

55:16

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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[Resource: Map of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount](#)

Introduction

Well, this morning we continue in Mark. We've been working our way through the Gospel of Mark and we come to a parable that Jesus gives; the parable of the wicked vine growers.

Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the castle church in Wittenberg, Germany. Why did Luther nail his 95 theses to the church doors? Because the Roman Catholic Church was corrupt. They were a corrupt church. And they were selling indulgences that, if purchased, would transfer some of the merits (this is what they would say) it would transfer some of the merits of the saints to the sinner so that the sinner could be forgiven. Simply put, the Roman Catholic Church was offering forgiveness with a price tag.

Luther was disgusted with the corruption of the church and what they were teaching. And the three main issues that Luther had with the church when he posted his 95 theses.

First, he was repulsed at the fact that the Roman Catholic Church was selling forgiveness.

Second, he wanted to establish that the pope is not the authority. The Pope is not the authority in the church, but that the scriptures are to be the authority in the church.

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And third, he was angry at what the indulgences did for grieving sinners. Because it offered them a false hope of salvation, and took away from the true gospel, the true gospel, the only gospel that gives real hope.

Martin Luther through those 95 theses, attacked the church. He attacked the Roman Catholic Church, but not just the church, he went after the leaders of the church. In fact, Luther would later go on to call the Pope, the Antichrist...because of what the pope had done, to offer false hope to so many people. And although Luther played a very important role in the life of the true church, he wasn't the first one to attack a false religious system.

In our passage this morning, we're going to see Jesus, we're going to see Jesus use not 95 theses, but a parable. He's going to use a parable to confront the leaders of the false religious system that the Jews had established. Now I know we're in Mark chapter 12 here this morning, but before we turn there, I want you to turn in your Bibles to Matthew 21. Turn over to Matthew 21.

And as you do that, let me remind you what's going on in the life of Christ at this point. It's the Passover week. It's the week of the Passover. You remember Jesus came riding into Jerusalem on a donkey on Monday. We often call it Palm Sunday, but it was actually Monday that Jesus came riding in. And as He came riding in on this donkey, the people hailed Him as the King. Jesus then went into the temple, and He looked around and headed back to Bethany and stayed there... a two mile trip, He went back there and stayed the night.

The next day was Tuesday. On Tuesday, Jesus came in and He destroyed the temple. He turned over tables. He went in to destroy the temple grounds. And He taught the people about how the temple had been turned into a den of robbers. It was supposed to be a house of prayer, but they had turned it into a den of robbers.

On Wednesday, Jesus comes back to the temple and He begins teaching again on the temple grounds. The Sanhedrin is there. They come and approach Him. That is the chief priests, the scribes and the elders. They all come and they approach Jesus and they want to know by what authority Jesus is doing what He's doing. And He traps them with a question about John the Baptist. Do you remember that from a couple weeks ago?

If you remember that encounter there with the Sanhedrin. The twelve are also gathered there and there's a large crowd of people because that's who Jesus went to teach in the temple grounds, large crowds of people. They were all there gathered around Him...the twelve were there, and the Sanhedrin were there. And the Sanhedrin are afraid of the crowd, and they won't give Jesus an answer about John the Baptist when He confronts them and asks them about John the Baptist. They're afraid of the people, and so they won't give Jesus an answer. And so Jesus says, then I'm not giving you an answer. I'm not telling you by what authority I do all of this.

Well, it's still Wednesday, still Wednesday, and the twelve, and the crowd, and the Sanhedrin are still gathered around Jesus. And Jesus then begins to teach in parables. And look at Matthew 21 and verse 28. Matthew 21, and verse 28. Jesus says this,

Well, what do you think, a man had two sons. And he came to the first and said, son, go work today in the vineyard. Note that vineyard...that's very important for us this morning... And he answered, I will not. But afterward he regretted it and went, the man came to the second and said the same thing. And he answered, I will, sir, but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father. They answered the first. Jesus said to them, Truly I say to you, that the tax collectors and the prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you, for John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him. But the tax collectors and the prostitutes did believe him. And using this did not even feel remorse afterward, so as to believe him.

