

Theme: The parable of God's vineyard and the wicked tenants displays the patience and mercy of God, the wickedness of the leaders of Israel, and God's vindication of Jesus.

I. Intro - Stories of Conflict

A. Mark gives 5 stories of conflict in Galilee and Jerusalem

Galilee	Jerusalem
Jesus forgives the paralytics sins (2:1-10)	Jesus questioned on His authority/ The Parable of the Tenants (11:27-12:12)
Jesus and the "sinners" (2:13-17)	Paying Taxes to Caesar (12:13-17)
Questions about fasting (2:18-22)	Marriage at the resurrection (12:18-27)
Picking grain on the Sabbath (2:23-27)	The Greatest Commandment? (12:28-34)
Healing on the Sabbath (3:1-6)	Whose Son is the Christ? (12:35-40)

B. The conflict in Jerusalem is merely the continuation and intensification of the conflict in Galilee

C. Last week: Jesus' authority

D. Today - a parable to reveal what is happening

II. A Familiar Story?

A. Jesus shifts the conversation to teaching by a parable

He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. Mark 12:1

1. A very common situation in Israel at this time

2. The vineyard owners were often wealthy absentee owners - and were resented by many

3. But Jesus is referencing Isaiah 5:1-7

I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside. ² He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit. Isaiah 5:1-2

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a. The same details - vineyard, dug winepress, tower

b. In neither passage do these play any further part!

c. Jesus gave them as a reference to Isaiah 5

B. A surprising twist!

Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit. Isaiah 5:2

Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. Mark 12:1

1. Isaiah 5 is a judgment for an unfruitful vineyard

a. God had made every provision - and yet the vineyard was unfruitful!

b. In Isaiah, God judges the vineyard - Israel will go into exile!

c. This is like the fig tree and the Temple - no fruit!

d. How will Jesus apply this to the present?

2. Suddenly Jesus adds a big twist - tenant farmers!

a. There were no tenant farmers in Isaiah's story!

- b. Perhaps this will reference the Romans who now control the vineyard of Israel?
- c. Surely the evil Romans will be put in a bad light!

III. An Owner, A Vineyard & Wicked Tenants

A. A fruitful vineyard - but wicked tenants!

At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. ³ But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ⁴ Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. ⁵ He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed. Mark 12:2-5

1. The owner sends servants for his share of the harvest
2. The wicked tenants mistreat the servant and refuse to give the owner his rightful fruit
3. The owner sends more servants - and the mistreatment gets progressively worse!
4. This goes on for a long time - why does the owner keep trying this? Why do the same thing and expect different results?

B. The servants - the prophets of Israel!

1. The prophets were often called the Lord's servants
2. Israel consistently rejected and mistreated the prophets sent by the Lord
From the time your forefathers left Egypt until now, day after day, again and again I sent you my servants the prophets. ²⁶ But they did not listen to me or pay attention. They were stiff-necked and did more evil than their forefathers. Jeremiah 7:25-26

- a. From Egypt until now - Israel's whole history!
- b. I sent my servants the prophets (like the parable)
- c. You did not listen to My word - and it got worse over time!

But they were disobedient and rebelled against you; they put your law behind their backs. They killed your prophets, who had admonished them in order to turn them back to you; they committed awful blasphemies. Nehemiah 9:26

- a. Nehemiah's prayer of repentance
 - b. They disobeyed Your word & killed Your prophets
 - c. This culminated in the rejection of John the Baptist!
3. Israel's history was one of rejecting, persecuting, and even killing the servants of the Lord, the prophets He sent to His people.
 4. The owner is not Rome, it is the Lord - and He has been so patient!
 5. The problem is not Rome - it has been Israel all along!

C. One final chance - the beloved Son

1. The owner gives them another chance - his son
"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.' Mark 12:6
 - a. One final messenger - the Beloved Son
 - b. These are the words spoken at Jesus' baptism!
 - c. Surely they will respect the Son of the Father!
2. The shocking actions of the tenants!

