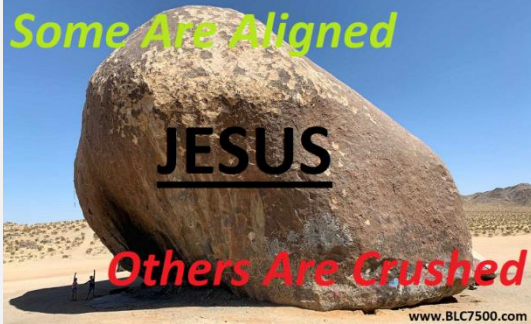


Fifth Sunday in Lent – 2022

Saturday, 4/2 at 4:00 & Sunday, 4/3 at 9:00



Text: Luke 20:9-20 NAS-95

Lenten Wednesdays: Services 11 & 7; Meals 12 & 6

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: During Jesus' ministry,
➔ His followers increased while ➔ those who listened to the Jewish leaders decreased. Therefore, the Jewish leaders grew in their ➔ jealousy and ➔ hatred toward Jesus.

Now, *in today's gospel reading*, the setting is **Tuesday of Holy Week**. The leaders have just questioned Jesus' authority to drive the ➔ moneychangers and ➔ merchants out of the temple. Then (*as recorded in Matthew*) Jesus told the parable of the two sons; then Jesus said to the Jewish leaders: "Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you" (Matt. 21:31 NAU), *which certainly intensified the situation!*

Then, *immediately*, Jesus told **the parable of the wicked tenants** – *today's gospel reading*. A parable is a story with two meanings: (1) on the surface and (2) below the surface:

- a. The owner and planter is God the Father.
- b. The vineyard is the kingdom of God.
- c. The vine-growers are the Jewish leaders.
- d. The produce includes sorrow, trust, and obedience.

- e. The slaves are *the prophets sent by God*.
- f. The beloved son is *Jesus sent by His Father*.
- g. The others are *the Gentiles*.

1. **Setting:** ⁹ And [Jesus] began to tell the people this parable: “A man [God] planted a vineyard [His kingdom] and rented it out to vine-growers [Jews, especially the leaders], and went on a journey for a long time.” // Think back to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the descendants of Jacob who became the nation of Israel. God ♣ made them His people and ♣ showered His blessings upon them!

2. **Rejection of God’s Slaves:** ¹⁰ “At the harvest time he sent a slave [prophet] to the vine-growers, so that they would give him some of the produce of the vineyard [sorrow, trust, and obedience]; but the vine-growers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ¹¹ And he proceeded to send another slave [prophet]; and they beat him also and treated him shamefully and sent him away empty-handed. ¹² And he proceeded to send a third [prophet]; and this one also they wounded and cast out.” // As the Jewish leaders heard those words, they probably recalled the horrible treatment various prophets had received. The Bible says, ♣ “Jezebel destroyed the prophets of the LORD” (1 Ki. 18:4), ♣ “the sons of Israel have... killed Your prophets with the sword” (1 Ki. 19:10), and ♣ “[the Israelites] killed Your prophets who had admonished them” (Neh. 9:26 NAU). God sent the prophets in love, yet they murdered them!

3. **Rejection of God’s Son:** ¹³ “The owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son [Jesus]; perhaps they will respect him.’ ¹⁴ But when the vine-growers saw him, they reasoned [discussed, debated] with

one another, saying, 'This is the heir; let us kill him so that the inheritance will be ours.' ¹⁵ So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him." // Think of the escalating rejection of the Israelites: For the most part, **✦**they refused to repent—*so no sorrow, no faith, no obedience*; **then** **✦**they rejected the prophets; **and then** **✦**they killed the prophets. Note: As Jesus was speaking, *He was very aware of their plans to kill Him!*

4. **Response of God the Father**: "What, then, will the owner of the vineyard do to them? ¹⁶ "He will come and destroy these vine-growers and will give the vineyard to **others** [*Gentiles*]." When they heard it, they said, "May it never be!" // Jesus' hearers were **✦**Jewish leaders and **✦**other Jews – *who were in Jerusalem for the Passover*. It seems those *other Jews* "**hoped to God that [the story] would not come to such a terrible end as the killing of the heir and the judgment on the vine-growers**" (Lenski, 982). However, as Jesus knew of their desire to kill Him, *so He also knew of the coming destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70!*
5. **Trust or Consequences**: ¹⁷ But Jesus looked at them [*the Jewish leaders*] and said, "What then is this that is written [in Psalm 118:22]: 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone'?" ¹⁸ "Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust." // The Jewish leaders had already rejected Jesus and, *in three days*, would kill Jesus.
- a. Chief Corner Stone: The Jewish leaders basically threw Jesus away – as unusable, yet **he is the MOST IMPORTANT STONE in the entire kingdom of God!**

Since Jesus is the Chief Corner Stone, *every repentant person is aligned with Jesus!*

- b. **Rejectors of THE STONE**: For those rejecting **now**, it may seem insignificant. But imagine **▶running full speed into a HUGE rock OR ▶having a huge rock fall on top of you**. For all who **keep rejecting Jesus, and for those who know Him now yet go the way of the world, they will be terribly ☹broken and ☹pulverized forever!**

6. **Hatred and Plans to Murder**: ¹⁹ **The scribes and the chief priests [were so enraged that they] tried to lay hands on Him that very hour, and [yet they did not because] they feared the people; for they understood that He spoke this parable against them [and maybe the other people understood that too].** ²⁰ **So they watched Him, and sent spies [on that same day] who pretended to be righteous, in order that they might catch Him in some statement, so that they *could* deliver Him to the rule and the authority of the governor [Pilate]. // No repentance, only murder☹.**

Take Aways:

- **Truth** – Alignment with Jesus is CRITICAL!
- **Relevance** – Everyone is either *aligned* or *will be crushed!*
- **Inspiration** – NOW is the golden opportunity to repent!

Let Us Pray: Dear Jesus, even as people hated You and wanted to kill You, You kept teaching them, loving them, and calling them to repent. *Grant many to heed Your call today!*

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