That's the parable that Jesus teaches, that He gives to the Sanhedrin, who were standing before Him in the temple grounds. And it's that parable, then that sets the context for the parable in our passage. So turn it over to Mark chapter 12. Mark, chapter 12, we're going to see another parable that Jesus gives as He standing there, again, with this large crowd, the twelve, and the Sanhedrin gathered around Him. And we're going to take this parable here in Mark chapter 12, we're going to take it piece by piece, so that we can understand what Jesus is conveying to these leaders, as He gives them a second parable right there on the temple grounds.

And so we'll start with the first point here this morning, what we'll call the setting.

1. The Setting.

Look at verse one, Mark chapter 12 and verse 1.

And He began to speak to them in parables

Stop right there. Before we get into this parable, we need to understand a little bit about parables. We've got to understand why Jesus taught in parables. Many preachers today will say that they like to use stories in their preaching, because well, that's what Jesus did. Didn't He just tell a bunch of stories? But sadly, they don't understand why Jesus used stories, why Jesus told parables. Jesus didn't use parables to entertain the crowd. He didn't do it to fill up sermon space. He didn't do it to draw a crowd of people so that they would come and listen to Him.

In fact, in Matthew 13:10, the disciples asked Jesus, why do You speak in parables? Why do You do this Jesus? And Jesus answered them, Matthew 13:11 "To you, it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted." Then in verse 13, He says, "Therefore, I speak to them in parables, because while seeing they do not see and while hearing, they do not hear, nor do they understand. Jesus spoke in parables for two reasons.

1. First, to reveal the truth to those who believe. He's revealing truth to believers.
2. But He also used parables, a second reason he used parables was to hide the truth from those who do not believe. It was judgment upon them, because they wouldn't believe. And so for the believing, Jesus would use parables to teach a spiritual truth, and to give them a greater

understanding of God's Word. But for the unbelieving, the parable would actually hide the spiritual truth because of the hardness of their heart. And it would be hard to understand because they didn't have believing hearts. Parables were hard for the unbelievers to understand. Jesus didn't tell stories to try and help the unbelieving understand the truth. That's not what he was doing. He actually hid the truth from them by using parables.

And these leaders, these Sanhedrin that are standing before Jesus, they don't believe they don't believe in Him. And therefore, they would not understand the truth in the parables that Jesus told.

But this parable, this parable is different. This is a different parable. Most of Jesus parables were about the kingdom of God, if you were to go through and study the parables of Jesus, most of them are about the kingdom of God. They were about the gospel and salvation, about people entering into the kingdom of God, people entering into heaven. And they would reveal truth about the kingdom of God and what it was like, and how someone could enter into the kingdom of God. But this parable that Jesus gives here before the Sanhedrin, this is a different parable.

This was a parable that was meant not to bring salvation, but to bring judgment. This is a parable of judgment. And this parable is aimed at those who do not believe. And specifically, it's aimed at the Sanhedrin who are standing there before Jesus. It was aimed at the leaders of the Jews, whose job it was to point the Jews to the truth of God and His Word. That was their job. But they failed in it. So Jesus gives them a parable of judgment here.

What does Jesus say? Well, let's continue on in verse 1. Look at what He says there as He begins this parable. He says

"A man PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT, AND DUG A VAT UNDER THE WINE PRESS AND BUILT A TOWER, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey. (Mark 12:1)

Now, what's interesting about this is that Jesus often started off His parables with the phrase like this, "The kingdom of heaven is like," The kingdom of heaven is like this. And then He would go on and tell a parable. But if you'll notice in some of your Bibles, you'll see a large portion of this part here in verse 1, in capital letters, you see that there? It's in capital letters. Why is it in capital letters? Well, this means that Jesus is quoting from the Old Testament. He's quoting from the Old Testament here, and Jesus is actually introducing His parable by quoting Isaiah chapter 5. Isaiah chapter 5. Jesus introduces this parable by quoting the Old Testament. Now why would He do that? Why would Jesus do this?

Well, you have to understand the context of Isaiah chapter 5. Isaiah was a prophet. Isaiah was a prophet to Judah. And he knew from the very beginning of his ministry, that he was going to prophesy to a hard-hearted and rebellious people who would not listen to him. Now imagine that God calls you and says, go and speak. Okay, Lord, here I am. I'm going to go speak. Who do I speak to? A bunch of people who aren't going to listen to you. Now go, that was his job. That's what he was called to do.

