

A PARABLE OF CONDEMNATION

Wednesday, August 16

Reading: Mark 12:1-12

Mark 12:10 *Haven't you read this passage of Scripture: " 'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; 11 the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes?'"*

Jesus' parable was aimed directly at these religious leaders – and they knew it! The story starts off innocently enough. It was common in Jesus' day for a farmer to rent out his field to tenants and receive part of the crop back as payment. The story would have sounded familiar to the people because the prophet Isaiah had told a similar parable centuries before (Isaiah 5:1-7). The images of this parable are interpreted as follows:

Vineyard Owner	=	God
Vineyard	=	Israel
Tenants	=	the religious leaders
Servants	=	faithful prophets
Son	=	Jesus
Others	=	Gentiles

God had “planted” the nation of Israel and put time and effort into them. He expected to get something back in return but the religious leaders who were to protect and lead the nation had failed in their job. Instead of pointing people to God, they grabbed all the power and honor for themselves. They rejected, mistreated, and killed the prophets God had sent to turn them back to God. Now God had sent His own Son and they will kill Him as well. Thus, God would judge them and would give His blessings to those who would believe – even to the Gentiles.

Jesus quotes Psalm 118:22-23 to show that though the religious leaders had rejected Jesus (“the stone”), God's plan would still be accomplished. This condemnation made the chief priests want to arrest Jesus on the spot but they feared the crowds and so were forced to simply walk away.

POINTS TO PONDER:

1. “He Rented the Vineyard to Some Farmers.” The religious leaders (pictured as tenants) were to be God's representatives, leading His people into holiness. But through the centuries Israel's religious leaders had often led them astray. They persecuted the true prophets of God and now would kill the Son of God Himself (see Acts 7:51-53). This parable is a warning to those who lead God's people. If you abuse your position and think only about yourself, judgment is coming! Pray for your church leaders that they will remain true to God. And pray for yourself that you live for Christ and not for yourself.
2. “The Stone the Builders Rejected.” Jesus knew what was in the chief priests' hearts. He knew they were secretly plotting to kill Him. The cornerstone was used as the standard by which the whole building was measured. Though He was rejected by Israel's leaders, Jesus would be the stone on which God's kingdom would be built. How does your life measure up to Jesus? Is He the standard by which you measure the way you live?