

**The Gospel According to Luke: 20:9-19**

**Reading:** Matthew 21:33-46

**Parallel Passages:** *Matthew 21:33-46 and Mark 12:1-12*

Sermon #84

July 19, 2020

## **Rebellion Will Crush Israel**

Our Lord Jesus Christ loves His followers. His concern, even with His death a matter of a few days away, is that His followers not become overwhelmed with grief or overwhelmed with fear once He returns to His Father. With this concern in mind, He tells a parable showing the vital need for everyone to rejoice in the Son and not reject the Son. By believing in Jesus one receives eternal life with God. To reject the Son of God is to count oneself among those unworthy of eternal life and to suffer eternal damnation. Today's message is meant to remind those listening that one's eternal destiny hinges on believing in or not believing in Jesus as the Christ.

Jesus has just cleared the Temple for the second time because of the corrupt men and their sinful practices dishonoring to God and now has begun to teach and preach the Good News to all the people. All the people would be Jews and Gentiles. As usual, the people listened intently, as Luke says, “[all the people were hanging on his words](#)” (Lk. 19:48) because the people knew the truth of what Jesus taught. During this same time the leaders schemed and planned Jesus' death.

This is a key parable of importance for all three synoptic Gospels; Matthew, Mark, and Luke record it. To understand this parable correctly we must discern Jesus' meaning within the allegory of the parable. Here, Jesus is warning the people not to follow the religious leaders of Jerusalem and He is also warning the leaders that unless they repent, they will perish. In this parable, Jesus is using veiled allegorical images to reveal His meaning. The allegorical meaning will remain hidden for some and shock those who understand. To help us understand as we work our way through this allegorical parable, we need to know the following:

- **The Vineyard is Israel**
- **The Owner of the Vineyard is God**
- **The Tenants are the Religious Leaders** (v. 9,14,16)
- **The Servants are the Old Testament Prophets** (v. 10-12)
- **The Others are the Apostles** (v. 16)
- **The Son the tenants killed and the Stone the Builders Rejected is Jesus** (v. 13-15, 17)

**Key Point:** *God is extremely patient when people oppose Him, but rejecting His Son, brings about swift and eternal destruction.*

Where do we see this? As we work through the parable you will notice the patience of God and how He repeatedly sends servants or prophets to His enemies requesting them to do what is right, but over and over the prophets of God are rejected. But now the climax is at hand; God has sent His Son. God will not send another prophet, but He send His only begotten Son, but again the enemies of God, the corrupt Jewish leadership, rejects the Messiah. Where before God had patience, He will now act and destroy those who reject His Son for all eternity.

Now I believe we are ready to hear the Word of God with ears that hear and eyes that see the meanings of this parable. Let me pray for God to also open our hearts and souls to His eternal truths.

Pray

### **Christ Addresses Israel's Rebellion** (v. 9-15)

Please open your Bibles - we begin at verse 9 of chapter 20 of Luke's Gospel. Verses 9 to 15 comprises the parable, <sup>9</sup>“*And Jesus began to tell the people this parable: ‘A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while. <sup>10</sup>When the time came, he sent a servant to the tenants, so*

that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. <sup>11</sup> And he sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. <sup>12</sup> And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out. <sup>13</sup> Then the owner of the vineyard said, “What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.” <sup>14</sup> But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, “This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.” <sup>15</sup> And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them?’ ”

We learned from the reading of Matthew by Ivan that the owner bought the land, made a long-term investment by planting a vineyard, built a wall around it to protect the vineyard and workers, built a wine press and constructed a watch tower. A new vineyard does not produce grapes of quality for wine for 4 to 5 years. So, the owner would pay hired workers or possibly the tenants to the work to care for and prune the vineyard why it matured. Then when the vineyard is ready owner leases it. I ancient near east cultures the tenants would lease the vineyard without money up front, but with the promise to harvest the crops and the landowner would receive a percentage.

During worship at the synagogue, the people would from time-to-time sing Isaiah 5; The Song of the Vineyard. So, everyone was familiar with Isaiah 5 and knew the vineyard was the House of Israel. Reading from Isaiah, chapter 5, verse 1, “Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. <sup>2</sup> He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.”



<sup>3</sup>“And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. <sup>4</sup>What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?”



<sup>5</sup>“And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. <sup>6</sup>I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and briers and thorns shall grow up; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.”

<sup>7</sup>“For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the **house of Israel**, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!” (Isaiah 5:1-7) God had planted a beloved vineyard; the land He promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It was supposed to produce an abundant crop of people faithful to God because of the fertile soil chosen, meaning people of Israel. However, it only produced weeds and wild grapes. There is a difference between this Old Testament parable and Jesus’ parable. Our Lord is not here, condemning the people, like the text in Isaiah because the people followed the corrupt leaders, but Jesus condemns only the leaders. It is that slight difference that catches the attention of these leaders. They know Jesus is speaking about them and their corruption.