And then Isaiah 5, Isaiah begins to sing a song for his beloved friend. And his friend, there is actually God. He's singing a song for God. And as Isaiah begins to sing this song, it turns into a parable about a

vineyard. A vineyard. And in Isaiah's parable, the owner planted a vineyard and he cared for it, and the owner then expected it to produce good grapes, which is what any owner would expect, right? You plant a vineyard, you make this whole thing, and you would expect that it's going to produce good fruit. But Isaiah in his parable, says that it produced worthless grapes, worthless fruit.

And Jesus uses this song, this parable that Isaiah is giving in Isaiah 5, to introduce His parable. And as Jesus is telling this, He's telling it to the religious leaders of the day. And these men would have been very familiar with this passage, those Sanhedrin that are standing before Him, they knew Isaiah 5. They knew their Old Testament; they would have known exactly what Jesus was talking about here. And they would have known right away what Jesus was referring to, they would have known that the vineyard that Isaiah is talking about, that vineyard there is Israel. It's Israel. They knew that God planted Israel, that is...God chose Israel to be a fruitful nation.

He cared for Israel, He provided for Israel, He gave Israel everything necessary to flourish. Everything Jesus goes on, and He tells us exactly what Isaiah said. And he says that the owner put a wall around it. Why would he do that? He put a wall around his vineyard to protect it against wild animals and robbers. He goes on and he says,

"and dug a vat under the wine press", that was to collect the juices of the grapes after they had been crushed. And then he says "And the owner built a tower", that was for shelter, for storage, and protection...as a watchman would go up on the tower and watch over the entire vineyard.

And what this parable is talking about, is that God chose Israel and God provided everything it needed to flourish as God's people. God only blessed Israel. And when they failed, He called them to repent. And He brought him back. And He blessed them, and He blessed them, and He blessed them and He provided everything that Israel needed to flourish. He blessed them with His Word. He blessed them with leaders, and with prophets who would teach them His Word. God blessed Israel.

And Jesus said, the man, the owner, rented it out to vine growers and went on a journey. So Jesus, again, is pulling from Isaiah 5 and He sets up the scene for us here. This is what's going on. This owner has made this vineyard, he's created this he's provided everything for this vineyard to flourish. And then he rents it out to vine growers, and he goes out on a journey. That is the owner gave it over to the vine growers to care for it and to make sure that it produced fruit. That was the job of the vine growers, make sure it produces fruit.

This is still a common practice today. Owners well rent out their lands so that someone else can take care of it and produce the fruit on the land. Warren Wiersbe points out in order to retain this legal, his legal rights to the property, the owner had to receive produce from the tenants, even if it was only some of the vegetables that grew between the rows of trees or vines. And so the owner had to receive produce from this vineyard that he owned. So even though this owner has gone on a journey, he is still expecting some kind of fruit from these vine growers. He gives it over to them and he expects them to produce fruit.

So that's the setting of this parable. A man has a vineyard it's cared for, and he rents it out to vine growers.

2. The Slaves

Let's now look at our second point this morning. Second point we'll call The Slaves.

We saw the setting Now let's look at the slaves. Look at verse 2.

At the harvest time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, in order to receive some of the produce of the vineyard from the vine-growers. 3 They took him, and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. (Mark 12:2)

Notice this, harvest time has arrived. It's time for the harvest. And the owner knows it. And the owner is expecting some kind of fruit from his land, right? That's what any owner would expect. So what does he do? He sends a slave, one of his slaves to go and gather fruit. And the slave's job was to go and collect the produce from the vineyard. And so the slave arrives to the vineyard and when he shows up, the vine growers take the slave and they beat him and send him away empty handed. Notice this, they beat him.

Now remember, you have the twelve there, you have a crowd of people that are there, you have the Sanhedrin that are standing around, as Jesus is telling this parable. And as Jesus gets to this point in His parable, these people must be shocked. This is shocking. A simple slave, a servant of the owner just shows up on behalf of the owner to collect some of the fruit. All he's looking for is some fruit from this land. And the vine growers beat him. The Greek word here means to beat or to whip. And you can imagine the people just sitting there in shock thinking to themselves, what wicked vine growers? What wicked men.

Now why was the slave sent away empty handed? Well implied is that they didn't produce any fruit. There was no fruit that was produced on this land. They had nothing to send back with him because they're worthless vine growers. They didn't do their job.

