

Luke 20:1-19

*20:1 On one of the days while He was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders confronted Him,*

1. They are angry because Jesus accepted praise as He entered Jerusalem
2. And they are really angry because He wrecked havoc on their business venture in the temple
3. So they thought, let's go find out who he thinks he is!

*2 and they spoke, saying to Him, "Tell us by what authority You are doing these things, or who is the one who gave You this authority?"*

1. Who do you think you are?
2. Who gave you the right to do the things you are doing?

*3 Jesus answered and said to them, "I will also ask you a question, and you tell Me: 4 Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?" 5 They reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why did you not believe him?' 6 But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet." 7 So they answered that they did not know where it came from. 8 And Jesus said to them, "Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things."*

1. Jesus lets their question roll right off His back
2. He asks them a question that puts them between a rock and hard place and silenced them
3. But He was not done!

He tells a parable...and what is interesting about this parable is, the Jews understand it without interpretation.

It is a parable with 4 main parts.

### **I. Trust            v9-10a**

*And He began to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard and rented it out to vine-growers, and went on a journey for a long time. 10 At the harvest time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, so that they would give him some of the produce of the vineyard;*

These tenants are given a great trust by the planter, the owner of the vineyard.

1. Tenant farmers are contract farmers who don't own any land but rather rent the land
2. Their goal is to produce a crop and pay the owner of the land a certain percentage of their earnings, which would have been agreed upon beforehand...kind of like a sharecropper.
3. The tenants have the best of everything really.
  - a. They have freedom to work the land the way they want, but they don't have to pay the land note.
  - b. They don't have somebody, like a boss, looking over their shoulder.
  - c. They can do as they see fit, produce the crop, and then pay the owner what they agreed upon. Everything else they get to keep.
4. The planter left these tenants his farm trusting that they would produce some fruit.

At the appropriate time, “he sent a slave to the tenants,” so that they might give him some of the produce of the vineyard.

## II. Persecution v10b-12

*but the vine-growers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. 11 And he proceeded to send another slave; and they beat him also and treated him shamefully and sent him away empty-handed. 12 And he proceeded to send a third; and this one also they wounded and cast out.*

The tenants moved from trusted stewards to persecutors.

1. They beat one servant and sent him away empty handed.
  - a. The word “beat” is a strong word and can literally mean a beating over the entire body
  - b. The listeners would see this as ungrateful, wicked, and clearly illegal.
  - c. This owner in the story would have had every right after they beat up the first slave to show up, call in the appropriate authorities and bring justice and judgment.
  - d. He didn’t, he sent a second slave. What patience!
2. They beat the second one and treated him shamefully and sent him away empty handed.
  - a. The Greek verb for “treated him shamefully” is where we get the English word traumatize.
  - b. Still, he does not deal harshly with the tenants. He sends a third. What mercy!
3. The third one they wounded and cast out.
  - a. This owner is extremely patient, giving them opportunity after opportunity after opportunity to do what is right...very merciful to send a new servant a 2<sup>nd</sup> and a 3<sup>rd</sup> time.
  - b. They just keep throwing it right back in his face.

We see the tenants persecution of the planter’s servants, but it does not stop there.

## III. Murder v13-15a

*13 The owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.’ 14 But when the vine-growers saw him, they reasoned with one another, saying, ‘This is the heir; let us kill him so that the inheritance will be ours.’ 15 So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.*

This time he doesn’t send a servant, he sends his son. What grace!

1. A son would carry more authority, the heir to the Father’s vineyard.
2. Surely, they would listen to Him, but no they took it even further with him. They killed him!
  - a. According to the Talmud, if three years went by and no one laid claim to land, it reverted to those who were working the land.
  - b. So maybe they assumed that the son had come because the planter had died.
  - c. So, if they got rid of the son, the vineyard would then belong to them.
3. So they murdered him. The planter’s great patience, mercy, and grace was met with murder.

These tenants have moved from stewards, to persecutors, to murderers and thieves.

#### **IV. Judgment v15b-19**

*What, then, will the owner of the vineyard do to them?*

Keep in mind that Jesus has a captive audience: disciples, Jews, and Jewish religious leaders.

1. The planter has trusted his vineyard to tenants.
2. The tenants had broken the trust 3 times by beating his servants and refusing to pay up.
3. Finally, they had murdered his son.
4. He asks the question, what is this owner going to do to them?

They knew the answer, but no one spoke up. There was silence in the crowd.

1. So Jesus answers his own question.

*16 He will come and destroy these vine-growers and will give the vineyard to others.”*

2. Now, notice the response!

*When they heard it, they said, “May it never be!”*

3. ‘May it never be’ in Greek is, the strongest negative possible, no, no, no, no, never, never, never.
4. Why would they say that? This is what everyone would expect to happen!

*17 But Jesus looked at them and said, “What then is this that is written: ‘THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone’? 18 Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.” 19 The scribes and the chief priests tried to lay hands on Him that very hour, and they feared the people; for they understood that He spoke this parable against them*

Those that were represented in the parable became very clear to those who were listening.

1. The man who planted the vineyard was God.
2. The vineyard that was planted was Israel.
3. The Tenants are the Jews.
4. The servants sent to the tenants are a picture of the prophets.
5. And the son...is Jesus...WHO THEY WERE PLANNING TO KILL AT THAT VERY MOMENT!

Just like those tenants were trusted with the planter’s vineyard, Israel and its religious leaders were given a great trust, a great stewardship as well: to preserve and proclaim the truth of His Word.

1. But what did they do? They turned inward, became self centered and arrogant.

2. Then, when the prophets came to hold them accountable and call them to repentance they beat them, shamed them, cast them out, and rejected them.

3. Over and over, throughout the history of Israel, the prophets are met with hostility.

a. Matt 23:29-31 *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, saying, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets*

b. Matt 23:37 *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!*

c. Acts 7:52-53 *Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.*

4. And just like those tenants in the parable murdered the son, that was exactly what Jesus knew the current tenants of Israel were going to do to him.

All of this came clear to those who were listening and they recognized what Jesus was prophesying through his parable.

1. Jesus was prophesying their Destruction when he said “He will come and destroy those tenants!”

a. And the people are saying, no, no, no may it never be. But it was.

b. In A.D. 70 Tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of Jews were slaughtered by the Romans and the city and the temple were leveled to the ground.

c. From that moment on, no priesthood has existed in Israel, no temple, no sacrifices, no ceremonies, no Sadducees, no Pharisees, no chief priests, no high priests, the whole system ended.

2. Jesus was prophesying their Displacement when he said, “The vineyard will be taken from those tenants and give to others.

a. And the people said, No, no, no. May it never be. But it was.

b. The kingdom of God was taken from the Jews and given to Gentiles.

It was a story of judgment and the people did not want to hear it.

1. One of the most ironic things in this whole story is how the leaders respond to the message?

2. Look at verse 19.

3. They, disagreeing with his sermon, fulfilled the sermon.

4. They were thinking, we would never kill the son of God, and then they turned around and went after him.

So, what does this mean for us this morning? It means that the stewardship of the kingdom has been handed to us. And we had better not take it for granted. And we had better not assume that God won't take it from us and give it back to his chosen people.

1. Rom 11:17-24 *But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, 18 do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." 20 Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; 21 for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either. 22 Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. 23 And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 24 For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?*

2. Do not take your relationship with God for granted: seek diligently to know Him!
3. Do not take your responsibility before God for granted: seek diligently to make Him known.