

Matthew 21:33-46: "Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard & put a fence around it & dug a winepress in it & built a tower & leased it to tenants, & went into another country.³⁴ When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit.³⁵ And the tenants took his servants & beat one, killed another, & stoned another.³⁶ Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them.³⁷ Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'³⁸ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him & have his inheritance.'³⁹ And they took him & threw him out of the vineyard & killed him.⁴⁰ When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"⁴¹ They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death & let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons."⁴² 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, & it is marvelous in our eyes'?"⁴³ Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you & given to a people producing its fruits.⁴⁴ And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; & when it falls on anyone, it will crush him."⁴⁵ When the chief priests & the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them.⁴⁶ And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.

Intro: Last time, Jesus told a parable that contrasted the religious leaders' rejection of John's (& therefore His) authority with the submission to John & Jesus' authority by some very non-religious, scandalous people. And we saw that Jesus hates hypocrisy, & He delights in repentance (change of mind), faith, & obedience to all the will of God. Talk is cheap! "Performance is more important than promise." Trust is more important than talk. You should submit to Jesus' authority, change your mind, & trust & obey Him in order to enter the Kingdom of God.

This week we see another parable that shows the measureless (seemingly reckless!) love & mercy of God, & it shines the light of conviction & condemnation on the Jewish religious leaders of Jesus' day for rejecting the prophets God had sent to them & ultimately rejecting Jesus Himself, the Son of God.

Sin=God rejection: Piper: Every time we sin we say: God is not the supreme treasure to be desired above all else.

Charles Spurgeon: Preached a sermon on Luke 15 titled: "Prodigal Love For The Prodigal Son"

Prodigal: Extravagant, lavish, profuse, wasteful, spending money or resources freely and recklessly.

God's love & mercy are relentless & without measure, but you must repent & receive His Son to receive mercy.

1. The Parable Of The Wicked Tenants

Matthew 21:33-40: "Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard & put a fence around it & dug a winepress in it & built a tower & leased it to tenants, & went into another country.³⁴ When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit.³⁵ And the tenants took his servants & beat one, killed another, & stoned another.³⁶ Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them.³⁷ Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'³⁸ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him & have his inheritance.'³⁹ And they took him & threw him out of the vineyard & killed him.⁴⁰ When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"

a. Parables: Parables are earthly stories with heavenly meanings. The master of the house who plants the vineyard represents God. The vineyard represents the kingdom of God (**G. G.:** God's people, under God's rule, in God's place). The tenants (those who were to protect & cultivate the vineyard) are the Jewish religious leaders. The fruit is righteousness – obedience to the will of God. The servants sent by the master to get his fruit are the prophets God sent over & over again to speak His Word & warn His people to repent. The son of the master is Jesus Christ.

b. God gave His people all they needed & expected fruit: Isaiah 5:1-2, 7: Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He dug it & cleared it of stones, & planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, & hewed out a wine vat in it; & he looked for

it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes . . . For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel

c. These tenants are wicked and rebellious: Vs. 34-36: When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. And the tenants took his servants & beat one, killed another, & stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them.

John MacArthur: Tradition tells us – & it comes from Justin Martyr’s Dialogue with Trypho – that they took Isaiah, & with a wooden saw, they sawed Him in half. It may be what Hebrews 11:37 is referring to when it talks about the men of faith being sawn asunder. They took Jeremiah & threw him into a pit, & tradition says ultimately he was stoned. They rejected Ezekiel. Amos had to run for his life. Zechariah was rejected & stoned. Micah was smashed in the face, 1 Kings 22:24 says, by the people who would not hear the message that he gave. And this is the norm. This is how they treated the prophets – the kings, & the high priests, & the leaders of the people, the religious people – this is how they treated God’s prophets.

- **Jeremiah 7:25-26; 12:10-11:** From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them, day after day. Yet they did not listen to me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers . . . ^{12:10-11:} Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard; they have trampled down my portion; they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness. They have made it a desolation; desolate, it mourns to me. The whole land is made desolate, but no man lays it to heart.

- **Matthew 23:29, 33-35:** Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets & decorate the monuments of the righteous . . . ³³ You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? ³⁴ Therefore I send you prophets & wise men & scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, & some you will flog in your synagogues & persecute from town to town, ³⁵ so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah . . . **GOSPEL!**

d. God’s love & mercy are relentless & without measure: After these wicked tenants took his servants & beat one, killed another, & stoned another, the master sends more! This is amazing (reckless?) love & mercy!