So the owner sends another slave. Look at verse 4.

Again he sent them another slave, and they wounded him in the head, and treated him shamefully. (Mark 12:4)

With this slave, they didn't just beat him. But they wounded him in the head. Implied here is stoning. They would pick up stones to stone him, and they would throw stones at their head. And what Jesus is saying here is that they became even more violent with this slave, and they cause greater wounds to him. And they treated him so badly that it brought shame to this man. They dishonored this man, and they disrespected him.

And you can just hear the crowd and the Sanhedrin, now at this time thinking, who would treat someone like this? Who would do something like this? What wicked vine growers? These men are wicked. Well, Jesus isn't done.

Look what he says in verse 5.

And he sent another, and that one they killed; and so with many others, beating some and killing others. (Mark 12:5)

Now they don't just beat and send some back empty handed, they now start killing the owners slaves. They're killing them. They can't take it anymore. They don't want these slaves to keep coming and asking for the produce of the land. Stop coming here. So they end up beating some and killing other slaves that the owner sends to these vine growers. An the crowd, and the Sanhedrin must be outraged at this point, as they're listening to this parable. How dare these vine growers treat the owner slaves like this? And they must be thinking, why does the owner keep sending the slaves back to these wicked and evil vine growers? Right? What does he do this? Let me just stop here for a moment and explain this parable up to this point and what's going on.

What this parable means.

As Jesus isn't done, there's more to come in this parable. But it'll get more clear as we move along. And so in understanding this parable, we need to know what going on. First of all, the owner of this parable is who? It's God. God is the owner.

The vineyard in this parable is Israel. It's Israel. We saw that even with Isaiah. The vine growers are the Sanhedrin. The religious leaders that are standing right there before them.

So who are the slaves? The slaves are the prophets. The slaves are the prophets. These are the prophets that God sent to Israel time and time again. What was the job of the prophet? To speak the Word of God to the people and to call the nation of Israel to repentance. That's what their job was.

But what did the leaders of Israel do? What did they do with the prophets? They killed the prophets. They killed the men who came speaking the Word of God. They killed them.

Listen to Hebrews 11:37.

They (The Prophets) were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated 38 (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. (Heb 11:37-38)

That's how they treated the prophets. And if you study the history of Israel, and all of the prophets.

- Jeremiah was a prophet he was thrown into a pit at one point. And according to early church father, Tertullian, he was eventually stoned to death.

- Justin Martyr tells us that Isaiah was sawn in two and so that in Hebrews chapter 11, they the prophets were stoned and they were sawn in two. There's Isaiah sawn in two
- Elijah ran from his life from who? Jezebel who wanted to kill him.
- In 2 Chronicles 24, the prophet Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, was stoned to death.
- In Jeremiah 26, the prophet Uriah was killed with the sword by King Jehoiakim.
- John the Baptist was eventually what? Beheaded.

And there are many more prophets who were beaten and killed. Israel beat and killed the prophets...the slaves that Jesus is talking about here in this parable. That's how they treated the men who came to preach the truth. And it was Israel's leaders who were responsible for this. They didn't want to hear the truth, that God had sent the prophets to preach, and so they killed them. Just like the vine growers killed the owner's slaves, they killed the prophets.

3. The Son

There's one more death that is even greater than those of the slaves which leads to our third point which we'll call the Son, the Son. We saw The Setting, and The Slaves. Let's look now at the Son.

Look at verse 6.

He had one more to send, a beloved son; he sent him last of all to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' 7 But those vine-growers said to one another, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours!' 8 They took him, and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. (Mark 12:6-8)

What evil and wicked men these vine growers are.

And as Jesus is telling this parable, the people must have been thinking, no, no, no, not the son. Not the owner's son. Stop Jesus. Stop with this parable. Why would the owner send his only son. He knows what they did to the slaves and now he's going to send His Son?

Notice what he says in Mark chapter 12 and verse six. He says he sent him last of all, last of all. This was it. The final prophet sent to Israel. Moses tells us in Deuteronomy 18:15,

"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. (Deut 18:15)

Who was that Prophet that Moses was referring to? Christ, Jesus Christ. And He was the last one of all.

Jesus says in the parable, they will respect my Son. I mean, they have such respect for me as an owner, surely they will respect my Son. But did they? Did they respect Him? Did they listen to Him? These vine growers hated the Son even more. But who did they hate most of all? They hated the owner. They hated God. That's who they hated.

