

Maranatha Mirror Messages



HAPPENING NOW

So what's it going to be?

Nuclear war?

A climate cataclysm?

Economic melt-down?

The Messiah's return?

Everybody knows something's going to happen soon.

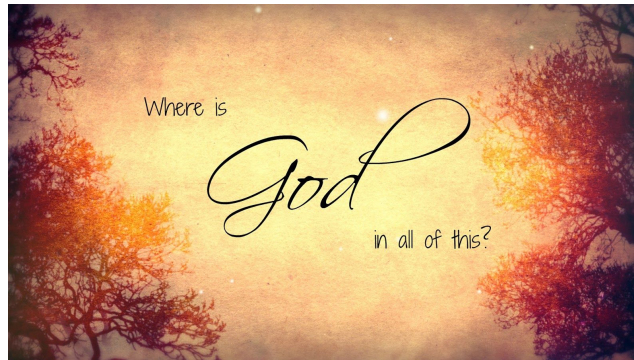
We're all focused on the future.

But who's paying attention to what's *happening now*?

What are we going to do about the worldwide mess staring us in the face?

Do we just stand, wring our hands and wait for the End?

And where is God?



Our world is disintegrating before our eyes, and God does nothing?

We're not the first ones to be asking such questions.

John's complaint



"Why doesn't Jesus do something!" cried John the Baptist as he sat in prison waiting for the Messiah to shake up the world.

"Did I not announce Jesus as the Coming One? If he is the Messiah King, what's he waiting for?"

John can't stand it any longer. He sends messengers to Jesus to find out what's going on.

"Are you the one who is to come, or do we look for another?"

"Go tell John what you hear and see.

*The blind receive their sight, the lame walk;
lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up,
and the poor have the gospel preached to them.*

And blessed is he who takes no offense at me."

Matthew 11:3-6

While John was waiting for Jesus to roll back the heavens and bring down fire,
Jesus was doing exactly what he was sent to do.

"Pay attention, John, to what's going on right now!"

Happening now

It's not as if God is sitting in heaven drinking tea with the angels, while the world burns.
God is doing exactly what Jesus told us he would do, as the earth smolders.

**God is making his eleventh-our visit to the Marketplace,
hiring laborers for his Vineyard.**

The sun will not darken and the moon will not turn to blood until the Vineyard workers
have finished what needs to be done.

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour, he went out and found others standing; and he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.'"

Matthew 20:1-8

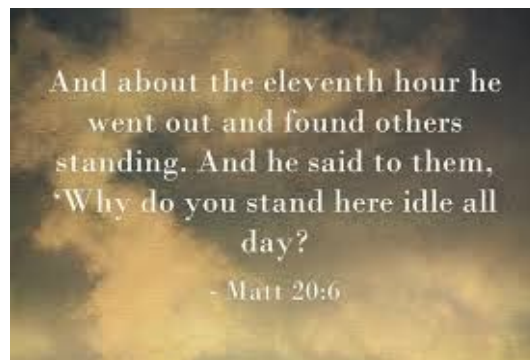
The Householder is hiring vineyard workers for the last time.

This is his final trip to the Marketplace.

The Marketplace

The Marketplace is where we go when we discover the futility of money and fame and power and shallow pleasure.

We wake up one day and say, *“What am I doing here? How did I end up in this barren place?”* Now we’re in the Marketplace waiting to be hired, waiting for God to come near and show us the way.

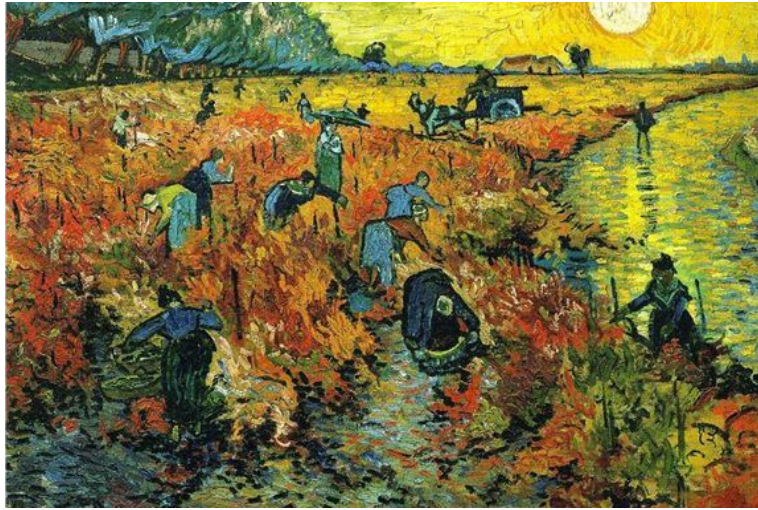


“Why are you standing here idle all day?”

“Because no one has hired us.”

“Go into my Vineyard.”

The Vineyard



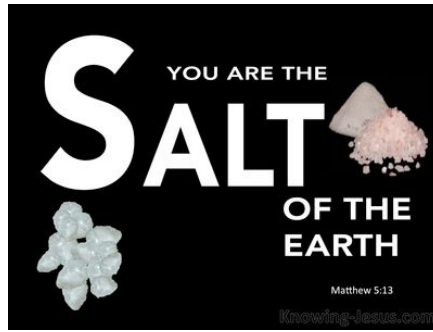
The Vineyard is not some fancy “ministry” or another elaborate “program.” The Vineyard is right where you are.

