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Living within a vision of God's justice

THE REV. WINNIE VARGHESE

"The kingdom of God will be taken away from you."

— MATTHEW 21:43

When I hear these words about tenant farmers, stewards, scheming to get more than their fair, legal share, I can't help but think of sharecroppers, serfs, peasants, landless laborers, migrants on every continent through the ages, wondering what it might take to create some security and stability in their lives. Surely the first people who heard this story were more likely to be like the tenants than a landowner.

Where is the kingdom of God in that? And what is this kingdom of God that we have already that can be taken from us?

In this reading from Matthew, and in all of the readings, it is clear that there is a law and also a parallel or critique, a law from the tradition, that is the way of the kingdom of God, the world as God intends it.

What does the Bible tell us are the attributes of a society living within a vision of God's justice?

In your context, does the law support you if you wish to live within that vision?

The virtues of the reign of God's justice, the world as God intends it to be, are clear in the Hebrew Scripture: The love and awe of God are illustrated by a just society. A just society has God at the center. A just society is marked by law that enshrine fairness toward one another; compassion and generosity to those who cannot fend for themselves; and right stewardship of the earth.

These are clearly difficult values to apply in

For reflection...

- What might it mean that even in the time of Jesus the ways of the powerful seem arbitrary, and laborers resisted?
- Is there a difference between an owner and a creator/maker?



The Rev. Winnie Varghese is the Director of Community Outreach for Trinity Church, Wall Street. She has been a priest for 17 years in parishes and as a college chaplain. Before joining Trinity, Winnie served as rector of St. Mark's-in-the-Bowery, a vibrant and diverse church in Manhattan that tripled in size under her leadership.

real living. In 2017, as in the time of the Hebrew prophets, we can feel like wackos at the gates of the palace as we try to proclaim these values.

As Christians, living as though the law of God is the law of our hearts is the work of our lives. We listen and bring the breadth of our experience to these texts, and we are convicted by them.