God has a beautiful lush fortified vineyard. Israel was entrusted to its tenants; meaning the scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and Elders. They were given the task of caring for God’s beloved vineyard, the people of Israel. They were to fertilize, cultivate, prune and tend to the needs of the vineyard or God’s people. They were to teach God’s Word clearly and truly. They were to teach others to keep the commands of God. They were to evangelize and share God’s Word with everyone. They were the tenants called to care for vineyard, as stewards of the Scriptures, but the vineyard belonged to God. However, in time the tenants began to

believe it was their vineyard and they were to receive all the profits and all the glory and they believed it was they who were to rule over the people instead of serve them.

The leaders knew this parable was about them. They realized that Jesus referred to the prophets God had sent to Israel, as His servants but they were rejected by Israel's leadership. They knew that some of the prophets were killed because of the message they brought; one of them, Zechariah, was murdered between the temple and the altar. Reading from 2 Chronicles, chapter 24, <sup>20</sup> “Then the Spirit of God clothed Zechariah the son of Jehoiada (yeh·ho·yaw·daw) the priest, and he stood above the people, and said to them, ‘Thus says God, “Why do you break the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, he has forsaken you.” ’ <sup>21</sup> But they conspired against him, and by command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the LORD.” (v. 20-21) Many desire leadership to seek their own fame, power or profit instead of being servants of the Most-High God and His people. The leadership of Israel had become forsaken by God and they abused and murdered God's prophets.

Jesus pronounces 7 woes in Matthew 23 and specifically mentions that these rulers will be responsible for all the blood they have shed over the centuries from Abel to Zechariah. Reading at verse 31, “**Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.** <sup>32</sup> Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. <sup>33</sup> You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? <sup>34</sup> Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, <sup>35</sup> so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah ... whom

you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. <sup>36</sup> Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. <sup>37</sup> O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!” (Matthew 23:31-37) Do you see - things have not changed? Those who seek their own power, who serve the evil one, those who say they are sent by God and abuse His Word and His people will be held accountable and be destroyed.

The first major point Jesus makes in the parable of the vineyard; is God had sent prophet after prophet; many more than the 3 mentioned by Jesus in this parable, and the people refused to listen. The people under the teaching, leading and control of the scribes, Sadducees, Pharisees and elders were encouraged to listen to men instead of God. Most of the time God’s prophets were treated badly and sometimes beaten and killed. Thus, the saying that has survived until this day – “Don’t shoot the messenger”. An idiom meaning; do not blame the person who brings bad news and do not take one’s anger out on the messenger. The first recorded use of this idiom was by Sophocles ([so.p<sup>h</sup>o.kles](#)) a Greek playwright in 442 B.C.

We observe the longsuffering and mercy of God as He has sent prophet after prophet after prophet to the vineyard of Israel over centuries. The time of prophets is over and God now sends His Son. The beloved Son enters the vineyard or the House of Israel and the tenants or the religious leaders plan to abuse and murder Him, thinking that the vineyard will be theirs once God’s heir is dead. They never expected Jesus to rise from the dead. Old Testament passages alluded to the resurrection; Isaiah 53 and Psalm 16, but people would not have understood this because they did not read them in the light of the Messiah’s resurrection until after Jesus rose on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day.

These corrupt leaders must rid themselves of Jesus if their religious system; one which has proven to be a moneymaking venture, enriching the leaders at the expense of the people, is to continue. They want the glory all for themselves. Jesus must be stopped if their profitable way of life is to continue. Jesus, quite simply, was bad for business. There is no difference today, Jesus is bad for the corrupt workings of the world and for most the people in power. Let me ask, “Is your career or job more important the Jesus and His glory?”

### **The Penalty Of Israel’s Rebellion** (v. 16-18)

When Jesus had finished telling the parable exposing the leadership as corrupt; He stated that the vineyard will now be given to “others” meaning the apostles and asks the leaders a question. Reading verses 15 to 18, “**What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them?**” Jesus answers His own rhetorical question, **He meaning God will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others.** When they heard this, they said, ‘Surely not!’<sup>17</sup> But he looked directly at them and said, ‘**What then is this that is written: “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone”?**’ *Psalm 118:22*<sup>18</sup> **Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”**

These leaders, who in truth were enemies of God, could not imagine that God would take away His blessings from the House Israel and give it to others; they were blinded by their pride, greed, ambition and hearts of stone. However, the history of the Apostles recorded Acts and other places in the New Testament show this is exactly what happened, as God the Son said, so it is. Reading from Acts chapter 13,<sup>46</sup> “Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.<sup>47</sup> For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, ‘I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring

salvation to the ends of the earth.’ ” (Isaiah 49:6, 45:22)<sup>48</sup> And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.” As Jesus predicted a generation later the Temple was destroyed and no more to this day. God removed these wicked “tenants” or the corrupt leadership and replaced them with the Apostles who remained faithful until their deaths. Because the Jews had rejected the beloved Son of God, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, they brought judgement upon themselves and the Church Age began. The Church is to take the Gospel to the whole world.

