# Matthew 21

**The Parable of the Tenants**

**33“Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. 34When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.**

This story about a landowner. Look at the story features:

* Vineyard – field, ownership where he planted seeds for a future harvest
* Wall – fence
* Winepress – vat used to crush the grapes and turn them into wine, product
* Watchtower – tower used to provide a higher vantage point so you can see in all directions and protect against attacks
* Rented to farmers (tenants) – vinedressers who work the land
* Harvest time – when the vineyard produces a harvest and final product, wine
* Servants of the owner – collect the rent, harvest. Work for the Man

The man expects to collect the fruit or produce from the renters. He was expecting them to treat the vineyard correctly and deliver their labor back to him.

**35“The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. 36Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. 37Last of all, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said.**

Why would the tenants beat and kill the servants who came to collect the fruit from the vineyard?

The man considers that while they disrespected his servants, surely they will treat his son correctly.

**38“But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance.’ 39So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.**

The objective in their mind is to take ownership of the vineyard. They want the field for their own purposes. They want all of the benefit and don’t want to share or give the owner the portion that he deserves.

Notice, they saw the son. They knew who he was and what he was sent to do. Knew what authority he was acting under. Knew that eventually he would be coming around. Took him, brought him outside of the vineyard and killed him there…outside.

**40“Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” 41“He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,” they replied, “and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.”**

Jesus asks a key question. Remember, the question and story are designed to bring them to awareness and repentance. They answer the question correctly. The man will take revenge, regain ownership, deal with the current tenants, and take them out; then rent the same vineyard to others who will act correctly.

**42Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:**

**“‘The stone the builders rejected
    has become the cornerstone;
the Lord has done this,
    and it is marvelous in our eyes’?**

So Jesus follows up with a scripture for further reference. Their answer and response is related to a scripture in the Word. This is a reference to Psalm 118. If they understand this passage about the corner stone being rejected but God lifting this same stone as His foundation….then they may see that Jesus is comparing himself to this cornerstone.

* Christ is the stone. The builders instead of using Him as the foundation, decide to reject Him and continue to build without Him.
* But instead, the rejected stone is the very stone that God lifts up and uses to build His church, His Kingdom, etc.
* Jesus rejection, death and resurrection is indeed marvelous in our eyes.

As we all should, Christ places Himself in the story. If He is the cornerstone, then these religious leaders must be the ones who are rejecting him and trying to build the church without him and for their own glory and liking.

**43“Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. 44Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.”**

It had not been taken away yet, so if they see themselves in the story, they could learn and understand the need to repent.

Jesus now reveals the Kingdom of God is represented in the parable as the vineyard and what it produces. The Pharisees are the tenants who are supposed to take care of the Kingdom and produce fruit (believers). The stone represents the Goodman’s Son who is cast out. As they answered, they will fall on this stone, because of their rejection and be broken.

New builders will come and manage the Kingdom and give the good man (God) His due.

**45When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus’ parables, they knew he was talking about them. 46They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.**

I wonder how they knew he was talking about them. What Jesus had done, worked, he wanted them to see themselves in the story. Unfortunately, instead of repenting, they continue to reject him and work against him.

Even after seeing their situation in the word, they still refuse to change.

Why won’t they change? Because they wanted to remain in power and keep doing it their own way without him. They were offended. They sought to defend themselves and their position.

What do you think they would have needed to do in order to repent and avoid the coming judgment?

* Recognize from the story, the need to change. Recognize they needed God’s mercy and forgiveness.
* Change their minds and repent about continuing to do it their way and their fear. They fear the people but really should fear God.
* Instead of rejecting Jesus, accept Him and place their hope in Him. Follow Him rather than their plans.
* Start to build up the Kingdom for the Glory of God and give Him what He is due.

Instead of repenting, they respond with violence and continue to play out their role in the story. They could change the ending of the story if they only would repent.

The people see Jesus as a prophet and a hope, but they see him as a hindrance and problem.

Question: what is the application for us today, is it only for the leaders? Has the Man loaned us or assigned us a work to do? Has He given us something to take care of that truly belongs to Him, that he will return for looking for fruit based upon our management? When He comes to collect, how will we receive Him? Are we still trying to hold on to something that really belongs to Him?

