



The Wicked Farmers

Matthew 21:33-46

Mark 12:1-12

Luke 20:9-19

Parables of Jesus

Jesus had been speaking in the temple, and then he told this parable.

There was a landowner, or master, who planted a vineyard.

He set a hedge around it, dug a winepress, and built a tower. Then he rented it out to some farmers, and then the master moved to a far country.

Discuss:

The man clearly invested in this property. He planted a vineyard, and then he put a hedge around it. What does that mean? This could have been a hedge of bushes or trees, or it may have been a fence. Why would he build a fence?

This would keep out people that he did not want to come in and take from the vineyard.

Then he put a winepress in it; and this is a place where they would smash the grapes to make wine.

The last thing he built was a tower. Why would he build a tower?

This would allow watchmen to see who was coming and prepare for an attack.

The landowner put everything in place to protect the property while he was gone. He made many preparations for the safety and preservation of the land. Then he rented it, or leased it, to some farmers, or “husbandmen” to take care of it while he was gone. It was their job to grow the grapes and make the wine and take care of the land.

When it was time for the harvest, the master sent his servants back to the farmers, so they could get the fruit of what had been grown and produced.

Discuss:

What do you think they were expecting to get? Grapes, maybe? Maybe wine? Maybe both.

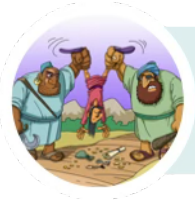
But the farmers would not give the servants anything. Mark and Luke say one servant, Matthew seems to say three. It is clearly the same story, just told slightly differently in the gospels; if you read it closely you can see they are just listing the servants and what happened to them in a different order.

The farmers took the servants and beat one of them, and sent him away with nothing.

Then they threw stones at the next servant, wounded him in the head, and treated him shamefully. The man kept sending servants and some of them they beat up, some of them they killed, and this seems to have gone on for a while.

Discuss:

Would you want that job? Would you want to be one of the servants sent to check on the land?



The Wicked Farmers

The landlord said, "What should I do?"

Finally, he thought, I will send my son; they will respect him.

He had one son, who was dear and beloved to him. He thought if he sent him, they would respect him and listen to him.

But when the farmers saw the son, they talked among themselves. They said, Let's kill him, and then we will take his inheritance.

Discuss:

Is that how that works? Would they be the rightful heirs? Probably not!

The farmers took the son, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

This is serious.

What do you think the landlord will do now? Do you think the farmers will get the inheritance they thought they would?

Absolutely not.

The landlord will come himself and destroy the farmers, and give the land to someone else.

He will rent it out to others who will give him the fruit from the land.

This ended the parable.

Then Jesus said, Have you read the scripture that says,

"The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone:

This is the Lord's doing. The kingdom of God will be taken from you, and given to a nation who will produce the fruit."

Whoever will fall on this stone will be broken, but whoever it falls on, it will grind him to powder.

When the chief priests, scribes and Pharisees heard his parables, they thought Jesus was talking about them.

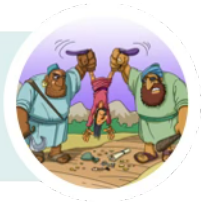
Discuss:

Did they understand the parable?

No, but they knew he was talking about them, and they knew he spoke the parable against them.

The Pharisees wanted to seize him and arrest him right there, but they were afraid of the people. The people thought he was a prophet and the Pharisees were concerned about the response of the people. So they left him at that time. But the telling of this parable was just days prior to the arrest of Christ, and he was crucified days later they arrested him and he was crucified within a week.

Jesus in the Story



What does this parable mean?

The landowner is God.

The husbandmen, or farmers, are the nation of Israel, the Jewish people, and specifically the Pharisees, scribes, and priests.

The servants are the prophets, and the son of the master is Jesus.

As a last resort, God sent Jesus to earth, and he was killed by his own. Israel killed its own Messiah.

The Lord had a plan. He sent his prophets to the earth for centuries prior to Jesus. Some were persecuted, and some were killed by the Jews. The people rejected their teachings and pleas to lead the people back to the Lord. Finally, the Lord sent Jesus, and they killed him.

The wicked farmers hoped to receive the inheritance of the heir.

In the same way, the leaders of Israel were trying to receive the blessings and inherit the kingdom by their own merit. They felt they had earned it, and their goodness would obtain these things for them. They did not realize that our goodness or righteousness is nothing to God (Isaiah 64:6). The only way to receive the inheritance - which is the blessings of kingdom life here on earth and life eternal - is through a relationship with Jesus Christ and acceptance of his righteousness.

Just like the parable, the kingdom of God was taken from the Israelites after the death of Christ, and it was given to another nation.

It opened up the kingdom of God to all the nations of the world; and now the kingdom was available to anyone who would believe, whether Jew or Gentile.

When they took the heir outside of the garden and killed him, this is symbolic of Jesus being taken to Golgotha to be crucified. The place of his crucifixion is believed by some scholars to possibly be the place where Cain was exiled, the point where the land of Eden.

This stone that Jesus is referring to is mentioned in Psalm 118:22-23.

The stone is Jesus.

The builders are the Jewish nation.

This stone, Jesus, was rejected by Israel.

What they did not realize is that Jesus was the cornerstone by which God would build everything.

What is a cornerstone?

It is the first, and the most important stone laid in a building's foundation. It is the stone on which all the other stones of the foundation are aligned and built.

Israel rejected Jesus, and he IS the foundation for the kingdom of God.

Lesson Questions & Memory Verses

41. The Wicked Farmers

1. What did the farmers do to the first servant that the man sent?
2. What did they do to the other servants?
3. Who did the man finally decide to send?
4. Where did the servants they take the son?
5. What did the servants do to the son?

Isaiah 28:16

...Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; whoever believes will not act hastily.

42. Kingdom Business

1. What did the first servant do with the money?
2. Where did the last servant put the money?
3. What did the king do with the last servant's money?

Luke 19:26

For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.

43. Improperly Dressed

Read John 14:6

1. Jesus is always full of?
2. Jesus is not death, he is always?
3. What is the ONLY way to get to God the Father?

Isaiah 61:10

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

44. Arrested!

1. In Ezekiel 1:28, what happened when he saw the glory of the Lord?
2. In Psalm 41:9, who betrayed (lifted up his heel)?
3. In Matthew 26:50, what did Jesus call Judas?

Psalm 103:2-4

Bless the Lord, O my soul and forget not all his benefits: who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies...