Then the tenants do the same to these servants – they beat, kill, & stone them! Surely now the master will judge! But no! The master sends his son! When I read this, I’m thinking “No! Don’t do it! They are going to kill him!”

V. 37: Finally he sent his son to them, saying, “They will respect my son.”

This seems like even more reckless love & mercy!

- **Hendriksen:** It is a parable depicting sin most unreasonable & love incomprehensible!

- **Exodus 34:6:** The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful & gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness . . . **(God has a Mercy-Heart!)**

- **Ezek. 33:11:** As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way & live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?

- **1 Peter 1:3:** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again

- **2 Cor. 1:3:** Blessed be the God & Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies & God of all comfort

- **1 Timothy 1:2:** Grace, mercy, & peace from God the Father & Christ Jesus our Lord.

- **2 John 1:3:** Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father’s Son

- **Luke 6:36:** Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

Sermon: I was listening to a sermon this week about how God relates to us when we sin. He is chasing us down! He wants us! **S. of Sol. 2:10:** My beloved speaks & says to me: “Arise, my love, my beautiful one, & come away”

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e. The tenants totally reject God's great mercy: Vs. 38-40: But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him & have his inheritance.' & they took him & threw him out of the vineyard & killed him. When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?

- 1) They presume upon the master's love, mercy, & patience: They don't think He'll ever punish them!
- 2) They must think the master of the vineyard is dead (L. Duncan): Since he's dead, if we kill the son, we get it all!
- 3) They are proud, arrogant, selfish, & greedy. They want what does not belong to them. & they will kill to get it!

Jesus asks His hearers – what will the owner of the vineyard do to these wicked tenants when he comes?

2. The Jewish Leaders Cry For Justice

Matthew 21:42: They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death & let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons."

a. These leaders know what these tenants did was wretched: They call them "wretches"! Wretched: Despicable; hatefully vile and contemptible; extremely or deplorably bad.

- **Rev. 3:16-17:** because you are lukewarm, & neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, & I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

b. They know what the tenants deserve: They say these wretches should be punished with "a miserable death".

YL Translation: Evil men he will evilly destroy!

- **Rev. 14:10-11:** he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, & he will be tormented with fire & sulfur in the presence of the holy angels & in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever & ever, & they have no rest, day or night

c. They know the vineyard should be given to other tenants who will give the owner his fruit: "let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons."

- **John 15:1-2:** I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

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3. Jesus Agrees With & Affirms The Jewish Leaders Cry For Justice

Matthew 21:42-44: 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, & it is marvelous in our eyes'? ⁴³ Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you & given to a people producing its fruits. ⁴⁴ And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; & when it falls on anyone, it will crush him."

a. Jesus rebukes these leaders with Scripture: Jesus quotes the Bible! He quotes **Psalm 118:22-23:** "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, & it is marvelous in our eyes."

b. Jesus Christ is the cornerstone & capstone: Acts 4:11-12: This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Jesus would be rejected & crucified by these leaders, but He would rise from the dead to be the Stone of stones!

1) Jesus is the cornerstone: He's the first and most important stone in the foundation of God's kingdom after which the whole kingdom is patterned after, guided by, and built on! He is preeminently important! He's central!

2) Jesus is the capstone: He's the highest, most important, preeminent stone. Holds all together. He's the Stone of stones & the Son of sons! Jesus is clearly claiming to be God's Son in this parable! **Aram.:** Son(ben); Stone(eben)

c. God did this: "This was the Lord's doing!" God sent His Son! God crushed His Son! God raised His Son! - **Acts 4:27-28:** for truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Your hand and Your plan had predestined to take place.

d. This is marvelous in our eyes: 1 Peter 2:6-7: For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen & precious cornerstone, & the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." ⁷ Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone,"

e. God will give His kingdom to others who bear fruit: V. 43: Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you & given to a people producing its fruits.

They reject Jesus, so they lose the kingdom! You must trust & follow the King to receive the Kingdom! And if you trust & follow the King, you will bear fruit: righteous living in obedience to the will of God found in His Word!
- **1 John 5:12:** Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.
- **John 15:5:** I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

f. God will judge the wicked: V. 44: And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; & when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.

Revelation 19:11-16: Then I saw heaven opened, & behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful & True, & in righteousness he judges & makes war. ¹² His eyes are like a flame of fire, & on his head are many diadems, & he has a name written that no one knows but himself. ¹³ He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, & the name by which he is called is The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white & pure, were following him on white horses. ¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, & he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe & on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings & Lord of lords.

