

SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON

WEEK 19

Jesus teaches the parable of landowner

Mark 12:1-12



DAY 1

Jesus used a parable to condemn the religious leaders •
Mark 12:1-9

READ

Mark 12:1-12

EXPLAIN

The truth of Mark 12:1-9

Jesus told a simple, familiar story. His listeners would have known the hard work of planting a vineyard on the rocky hills of Judea. But the conflict in Jesus' parable is quite unusual. Instead of paying any rent, the tenants beat and killed the owner's slaves, and then killed the owner's son. They also dishonored the son by throwing him out of the vineyard without a proper burial. So what does this parable mean? Jesus' description of the vineyard comes from Isaiah 5:1-7, which compares Israel to a vineyard. God had chosen, rescued, guided, taught, protected, and cared for Israel, and He expected Israel to bear the fruit of righteousness. When they did not, God was patient and gracious like the vineyard owner, sending prophets over and over again to urge righteousness (Jer 7:25). But like the tenants, Israel's leaders persecuted and killed the prophets (Jer 26:20-23; 2 Chron 24:20-22; Mark 11:29-33). Now, they were rejecting the "*beloved son*," *Jesus* (Mark 12:6; 1:11; 9:7), *the heir and therefore the true owner of Israel*.

ASK

1. What did the man make?
A vineyard, with a wall, a winepress, and a watch tower.
2. What did the tenants (farmers who rent the land) do to the man's slaves?
They beat and killed the slaves instead of paying the rent.
3. What did the vineyard represent?
Israel (more specifically, the kingdom which God entrusted to Israel).
4. What did God expect from Israel?
God owned and cared for Israel, so Israel should have lived for Him (produced the fruit of righteousness).

DISCUSS

1. How does this parable show God's care, provision, and patience towards Israel?
2. Is your life producing the "fruit of righteousness," or are you, like Israel, squandering God's provision, resources, and blessing?

DAY 2

The religious leaders knew the parable was about them • Mark 12:1–9

READ

Mark 12:1–12

EXPLAIN

The truth of Mark 12:1–9

The religious leaders understood Jesus' story. They were rightly indignant at the tenants, even going so far as to pronounce sentence on them when Jesus asked what the owner would do when he returned: "He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons" (Matt 21:41). But when they realized this parable was about them, they did not repent (Luke 20:16). As a result, they would get exactly the same punishment they had called for: total destruction (Matt 21:41), a complete undoing of everything they stood for. Forty years later, in AD 70, the Romans destroyed Israel. Ever since then, there has been no temple or genealogical records. That means no sacrifices or priesthood. Their system is gone. Now God's kingdom is entrusted not to Israel or its leaders, but to a new nation with faithful leaders (Matt 21:41), to the church and its apostles (1 Pet 2:9; Eph 2:20). Israel's enjoyment of the kingdom would have to wait (Luke 21:24), and those who rejected Jesus when He came would never enjoy it.

ASK

1. What did the tenants do to the man's son?
They killed him and threw him out of the vineyard.
2. Who did the different people represent?
The owner is God, the tenants are Israel's leaders, the slaves are the prophets, and the son is Jesus.
3. Why should the tenants have respected the son?
The son of the owner is the heir. He is in charge of the vineyard.
4. What would God do to the leaders when they killed Jesus?
He would use Rome to destroy them—and their whole religious system, including temple, sacrifices, and priesthood.

DISCUSS

1. What should the religious leaders have done when they realized the parable was about them (cf. 2 Sam 12:13)?
2. How do you respond when confronted with your sin?

DAY 3

Jesus used a prophecy to prove the parable • Mark 12:10–12

READ

Mark 12:1–12

EXPLAIN

The truth of Mark 12:10–12

When the leaders reacted against the parable, Jesus rebuked them from Scripture. Jesus quoted from the same psalm the people used to praise Him when He entered Jerusalem two days before (cf. Mark 11:9; Ps 118:22, 26). He was affirming that He really was the Messiah. He was also giving another word picture: a rejected stone that in the end became the **cornerstone**. This most likely refers to the corner foundation stone,

the stone that bears the weight of the building and is the standard for making the rest of the building level and straight. So while Jesus would be rejected and killed, He would rise from the dead and become the foundation and focus of God's kingdom. After reciting the prophecy of the cornerstone, Jesus kept quoting from Psalm 118 to show two things. First, Psalm 118:23 shows the Father's **providence**, His control and oversight in sending Jesus to be the cornerstone. Second, for Jesus to be rejected and yet become the focus of God's kingdom would be "marvelous in our eyes" (Ps 118:23b). His victory despite rejection would be stunning.

DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASK 

1. After the parable, how did Jesus prove He is the Messiah?
Jesus quoted from the same psalm (Ps 118) the people used to praise Him when He entered Jerusalem two days before.
2. Why did Jesus rebuke the religious leaders saying, "Have you not read this Scripture"?
The leaders of Israel should have known the Scriptures.
3. What kind of stone is Jesus like?
A cornerstone—the foundation and the corner that guides the rest of the walls.
4. How was Jesus like the stone rejected by the builders?
Jesus would be rejected and killed, but He would rise from the dead and become the foundation and focus of God's kingdom.

DISCUSS 

1. Why don't people listen to Jesus, even when Scripture proves He is the Messiah (Matt 13:15)?
2. Is your life built on Jesus? List some of your habits that need to change in order to be in line with Jesus the Cornerstone.

DAY 4*The LORD's vineyard • Isaiah 5:1-7***READ** 

Isaiah 5:1-7

EXPLAIN **The truth of Isaiah 5:1-7**

What would you do if you had a garden that produced only bitter fruit? You had cleared its stones, planted choice plants, watered it, weeded it, fertilized it, and guarded it but still nothing. It produced only rotten vegetables, fit only for the garbage can. This is how Isaiah describes God's people, His "vineyard." Israel was like a worthless garden, full of violent people who produced nothing but the fruit of unrighteousness. Yet Israel should have overflowed with righteous fruit. God, the owner of the vineyard, had done everything imaginable to provide for His vineyard. He had removed the rocks and built retaining walls to create flat terraces where choice vines could be planted. He had carved out a winepress and constructed a stone wall and a watchtower to protect His vineyard. Yet His vineyard produced only "wild grapes," inedible sour berries. What will God do? He will remove His protection and withhold His care, allowing His vineyard to be trampled down and destroyed. This is exactly what happened to Israel. Because Israel was unfruitful, God allowed Israel to be trampled down and devoured by her enemies.

ASK 

1. What more could God have done for Israel, His vineyard?
Nothing. God had provided for His people in every way.
2. How should Israel have responded to God's provision?
By producing the fruit of righteousness.
3. How did God punish Israel?
He removed His provision and protection. As a result, Israel was invaded by other nations and destroyed.

DISCUSS 

1. How has God blessed you? Do you use those blessings to please yourself or to please Him?
2. Did Israel have any excuse for being unfaithful? Will we have any excuse on the day of judgment (Rom 1:18-21; 2:14-16; 3:19-20)?

DAY 5

Jesus is the greatest friend • Ephesians 2:20

READ

Ephesians 2:11–22

EXPLAIN

The truth of Ephesians 2:20

Have you ever built something out of blocks? Maybe a tower or wall out of small, wooden blocks, or something larger like a retaining wall using brick or cement pavers? If you have, you probably realize the importance of getting the foundation right. If the foundation isn't laid correctly, then the entire structure is crooked or even collapses. But the right foundation—the right size block laid in the right location in just the right way—makes all the difference. And if the foundation is important, the cornerstone is even more important. This stone at the corner of the foundation not only bears the weight of the structure, it is also the standard to which the rest of the building is leveled and straightened. It is the most important piece of the most important part of the building. So is it any surprise that Jesus is the cornerstone of the church? The church is built upon Jesus (Eph 2:20), and whoever trusts in Him has a firm foundation and will never be shaken (Isa 28:16).

ASK

1. What is the most important part of any structure?
Its foundation.
2. What is the most important part of the foundation?
The cornerstone.
3. Why is the cornerstone important?
It supports the weight of the structure and is the standard by which the rest of the structure is leveled and straightened.
4. Who is the church's cornerstone?
Jesus. The church is built upon Him and aligns itself with Him.

DISCUSS

1. What happens when the church rejects its cornerstone, Jesus? How do you know when a church has rejected Jesus as its cornerstone (John 14:15; Acts 17:10–11)?
2. What can you do to make your life align more with Jesus as your cornerstone (John 15:10)?

NEXT WEEK

Jesus teaches the
parable of the talents

Matthew 25:14–30

