

# Are You Aligned With the Cornerstone?

Sunday, April 7 – 8:00 & 10:45

Fifth Sunday in Lent – 2019

Wednesdays of Lent: Services at 11 & 7; Meals at 12 & 6

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: Think about an electric drill... to make it work, *its plug must be aligned with and inserted into an electrical outlet!* Now, think about a sinner... to have God's gift of eternal life, *he must – by God's grace and through God's gift of faith – be aligned with Jesus!*

Today, as we work our way through a parable told by Jesus, as recorded in [Luke 20](#), the day is Tuesday of Holy Week – just two days earlier it was Palm Sunday; then, on Holy Monday, Jesus had cleaned the temple; then the Jewish leaders questioned Jesus about His authority. Now, with *those events in mind and those leaders present*, we get into today's text!

1. **Parable:** <sup>9</sup> **And [Jesus] began to tell the people this parable:** // *A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning!* As we begin to hear the parable, we may not be real familiar with a vineyard owner, tenants, servants, and fruit, *but those who heard Jesus understood His story.*
2. **Situation:** **“A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while.** // Let's make some important connections between *the*

earthly story and the heavenly story: “The owner is **God**, the vineyard is **Israel**, the tenants are the **religious leaders**, the servants are the **prophets**, and the beloved son is **Jesus**” (TLSB).

3. **Servants – Prophets:** <sup>10</sup> When the time came, [the owner] 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.
- a. The “*servant*” references point to the many prophets sent by God to the various leaders in Israel and Judah. “When God sent them he expected fruit, [in the earthly story, the fruit refers to grapes or wine; in the much more important heavenly story, the fruit refers to] **contrition [sorrow for sin], faith, true obedience**” (Lenski, 977). Dr. Luther identified *our proper response to God* with these words: It is our “**duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him**” (First Article Explanation).
- b. However, the various servants / prophets were beaten, treated shamefully, wounded, and cast out! The OT says that “The LORD... sent... his messengers, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place. But they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words and scoffing at his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD rose against his people, until there was no remedy” (2 Chr. 36:15-16 ESV). Also, when Stephen preached his famous sermon, *he said to the Jewish leaders*, “Which of the prophets did your fathers

not persecute? And they killed those [prophets] who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One..." (Acts 7:52 ESV). And why such rebellion? *They wanted to own, control, and benefit from Israel!*

4. **Son – Jesus:** <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. // We all sin and, sometimes, *much more than we want to admit* – so the Holy Spirit keeps working through Word to help us. However, for those Jewish leaders, *they were determined to go all the way* and, in fact, they did – *putting to death God's own Son, the Promised Savior!* They did it, but Jesus also died for our sins, so we did it too – *we are also guilty!*
5. **Owner – God:** **What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them?** <sup>16</sup> He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others." // So, to their faces, Jesus told those leaders: Killing the Son will NOT get you the vineyard, yet they did it anyway – *which brought God's eventual destruction upon ♦them and ♦the nation!*
6. **Application:** **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"? <sup>18</sup> Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him." // The passage quoted by Jesus is from Psalm 118:22; those leaders should have ♦known that passage AND ♦recognized Jesus to be that

“cornerstone” – *the One with whom everyone in God’s kingdom is in alignment!* In other words, such people  
✦know of their own helplessness, ✦are sorry for their sins, and ✦have their God-given faith in Jesus as their only Savior! For those who reject the Cornerstone, they will  
✦fall upon it and be broken or ✦lay under it crushed!

7. **Reaction:** <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. <sup>20</sup> So they watched him and sent spies, who pretended to be sincere, that they might catch him in something he said, so as to deliver him up to the authority and jurisdiction [rule] of the governor. // A good reaction would have been ✦sorrow and ✦reconsideration of their evil plan, but, instead, *the Jewish leaders wanted to seize Jesus and kill Him at that very moment!* However, though restrained by fear, *they still foolishly thought they could lay a successful trap for Jesus, and then Pilate could kill Him!* Even though the Jewish leaders reacted badly, let us – *by God’s grace and power* – react with 😊sorrow, 😊faith, 😊assurance, 😊thanksgiving, and 😊obedience!

**This Week’s Challenge:** As all the stones in a building are aligned with the cornerstone, *so all people in God’s kingdom are aligned with Jesus – the Ultimate Cornerstone.* Check your own alignment and encourage others in the same!

**Let Us Pray:** Dear Holy Spirit, TY for working through ✦baptism to align us with Jesus, ✦the Supper to assure us of forgiveness, and ✦God’s Word to show us the way!

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