Think about this…..is there something He has placed us in charge of, with instructions on how to build? Have we considered using Christ as the cornerstone for this work we are building and in charge of, or have we rejected Him. God is still coming looking for a return on our account.

People are still rejecting Him and being crushed.

Matthew 22:1-14

**And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, 2The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, 3And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. 4Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. 5But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: 6And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. 7But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.**

This seems to be a continuation from the last parable from the previous chapter pertaining to the rejection of Christ….and the consequences of such a rejection.

Again, this parable describes the Kingdom. The Kingdom is like this story.

Elements of the story

* There is a King, again as in the other similar parables, this may represent God.
* The son to be married must represent Christ.
* Servants of the King, I assume represents those doing the Kingdom work today in spreading the good news.
* Those invited to attend but do not come must be those who reject the invitation to share in the marriage of the Son.
* The invitation is already setup. Behold, things are already in place to receive these guests. The desire of the King is to have them fellowship and share in the joy of the wedding.
* Those invited don’t come. Notice the different groups:
	+ Some in their own mind had more important things to do.
	+ Some more concerned with his land and property.
	+ Some thought handling what they owned was more important.
	+ There was a remnant of them who disrespected the King’s servants and killed them.
* After the servants were killed, the man found out and sent out his army and took revenge. What these people used to have and enjoy was gone as were their very lives.

**8Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. 9Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. 10So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.**

Servants are told that the original invitees who were called, were not chosen because they were not worthy.

Question: why do you think they were unworthy? Look at what they did in the story.

* Ignored the King’s invitation
* Didn’t make being with the King and His Son a priority….their will was more important to them than the King
* Abused the King’s servants.

Three different categories. Some got squashed early, but all three categories are considered unworthy.

Servants now have new orders, go all over and find as many as you can and invite them to the wedding. The servants obey. They didn’t discriminate on who they invited. Good/bad…all were invited.

These new guests show up as guests to the wedding.

* The unworthy are now worthy of honor. Who are these new guests? Gentiles? Those who were lost and rejected and now are found worthy.
* How did they gain this kind of favor and fellowship with the King? Simply accepted the invitation.

**11And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: 12And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. 13Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

**14For many are called, but few are chosen.**

**15Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.**

 The King comes in to review the guests. But one person is not dressed in wedding garments.

A question is asked, still has time to repent because the King calls him friend. How did you get in here dressed like that? Doesn’t have an answer. Why does he not answer? It was a mistake to not answer truthfully.

Even this person, who was a reject but now accepted and worthy, is later found not worthy and cast out.

I used to think that the weeping and gnashing of teeth were related to being sent to hell. This might still be the case, but it could be the remorse and regret of having missed out on such a great opportunity and having missed the mark.

Spiritual Application for Then:

* King = God
* Son = Christ
* First guests – Pharisees
* Next guests – Gentiles

Spiritual Application for Today:

* God desires us to celebrate Christ and his marriage to other believers. Invites us to participate in the return of Christ and the rapture.
* There are some believers who have been called and invited to attend, but they have put the world and possessions ahead of accepting the King’s invitation.
* Some of the first invitees have not only ignored the invite but have mistreated the servants and evangelists who have delivered the invitation from the King.
* Those that mistreated God’s servants will be dealt with by the King. There are consequences to rejecting the invite and abusing His servants.
* The Kingdom works like this, after the first group rejects the invite, there is an invitation to everyone.
* You can be invited to fellowship with the King, but you will be judged and if you are not dressed in righteousness or in right standing with God, you can still be cast out.

Can you be in one group and later find yourself in another group? I believe so.

How did the second guest show up with the wrong clothes on?

David Guzik - This parable demonstrates that those *indifferent* to the gospel, those *antagonistic* against the gospel, and those *unchanged* by the gospel share the same fate. None of them enjoyed the king’s feast.

MH – the feast was announced in the first invitation (the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand). The case of hypocrites, who are *in* the church, but not *of* it, who have a name to live, but are not alive indeed, is represented by *the guest that had not on a wedding garment;* one of the bad that were gathered in. Those come short of salvation by Christ, not only who refuse to take upon them the profession of religion, but who are not sound at heart in that profession.

" *In the day of judgment,* hypocrites will be bound; *the angels shall bind up these tares in bundles for the fire…”*