These were men who are supposed to speak for God, and lead the people to God, and yet they hated God. And sure, they use their Old Testament Scriptures for themselves, for their own self-righteous

religious system. They hated God. And they showed it by killing His only Son. And noticed this, they know that He is the heir. Listen to what Jesus says in verse 7.

But those vine growers said to one another, [this is the heir](#). This is the the owner's son. They know that He's the heir. They know that He was the Son, but they were so evil and greedy and selfish that they wanted the kingdom and the power all to themselves. And those days, if you had a piece of land that was found without an owner or without an heir to the land unit could rightfully be taken over by those who were occupying the land. And in this case, here would be the vine growers. So that's their plan will kill the son, kill the heir, and then it'll be ours. We'll take it over.

These men that are standing there before Jesus, the Sanhedrin, they hate God. They don't want to submit to God. They don't care about God's kingdom. They wanted the son dead so that they could run the show themselves. They wanted out all for them. And they knew that the son was a threat to them and their power. Jesus was a threat.

And these religious leaders are standing there, and they know that Jesus is a threat to their religious system. John 11:47,

[...the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs" \(referring to Jesus\) ". 48 If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." \(John 11:47-48\)](#)

They wanted it for themselves. It was all about them. They wanted the power. They wanted the authority. They wanted the nation. They wanted the kingdom...that was God's. And here comes God's Son, whom He sends. And He's a threat to their system. Two days later, you know what they would do to Him? They would kill Him. They would kill Him. Notice in verse 8, they kill him and they do what? They throw him out. They throw them out. They don't even give him a proper burial.

What did the Sanhedrin do? What did they end up doing on Friday? They did exactly that. They killed the Son and they threw Him out of the city. And where did Jesus die? In the city of Jerusalem? Nope...outside of the gates, they throw Him out.

Well, they're still in shock from this parable that Jesus is telling them. Remember, Jesus isn't giving them all the interpretation like you're getting here this morning. They're just getting the story. And they're in shock from this parable.

4. The Sentence

And the Jesus has a question for them, which leads to our 4th point, point number four, which we'll call The Sentence, The Sentence

Jesus goes on in verse 9. And He says, What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vine growers and will give the vineyard to others.

Now, what's interesting is that, in Matthew's account, he tells us that Jesus asked the question, and the religious leaders actually give an answer. Mark doesn't give us the answer. But in Matthew's account, Matthew does give us the answer. Listen to Matthew's account, Matthew 21, verses 40-41.

Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?" 41 They said to Him, "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers who will pay him the proceeds at the *proper* seasons." (Matt 21:40-41)

And so what happens here is that these guys, they don't realize it. But what these guys are actually doing is they are pronouncing condemnation and judgment upon themselves. They answer and they say, "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end." That's right, He will. These guys are bringing condemnation upon themselves. Again, they're shocked by this. And I don't believe at this point that they recognize that it's them that Jesus is referring to. Otherwise, they wouldn't have answered that way.

Remember, these guys are so self-centered and prideful, and think that they have all the authority that they wouldn't think that they were as bad as these vine growers in this parable. We're not like those guys. Those wicked and evil men. We are righteous. They were self-righteous. They were righteous in their own eyes. And so these guys answer first. And then Jesus answers in the affirmative in verse 9 in our passage, and basically says, That's right, guys. You're right, He will come and destroy the vine growers and will give the vineyard to others.

Now notice, when they respond, they say he's going to give it to other vine growers. And Jesus responds and says, You're right, he's going to come and destroy the vine growers, but he's going to give it to others. And it was then at that moment, that it hits these guys. And they realize now that Jesus is talking about them. Their eyes are opened. They see it. Because in Luke's account, Luke tells us that they respond and they say, May it never be! No, Jesus! May it never be. All of a sudden, they get it. They understand the parable now. They realize now that Jesus is talking about them. And He's saying that the vineyard that was supposed to be taken care of by these religious leaders, is going to be taken away from them. And they don't like it. And who is it going to be given to? Notice what Jesus says to others, to others, not other vine growers to others, who are those others? They're standing right there in the midst. Who are the others? The twelve apostles that are standing right behind Him. All twelve of those guys minus Judas Iscariot, but who will be replaced.