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4. The Jewish Leaders See The Truth And Reject The Truth

Matthew 21:45-46: When the chief priests & the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶ And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.

a. The terror & tragedy of total deception & truth suppression: These religious leaders knew Jesus was talking about them, but they went on to do exactly what Jesus warned them they would do! Do not be deceived Beloved!

b. Jesus is a prophet & more than a prophet: These religious leaders didn't do what they wanted to do because they feared the people – the crowds of people held Jesus to be a prophet. He is, & He's more than a prophet!

John 1:1-4: In the beginning was the Word, & the Word was with God, & the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, & without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life, & the life was the light of men.

c. Two summaries: 1) Kevin DeYoung: 1) Do you have a long history of ignoring God? (Grew up in church? Ignoring conviction? Running from God? Secret sins? Fake Christians?)
2) Do you act like God's gifts really belong to you and not to Him? (Your life; your gifts; your time; your money)
3) Do you figure you can do whatever you want because God won't notice or God won't care?
4) Do you really think you can get rid of Jesus?

2) Craig Blomberg: 1) God is patient with His people to bear the fruit He expects them to bear, even in the face of their hatred and rebellion against Him; 2) God's patience doesn't last forever – He will judge those who reject Him; 3) God's purposes will not be stopped, but He will accomplish all of His holy will.

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d. God's mercy is Jesus: Jesus is the most fruitful vineyard that has ever existed in the history of the world! Jesus is the most faithful tenant that anyone could ever dream of placing in charge of the vineyard. He's the most fruitful vineyard & the most faithful tenant & the most perfect Son & the most beautiful Stone – all at the same time!

Genesis 49:24: his arms were made agile by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob (from there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel) [Jesus is God!]

**Jesus Is The Beloved Stone And Son; Whom Wicked Men Would Kill And Shun
But Through His Death His Work Is Done; Now He's Alive Second To None!**

God planted His vineyard and expected fruit
Israel – His beloved, tender shoot
But sadly her leaders had no root
Glory and money was their pursuit
Their sin and rebellion was acute
They killed the prophets – truth dilute
His vineyard pure, they did pollute
And took the wicked, murderous route
So when Christ came, Him they'd refute
And cut Him down – His voice mute
But He's the Christ – He won't be mute!
He ended death and killed its root!
For He's Messiah – God's True Shoot!
The Israelite Who'd bear much fruit!
To save His bride was His pursuit
And all her wickedness refute
So trust Him now – He will recruit
And put you on a God pursuit!

God's patience runs with sinners long
In spite of all that they've done wrong
He cries: "Please turn and come along!
Follow Me where you belong!
I don't delight in judgment strong!
That's why I sent My Son along!"
God made Him, who knew no wrong
To be the wrong and suffer long
So He could save – make us belong
So trust the Savior Who is strong
His mercy-heart is your new song!

If the Christ you do reject
Against God's wrath He won't protect
And only curse you can expect
For Christ alone can wrath deflect

Since on that cross He hung erect
And took God's wrath Himself direct
He alone can save the wrecked
Since He'd die then resurrect
And all our blessings there collect
Against all foes He will protect
So trust Him now and you're elect
His glory then you will reflect
And from your sins He will perfect
Of joy, He'll be your great object!

Christ, above all, is the most precious Stone!
No diamond compares with the glory He's shown
Breathtaking beauty that leaves your mind blown
He's the greatest reality to ever be known
All your enemies He'll master and own
Since He gave His life for your sin to atone
Rejected by men and God all alone
In the dark on that tree He died with a groan
Then conquered the grave – and death's overthrown
He's alive not dead – from the tomb He's flown
Now He rules over all upon His throne
Come to Him now – no longer postpone
Believe in the Savior and bow to this Stone
His Word in your heart will ever be sown
He'll give you a love – a love unknown
Your joys shall rise in Christ alone
And you He'll hold tight and never disown!

Christ Jesus Is The Son And Stone
Of The Corner Best That's Known
Marvelous In Our Eyes Shown
So Beautiful That Minds Are Blown
God's Done This We Are His Own
By Christ's Rejection Died Alone
Spit On, Beaten To The Bone
Bore God's Wrath For Sins Atone
Died And Rose To Victory Own
Now With All Power On His Throne
He Rules O'er All The Cornerstone
Shows Mercy To All Those He's Known
Who Trust In Him By Faith Alone
But Crushes Sinners, Down They're Thrown
Who Reject His Rule And Groan
So Trust The Son He Won't Disown
All Those By Grace To Him Have Flown!