There were two things that enraged these wicked leaders and gave them a greater desire to murder Jesus. First, the leaders understood that this parable was directed at them and their corruption. Secondly, Jesus was also making clear that it was He who was the beloved Son of the owner of the vineyard; which meant He was the Messiah, the only begotten Son. Jesus has made it crystal clear to these leaders that He is the rejected Son and they are about to carry out their wicked role of the parable – they are about to murder Jesus, the beloved Son, just outside the vineyard. As the writer of Hebrews clarified why Jesus was hung on a cross outside the city and how Christians are to be different from the corrupt past,<sup>9</sup> “Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them.<sup>10</sup> We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat.<sup>11</sup> For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp.<sup>12</sup> So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.<sup>13</sup> Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured.<sup>14</sup> For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.<sup>15</sup> Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that



acknowledge his name. <sup>16</sup>Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.” (Hebrews 13:9-16)

As we continue in our journey through the passage, our Lord shifts now to add another word picture that these leaders understood. Jesus shows them that not only is He the beloved Son, the Messiah the tenants or leadership rejects, but He is the stone the builder’s reject. Reading verses 17 and 18, “But he looked directly at them and said, ‘What then is this that is written: “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone”?’ *Psalm 118:22* <sup>18</sup>Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.” What is it the Lord means by this?

Here Jesus is quoting 3 Old Testament passages from Psalms, Isaiah and Daniel to make clear 2 points; first, the leaders will reject Jesus as the Messiah and murder Him. Second, the people must not reject Him, but embrace Him as the chief cornerstone for their foundation in their relationship with God. I want those listening to understand, for this is a matter of eternity. Jesus had been rejected by the religious leaders and they moved to murder Him. Salvation for them will no longer be offered for it is now time for the owner of the vineyard, God, to come and destroy them and give the vineyard to the “others” or the apostles. While their fate is sealed, the people’s fate is not; they must not reject Jesus. They are called to turn from the corrupt ways of Israel or they too will suffer the same fate as the religious leaders. This truth has held true throughout the centuries to this very day. Jesus calls all, but only those chosen by God who give their lives in submission to Jesus will know eternity of heaven in the presence of God. This imagery is clear to the leaders who studied the Old Testament.

The imagery goes something like this – builders are working on a stone structure. As they build bringing together the stones, they keep running across a

stone of unusual shape and this stone does not fit into their man-made structure. So, they keep rejecting it because it just will not fit. However, as they built they come to the point where they need a stone that will tie the whole structure together and they remember the odd shaped stone they had no use for, it was a stone that they had stumbled over many times. They retrieve the stone and even though it was not shaped by man it fits perfectly and they rejoice. This is the image that comes from the Old Testament passages.

Psalm 118:22 and 23 tells us the cornerstone does not come from men. “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. <sup>23</sup> This is the LORD’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.” Isaiah adds definition concerning the cornerstone who is Jesus, “Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. <sup>14</sup> And he will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. <sup>15</sup> And many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken.” (Isaiah 8:13-15) Daniel explains this stone will destroy the corruption the man has brought into the worshipping of God. <sup>34</sup> “As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. <sup>35</sup> Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. ... <sup>44</sup> And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, <sup>45</sup> just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its

interpretation sure.” (Daniel 2:34-35 and 44-45) What I want you to clearly understand these leaders made this connection with the parable and then what Jesus directly told them. He is the stone and they have rejected Him and that makes them the enemies of God. If one rejects Christ, the stone cut not by human hands, the stone that will crush all other kingdoms, the stone that will be the only eternal kingdom that will be a mountain and fill the entire earth – to reject this stone, Jesus Christ, signs ones eternal death sentence – the death that never ends. Knowing this these Jewish leaders reject Jesus and they have no hope. As verse 19 states, <sup>19</sup> “The scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him at that very hour, for they perceived that he had told this parable against them, but they feared the people.” This, is exactly what prideful sinners do today. People, we know and love, are so busy building their own little kingdoms that Jesus just does not fit – so, to their peril they reject Jesus.

We have observed not only in this parable but throughout the history recorded in the Scriptures; *God is extremely patient when people oppose Him, but rejecting His Son, brings about swift and eternal destruction.*

Now as you think upon this passage and this parable this week, I want you to consider how merciful God is in the midst of this wicked parable that was true of wicked leaders. The Jewish leadership down through the centuries had proved themselves to be wicked; they had consistently rejected the messengers, God’s prophets He sent as warning of the coming judgement. The prophets had one message; repent for the kingdom of God is coming. Now Jesus arrives and His message to all who would listen is, repent for the kingdom of God is at hand. God withdrew His blessing of Israel, a smaller blessing for a nation and gave a greater blessing; salvation for Jews and Gentiles who come to Jesus and make up His Church universal that would spread throughout the world.

I hope you see the great responsibility that you and I have to embrace the Son of God and to turn from the corruption of the world. We need to be declaring to all people trust Jesus and be saved!

This parable shows us this eternal truth; *God is extremely patient when people oppose Him, but rejecting His Son, brings about swift and eternal destruction.*

This morning we should ask ourselves in our hearts, “Have we embraced the Son of God as King, Lord and Savior or have we added Jesus to the long list of things we do in this life. The answer is important with eternal consequences. I say as Joshua said, “*as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*” Please stand, I hope you will respond with me, just as the people answered Joshua, please read the screen if you agree, “*Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods!*” (Joshua 24:15-16) Amen!