He says the kingdom is going to be taken from you guys...you Sanhedrin, and it's going to be given over to these twelve. That's who the others are. This is a sentence and a condemnation on these religious leaders because they have failed in what they were supposed to do. Their job was to take the gospel to the world and to bring salvation to the nations. But they failed. They push the nations away, they push the Gentiles away and said, you're not good enough to be a part of us. God said, I put you there in Jerusalem, I chose you as a nation to be a light to the other nations. That was your job. But Israel failed. And so Jesus takes that vineyard, and He puts it in the care of twelve guys. Twelve guys who would start what? The church. The church. Jesus is talking about the Church Age right here.

That's what He's saying. He says, Israel, I am done with you. I am done with you Israel. Now, does God still have a plan for Israel? Of course He does. Yes, He does. But at this moment, He says, I am setting you aside, I am done with you. And I'm giving it now to others. And the church is going to be built, it will be established. And those 12 would be put in charge of the church and would take the gospel to the world. And that's exactly what they did, right. That's why we're sitting here this morning, in White Bear Lake, Minnesota, in 2021, as the church. Because they accomplished what God had sent them to do. To take the gospel to the world.

Well, Jesus isn't done with them. He's not done with these guys.

5. The Stone

Which leads to our fifth point, point number five, we'll call The Stone, The Stone.

Look at verse 10.

Have you not even read this Scripture:
'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED,
THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER *stone*;
11 THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD,
AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES'?" (Mark 12:10-11)

Jesus now turns to the Scriptures to a very familiar passage that these guys knew. In fact, what Jesus is quoting here is Psalm 118. Now the reason why this passage is so familiar for these guys, is that it's part of what's called the Hallel. The Hallel. Hallel simply means prays. And Psalms 113 through 118 are called the Hallel. It's called the Hallel. And the amazing thing is the Hallel would be sung, listen to this, during Passover. It's sung during Passover. What week is it for these guys? It's Passover. This is fresh in their mind. They've been singing it all week. They know what it is.

In fact, the people, the people had just quoted the Hallel two days earlier, when Jesus came riding in on a donkey. Hold your finger and Mark chapter 12. And turn it over to Psalm 118. I want to show you this, this is fascinating. This is the brilliance of Christ. And look at Psalm 118. And what it says. Beginning in verse 25, Psalm 118, the last part of the Hallel, in verse 25, it says this,

"O LORD, do save." (Psalm 118:25)

Now that phrase right there "do save" is the word Hosanna. Sound familiar? Hosanna.

O LORD, do save, we beseech You;
O LORD, we beseech You, do send prosperity!
26 Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD;
We have blessed you from the house of the LORD. (Psalm 118:25-26)

What were the people just singing on Monday, when Jesus was writing into Jerusalem? That very passage right there. Hosanna blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, as they lay the palm

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branches down and Jesus came into Jerusalem. It's fresh on their minds. They know exactly what's going on here.

Look up at verses 22 and 23. Look at what it says there. Psalm 118:22.

The stone which the builders rejected
Has become the chief corner *stone*.
23 This is the LORD'S doing;
It is marvelous in our eyes. (Psalm 118:22-23)

Sound familiar? It's exactly what Jesus just quoted, right? Back in Mark chapter 12. Turn back to Mark chapter 12. Jesus just quoted from the Hillel that was very familiar to them. So on the forefront of their minds, and as Jesus is quoting from the Hillel, who is the stone that Jesus is referring to? He is, Himself. He is the stone. And they have rejected Him. The builders, the ones who were supposed to build those vine growers who were there, those religious leaders that are standing right there in front of Him that were supposed to build, you know what they did, when the stone came, they rejected Him. He's the stone that they have rejected. But notice this, He says, but He has become the chief cornerstone. The chief cornerstone, this is the most important stone and the entire building. If you were to build a building in those days, the first thing you would do is establish the cornerstone, and everything would be built off of the cornerstone. So most important one, and who is the chief cornerstone? Christ is.

And what is he the cornerstone of? The church. Listen, Ephesians 2:19 through 20.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*, (Eph 2:19-20)

Paul in Ephesians, 2 is speaking of the church there. The gentiles would be welcomed in as the gospel is preached, and the church grows. This is the marvelous plan of God. It's a marvelous plan. And for all those who have ears to hear, and eyes to see this wonderful truth, it is marvelous.

