



# Building on the Cornerstone

## Glory to Jesus Christ!

Did you ever notice how important the right foundation is for success?

If you're doing homework, part of a sports team, or attending the liturgy on a Sunday morning, the **right foundation makes a difference** in what you can achieve in every situation.

### Master the basics

In school, we need to learn how to add  $2 + 2$  before we can calculate  $C = 2\pi r$  to find the circumference of a circle. Likewise, we need to know the rules of the game to be a teammate, and we learn the meaning of right and wrong and **how to pray**, before we can understand and **apply the virtue of forgiveness**.

The wise use of knowledge acquired throughout our lives (not just in school), makes it possible for us to succeed. But knowledge isn't enough to become the person God intended, we also **need mercy, compassion, and love**.

### Do it with love

The sole purpose of Jesus Christ becoming man was to **restore us to communion** with His Father: this expression of God's love for us is realized in the death and resurrection of His Son.

We are called to mirror **this ultimate example of love** by giving of ourselves, nurturing our relationships with others.

### A Creative Spirit

God is also present our natural thirst for learning and using our knowledge to create new experiences or things. This **gift from God the Holy Spirit** enables us to enrich our lives and the lives of those around us.

Together, these virtues of love and creativity provide us with the right foundation for everything we do in life, **living in the manner God intended**.

### The Chief Cornerstone

Our daily efforts should be built on **Christ as our cornerstone**, being confident in our faith that God will guide our footsteps whether studying for that test, facing a difficult conversation, or **making the Orthodox Faith real at home and in church**.

Success in God's eyes is not the same as society's idea of success and God gives us the free will to **follow Him** without condition. By using what He gives us, we can nurture the foundation of our life, ultimately **bringing us closer to God Himself**.

🔑 **Scripture Reading**  
for the 13th Sunday Gospel of the  
Apostle & Evangelist Matthew

**Matthew 21:33-42**



## Today's Reading

We hear a parable from Christ, explaining how the Hebrew nation of the Old Testament rejected the prophets and messengers of God, and will reject and kill Him: the Son of God.

At times, we may feel awkward or different from others because our Orthodox Faith is so radically different from what others do in society. Yet God's plan of Salvation will provide for our every need, so we can grow closer to Him and those around us, sharing His love so that we can transform the world into Paradise.

Parents, Church School Teachers & Youth Directors:  
Watch for the 🔑 to indicate topics/questions you can use to inspire conversations with youth. Or use the corresponding study guide for this resource.

# Scripture in my Life

## What do these readings mean for me?

Ages 11-13 (Grades 6-8)

Today's reading (Matthew 21:33-42) features a parable from Jesus, teaching about Who will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. In the parable, those for whom the Kingdom was prepared reject it. They refuse to obey the landowner, while those who are faithful will be given their place. We can learn from this reading about how we are to act as Orthodox Christians. Do we obediently follow the teachings of the Church or expect God to give us a pass? Do we show compassion and mercy or are we unkind? Jesus is very clear in His teaching - it's up to us to make the right choice so that we can be the cornerstone upon which His church is built in our community.

**Instructions:** *In pairs or small groups, read each verse of today's gospel lesson, then answer the corresponding questions, using the back of this page to write down your answers. Come together as a class to share and discuss the reading and your life.*

1. Listen to another parable.  
*Jesus uses stories to convey specific messages - why is it important for us to hear what Jesus is teaching?*
  
2. 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.  
*Jesus has blessed us with the responsibility to be His hands, feet, and presence in the world - what are we doing to fulfill His command (Matthew 25:31-46)?*
  
3. When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce.  
*Each of us will need to give account of our life at the Last Judgment - what will you have to say for yourself?*
  
4. 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.  
*The parable is referencing how the prophets were received and treated by the Hebrew nation - how do we treat the scripture, the liturgy, the saints, and the opportunities to repent and act in godly ways?*
  
5. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'  
*Jesus was betrayed and killed by lawless men who didn't respect Him as the Son of God - why is it important for us to worship and respond to Christ acknowledging that He is the Son of God?*

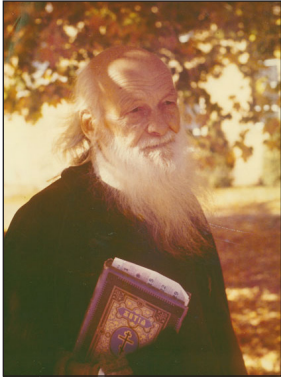
6. But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.' So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.  
*Scripture records how the people treated Christ (Matthew 27:25) - do we give Jesus the honor and glory He is worthy of receiving? How do you show your love and obedience to the Son of God?*
7. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"  
*Jesus gives the listeners an opportunity to draw a conclusion from the parable - why do you think He does this? What does He want the listeners to realize?*
8. 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 expects us to bear fruit for His glory - as His followers, doing what is expected of us, so that we can receive our inheritance as His children. What are the things we must do as Orthodox Christians?*
9. 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 marvelous in our eyes'?"  
*Why does Jesus say that the stone has been rejected - Who is the stone? How can we ensure we respect Christ and His teachings - what can we do to inherit eternal life?*

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**What do we learn from this gospel parable? How can we apply it to our daily lives at school? In our community? At church? At home?**



# ONE BRICK AT A TIME



*Venerable Father Vasily,  
pray to God for us!*

The ever-memorable Archimandrite Vasily (Philipoff) was a monk at St. Tikhon's Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania from 1934 until his repose on March 29, 1986.

Father Vasily would use a New York skyscraper as an analogy of how to approach the spiritual life. "Do you see the Empire State Building," he would ask, saying, "Was it built in one day?"

The answer, of course, was "No." and Father Vasily would continue, "It was built 'brick by brick,' one at a time...." In this way, explaining we must work every day, being patient with ourselves and others, developing the virtues of our own spiritual life in God.

In each brick below, choose from the list of virtues below to write how you can develop it in your daily life to live with Christ as your cornerstone, keeping this page handy as inspiration to live as an Orthodox Christian at home, school, in church, or in society.

## VIRTUES:

Forgiveness    Daily Prayer    Mercy    Fasting    Love    Being Faithful  
Coming to Church    Obeying God's laws    Patience    Letting go of Anger

Visit <https://orthodoxwiki.org/Virtues> for more virtues.

