

God is in Charge

Acknowledging God's position of authority.

Outline Notes

Matthew 21:33-46 (niv)

In this parable, the Chief Priests and the Pharisees knew well what Jesus was meaning. Everything Jesus said was familiar to His audience.

Before we look into this parable in more detail, let us establish first that the 'vineyard' represents the 'nation of Israel.' The 'owner' represents 'God' and the 'tenants' represent the 'religious leaders of Israel.'

The 'messengers' who were sent represent the 'prophets sent by God to foretell the coming of Jesus' and who so often rejected and killed. The 'son' who came represents none other than 'Jesus' Himself.

This parable has much to tell us about...

1. GOD

This parable reveals God's trust.

God pays us the compliment of entrusting us to carry out His work. Every task we receive is a task given us to do by God and He largely leaves us to get on to do what we are assigned to do without much supervision. But remembering God is always present when we need Him.

This parable reveals God's patience.

Matthew 21:34-36 (niv)

The owner of the vineyard in this parable is a great example of God in how patient He is with us.

God bears with all our wrong living and patiently waits for us to turn away from our wrong doing and back to pleasing Him.

This parable reveals God's judgment.

Matthew 21:40-41 (niv)

The tenants had disqualified themselves because of their wrongdoing and total lack of disobedience.

God's sternest judgment is when He takes out of our hands the task which He meant us to do if we fail to do so. We have sunk to our lowest level when we have become useless to God because of our sin and disobedience.

This parable has much to tell us about...

2. US

This parable reveals our privilege.

God not only give us a mission to accomplish; He also gives us the means whereby to do it. It is a privilege to serve God and His purposes.

This parable reveals our freedom.

God is no tyrannical task-master; He is like a wise ship commander who allocates a task and then trusts a man to do it using their skills and initiative.

This parable reveals our accountability.

There will come a day of reckoning for all of us. We will be answerable and accountable for the way in which we carried out the tasks God gave us to do.

This parable reveals the deliberateness of our sin.

Sin is the opposite of God and He cannot associate with sin as revealed by Jesus when He cried out on the cross *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"*

Deliberate sin is when we carry out and commit something that we know is exactly opposite to what pleases God.

This parable has much to tell us about...

3. Jesus

This parable reveals the claim of Jesus.

This parable shows us quite clearly Jesus lifting Himself out of the succession of the prophets. Those who came before Him were the messengers of God; no one could deny them that honour; but they were servants; Jesus is the Son!

This parable reveals the sacrifice of Jesus.

Jesus was never in any doubt of what lay ahead of Him. Jesus went willing and open-eyed to His eventual death on the cross on "skull Hill."

Matthew 21:37 (niv) *Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he (the owner) said.*

In trying to reach us with His love, God finally sent His own Son. If we ignore and reject God's gracious gift of His Son, then we reject God Himself.

Jesus reinforces His rebuke.

Matthew 21:42 (niv)

Here in this verse Jesus directly addresses the audience by reciting to them **Psalm 118:22-23**. **Psalm 118** would be sung at an appointed day during the Feast celebrations.

At this point in the parable Jesus changes the imagery from the tenants who rejected the servants and the son to the builders who rejected the stone.

The tenants by killing the son destroyed themselves, and the builders by laying aside the stone that became the capstone made them look foolish.

A capstone was the final stone placed on top of a stone arch.

It was the final touch or crowning achievement.

Jesus refers to Himself as "*the stone the builders rejected.*"

Acts 4:11 (niv) *He is the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.*

This picture of the stone which the builders rejected was the most important stone in the whole building!

Matthew 21:44 (niv) *He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed.*

Jesus used this metaphor to show that one stone can affect people in different ways, depending on how they relate to it.

This verse here in the parable is a composite picture put together from three Old Testament Scriptures. **Isaiah 8:14-15** - **Isaiah 28:16** - **Daniel 2:34; 44-45**

The idea behind these Old Testament prophecies of a stone are summed up in Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the foundation stone on which the church is built and the cornerstone that holds it all together. He is the capstone as the head of His Church.

To refuse His ways is to bang your head against the walls of His righteousness. To reject Him, would result in being crushed into living life completely separate to Him.

These two pictures of the vineyard and a stone were familiar to every Jew who knew of the prophets that went before Jesus.

Matthew 21:45-46 (niv)

...Application

So what does this parable mean to us today?

What can we learn from this parable?

The essence of the Christian life can be summed up in one word **“relationship”**. God wants to have a relationship with us.

God is the Creator. We are the Creation! Let us choose to place God in His rightful position of authority in our life by surrendering completely to Him.

We should display the same attitude of David the Psalmist;

Psalm 119:33 (tlb) *Just tell me what to do and I will do it, Lord. As long as I live I'll wholeheartedly obey.*

In trying to reach us with His love, God finally sent His own Son. If we ignore and reject God's gracious gift of His Son to us, then we reject God Himself.

The choice is yours!