to 1732, making it also one of the oldest congregations in Georgia. A thriving Episcopal parish that treasures their heritage and brings the gospel to bear on the modern world, Father Purdy has led the congregation at Christ Church since May of 2013, with a vision to help people deepen their relationship with God and Christ and to equip people for their unique calling. Under that leadership, the congregation of Christ Church continues to extend missional support to the Children of Morningstar and many other ministries throughout Glynn County and beyond.

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