But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.'
8 So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. Mark 12:7-8

- a. The owner has been prodigally merciful, so why would that change?
- b. Perhaps the owner has died so the son has come
- c. If the heir is killed they can claim the land and not have to deal with an owner!
- d. So they kill the son - and throw him out like trash!

D. The owner takes action

1. The owner judges the wicked tenants & gives the vineyard to others

What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. Mark 12:9

- a. The owners patience has run out - judgment falls
- b. He judges the wicked tenants for killing the servants and his son, and puts them to death!
- c. He gives the vineyard to others - the old priesthood and leadership will be replaced as the new covenant is ushered in and the vineyard of God becomes comprised of Jew and Gentile - the Church!

2. This is God's vindication of His Son

Haven't you read this scripture: "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; 11 the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes?" Mark 12:10-11

- a. v10-11 - Psalm 118:22-23
- b. This is a Passover pilgrimage Psalm - they just sang it!!

c. The wicked tenants/builders had rejected Jesus, but God made Him the cornerstone of a new Temple!

d. This is not the work of humans; it is the work of God!

E. The leaders' reaction: Arrest him!

Then they looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away. Mark 12:12

1. They understand the parable (very unusual in Mark)
2. They know Jesus is saying they are the wicked tenants - and they are furious!
3. They want to arrest him - but they fear the people
4. Ironically, they will fulfill the parable within days!

IV. Applying the Word

A. The wickedness of humanity

1. This parable shows the wickedness of the leaders of Israel who were fighting against Jesus
2. It also shows the wickedness of Israel throughout her history - she rejected the prophets constantly!
3. We will talk more about this in the coming weeks
4. But it also shows the wickedness of humanity as a whole - we too have constantly rejected God!
5. This began in the Garden when Adam and Eve rejected God's Word and listened to Satan.
6. They thought this would bring freedom and life, but it brought bonding and death!
7. Nietzsche spoke of the death of God': we killed Him!

8. Nietzsche hated any idea of Truth and Christian morality - he called it slave morality. Away with compassion, and mercy: kill God and seize the vineyard!
9. This ended in Nazism - and yet our culture has embraced his nihilism, rejecting Truth and the ways of God - we try to live Beyond Good and Evil!
10. This is the air we breathe in our modern world - the exaltation of personal desire and will, rejection of universal truth and morality - and it is destroying us!
11. Has this idea captivated my heart and mind?
12. Freedom is found, not in rejecting God's Word and killing Him, but in submitting to Him and His Word!

B. The long-suffering mercy of God

1. God has shown extreme patience & mercy!
2. This is seen in this parable and the prodigal son
3. This should give me hope for family and friends that are following the tenants or Nietzsche!
4. It should give me hope in prayer and evangelism - God is merciful and can reach them!
5. Ayaan Hirsi Ali is a recent example of a person who was entrenched against God and responded to the Gospel after a long time!
6. If you feel like you have rebelled too long or spoken against God - He is merciful! Come to Him today!

C. The vindication of Jesus

1. Jesus was rejected and killed by Jews and Gentiles.
2. But the Father vindicated Him in the resurrection!

3. The religious leaders, the Roman governor, and Nietzsche put Him to death - but He conquered death and is ruling over all right now!
4. He will also be vindicated when He returns in glory to judge the living and the dead.
5. We live in faith that the wicked tenants do not have the final word - God does!
6. As God vindicated the prophets and Jesus, so He will set all to right for eternity! Truth will conquer error, good will conquer evil, and life will conquer death!
7. Let this gird you with hope even in our dark times!

D. The Table of the Faithful God

1. This Table reminds us of the faithfulness of God
2. Jesus was put to death, but was raised and will return, and all will confess He is Lord!
3. Philippians 2:5-11 corporate reading
4. Come and be strengthened!

God's Vineyard and the Wicked Tenants

Mark 12:1-12
 July 28, 2024
 Communion
 2 John 1:3

Teaching keywords: Christology; kingdom of God; Israel; sin

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love. 2 John 1:3

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