God turned over a fruitless system, and He established the church so that the gospel would go forth, and so that lives would be saved all throughout the world. In fact, that system was so fruitless, that the Israelites were a part of, that the Sanhedrin were a part of, that just a few years later, in 70 A.D. the Romans came in, and they destroyed the whole temple. They took it all down. Stone by stone, they demolished the temple. Your false worship is done. And it hasn't been built since. There's no temple in Israel. The place of their false worship was demolished, and the vine growers were destroyed, just as Jesus said.

6. The Scorn

But these religious leaders, the Sanhedrin, didn't like hearing this from Jesus. Which leads to our final point, point number 6, The Scorn. The Scorn.

And look at verse 12.

And they were seeking to seize Him, and yet they feared the people, for they understood that He spoke the parable against them. And so they left Him and went away. (Mark 12:12)

These guys are angry. They're not happy with Jesus, they get this parable. They understand what Jesus is talking about here. Normally, parables were hidden from people, but not this one. Not this one. This was made very clear for them to understand.

And they were angry with Jesus. And they would have taken Jesus out right then and there. But they didn't. Why? Because they were afraid of the people. They had a fear of man. They were afraid of the people. Matthew tells us because the people consider Jesus to be a prophet. But the religious leaders saw Him as a threat. So they went away and they continue their plot to destroy Jesus, just as He said they would.

They understood this parable. They understood the condemnation. They understood the sentence. And instead of repenting and calling upon Christ for forgiveness, and mercy, they harden their hearts even more. And they left Jesus. They went away to plot His murder.

Closing

In closing, what do we learn from this passage?

1. First, we learn that Christ is the chief cornerstone. He is the cornerstone of His church. And either you come to receive Christ as Lord and Savior, or you will be -- listen to this -- you will be crushed by Him. The next time that Jesus comes, He is not coming as the Savior, He's coming as a judge. And He's coming with wrath. And He's coming to destroy His enemies. And if you're not a child of God, if you have not repented of your sin, and put your faith in Jesus Christ, He will come and crush you. And you will spend an eternity in hell.

But listen, it's not too late. Jesus right now stands with His arms open and says, Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. come to Christ this morning, repent of your sin and put your faith in Him, so that you can have an eternity in Heaven with Him. Because the next time that He comes, he's coming as a judge. Come to Christ this morning. Repent of your sin and put your faith in Him. And you can become a child of God and receive the gift of salvation that He offers today.

2. The second thing that we learn is we must not be like the wicked vine growers who were fruitless. We must be producing fruit, we must be producing fruit. What was the fruit that those religious leaders were supposed to do? What was it that they were supposed to produce? Their

job was this, simply this, to bring the message of salvation to the ends of the earth. That was their job.

Paul talks about it in Acts 13:47 as he preaches to both the Jews and the Gentiles, he says this,

For so the Lord has commanded us,

‘I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES,
THAT YOU MAY BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH.’” (Acts 13:47)

Listen, the Jews failed. They failed in their responsibility. They, they failed in the task that God had called them to accomplish. But this is our responsibility church. This is our job. Listen, church.

Our job is not to take back the United States. It's not our job. Our job is not to turn the economy around. It's not our job. Our job is not to win people to a political party, not our job. What is our job? Our job is to preach the gospel so that the lost would be saved. That's our task. May we be fruitful in the task that God has called us to.

Let's pray. Father, thank You, for the clarity of Your Word. Thank You for this amazing parable that Christ taught to these religious leaders who had failed in their task, who had failed in what You would call them to do. Lord, we know that You have called us as a church, to be those who would preach the gospel to the ends of the earth, so that lost people would hear the truth of Your Word and be saved. Father, we know and we believe in the power of the gospel. We believe in the power of Your Word. And, Lord, we know what our task is... to go and to preach this good news to lost souls. Father, I pray for anyone who is here this morning who is lost, that doesn't know You, I pray that You would grant them the gift of repentance and faith, and that they would come to trust in You as Lord and Savior. That they would receive the gift of salvation here this morning. I pray that they will leave here a changed person because of what You can and are able to do in the hearts of lost people. Father help us to lead from this place is those who would not only preach the truth, but live the truth in our lives, for Your glory alone, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.