

## Essay from the bold pastor

### #172 - The Grapes of Wrath -

California got almost no rain in the rainy season once again this year. The lack of rain has been a major problem since two years ago, when the state was devastated by a once in 500 years drought. To aggravate such dire situation, there was a talk about possible "Dust Bowl." The Dust Bowl is an event that happened around a century ago and known as a tragedy in the modern American history. John Steinbeck depicted the event in details in his Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *The Grapes of Wrath*.

As the Great Depression engulfed the whole world, farmers in the Midwest saw their fertile land destructed by a poor agricultural reform led by the government and capitalists. As a result, they went bankrupt one after another. Even worse, a major drought hit the area, leaving the abandoned crop land dry and causing a giant Dust Bowl (black blizzard) which reduced visibility to one meter or less at times. They were forced out of their land with no money and desperately headed for other places such as California for low-paid jobs. However, it was again the government and capitalists that awaited them, this time for exploitation of labor. Nevertheless, they had no choice but to fight over a limited number of jobs. Even those who got hired worked for a lot less than a regular rate, and some died of disease, took their own lives, starved to death, and even got killed. Having their hopes shattered by the reality, they hit the rock bottom.

Today in the U.S., we see protests happening everywhere by people with low income including fast food workers. Also, many of the soldiers who volunteered to go to the Iraq War were young people from rural areas with little job opportunities. The Grapes of Wrath is not merely a fictional story but symbolizes a problem we are currently facing.

***The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath. 20 They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press...***

**Revelation 14:19-20**

The above verse can be found in the last chapter of the Bible, and in fact, the title of the book, *The Grapes of Wrath* derives from it. Needless to say, the trampled grapes refer to those who do not respect God. This story is nothing like so-called "Judgement Day." It is a prelude to bringing justice to those who ignored Jesus Christ in spite that he was put on the cross for sinful and self-absorbed mankind. However, the film adaptation of this book offers a ray of hope, the matriarch and leader of the Joad family played by Jane Darwell. She never gives up. She never stops moving forward with her eyes looking up to God. Those who believe in God win at the end.

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