A gate swings open before your eyes and your circumstances are bathed in light. Now you are not just “making a living” or “pursuing a career,” or “taking care of the old folks.”



While you do those things well, you are a servant of God, preparing yourself and those around you for the arrival of God’s Kingdom.

You are the Salt of the Earth



“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt has lost its saltiness, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men.”

Matthew 5:13

In the Vineyard, we aren't striving to be the salt of the earth...

We are the salt of the earth.

Once the Lord Jesus brings us into the Vineyard, his Spirit within us conveys hope.

We carry the taste of God.

We bring the encouragement of heaven into the room just by being there.

Our words are “seasoned with salt.” Our lives are marked with integrity. People who seek the truth know they can trust us.

But if the salt has lost its saltiness, if we relapse into our old ways, we become useless to ourselves and to God.

Why did Jesus give us this warning?

Because it can happen so subtly, so quickly.

Lord, have mercy!

You are the Light of the World

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand; and it gives light to all in the house.

*Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works
and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”*

Matthew 5:14-16

In the Vineyard, we are not striving to be the light of the world.

We are the light of the world.

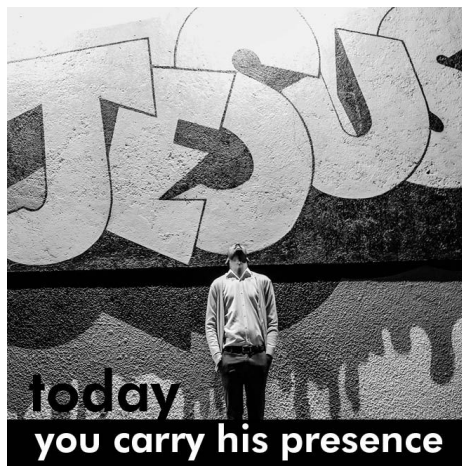
The Spirit of the Lord within us is light.

As we walk in the light, doing the Father’s will, good works flow from our lives.

They emerge so naturally that people who see our good works don’t even notice us; they see God. They give praise, not to us, but to God.

If God is not evident in our “good works”, people are seeing, not “good works,” but vanity.

In the Vineyard our daily life is humble and down-to-earth, yet charged with the light of the coming Kingdom.



We do our work. We connect with our neighbors. Buy groceries, pay our bills, just like everyone else. But all the while our focus is on following the Master, doing the Father’s will.

You are a Herald of Good News

In the Vineyard we are ordinary people answering a heavenly call.

*He opened the book and found the place where it was written,
"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."*

Luke 4-17-19

We are not nit-pickers.

We are not morality police.

We are not undercover judges.

We are heralds of hope.

The good news of God's Kingdom flows with power from our ordinary lives.

God Uses Ordinary People



God imparts this power as we carry on the work our Lord began. In varying degrees of power, signs of his Kingdom follow us, as we follow the Master.

The blind receive their sight, the lame walk; lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

Matthew 11:5

It happens in our neighbor's kitchen, at a bus stop, in the lunch room at work, in the nursing home and hospital. The living God pours encouragement through us wherever he puts us.

You are harvesting, not grapes, but people.



Like picking grapes from the vine, we reach out and bring living souls into God's World. And we do it so naturally that the miracle unfolds all by itself.

Jesus shows us the way.

He has no agenda as he sits by the well, resting from the journey, when a Samaritan woman comes to draw water.

"Give me a drink," says Jesus. And before the conversation is over, this woman has been harvested for the Kingdom.

Jesus' disciples are not pleased as they approach the well and see him talking to a woman. What's going on?

The woman leaves her water jar at the well and hurries back to the village. She returns with a crowd of people. As they approach, Jesus points to this multitude and says to his disciples,

"Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see how the fields are already white for harvest. He who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together.

***For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.'
I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."***

John 4:35-38

In the Vineyard, harvesting is not a matter of strategy, technique, or program. Harvesting takes place as we treat with integrity, the people God sends across our path.

If we do it the way Jesus did it at the well,
we will bring in a rich harvest before quitting time.

Quitting time

Quitting time is when the Householder gathers the laborers and gives them their pay.

At Quitting Time all accounts are settled.

"When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left.

Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;

for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me."

Matthew 25:31-37

Prayer

Lord Jesus, instead of fearing and dreading what's going to happen in the future. Open our hearts to what's happening now, the work to be done, now. Despite the lateness of the hour, change our idleness into action. May we lift our eyes and see the harvest that is before us now. The broken, the sick, the hopeless, the poor, the deaf and the blind are waiting for your healing touch. Lord, it is you who love these souls, you who have prepared them for harvest. Show us the way to their hearts, show us how to reap, despite our own inadequacies and feelings of insignificance. No matter how mundane, humble and seemingly futile the job, may we carry into each task, the extraordinary power of your presence. You have said that we are salt, that we are light, and that we are messengers of your good news. As salt may we flavor every interaction with the taste of your eternal Kingdom. As light, may everything we do, be illuminated by your holy light. As heralds of your good news, may your encouragement and hope, may the power and joy of your kingdom, be poured through our lips and our lives, so that those souls that are ripe, miraculously and easily fall into your hands. And at quitting time, O Righteous King may we be of those you call blessed, because we lovingly worked the harvest you bring us now.