

PRIVILEGE AND RESPONSIBILITY

Matthew 21:33-46

November 16, 2008 Sunday pm

INTRODUCTION

- A. Again, let's remember that Jesus often responded to his critics in parables.
Matthew 21:45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them.
1. In the parable of the "Two Sons" (21:28-32) Jesus answered the question his critics raised about his authority and teaching.
 2. In the parable of the "Wicked Farmers" (21:33-46) Jesus responded to his critic's rejection of him as the Messiah.
- B. Let's look further at this parable of the "Wicked Farmers"—**READ—21:33-40.**

I. FIRST, WHAT DO THE SYMBOLS MEAN?

- A. The vineyard is Israel.
Isaiah 5:1-3 1 I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside. 2 He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit. 3 "Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard.
- B. The landowner is God.
- C. The wicked farmers are Israel's religious leaders—21:45
- D. The landowner's servants are the prophets.
2 Chronicles 36:15-16 ¹⁵ The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. ¹⁶ But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the LORD was aroused against his people and there was no remedy.
Matthew 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.
- E. The landowner's son is the Messiah, Jesus.

II. WHAT DO THESE SYMBOLS SAY?

- A. First, God has given his people many privileges—**v.33.**
Matthew 21:33 "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. ..
1. He gave Israel many privileges—The Law, The Prophets, The Priests, The Temple.
 2. He has given us many privileges too—The Bible, The Church, Freedom of Worship.
- B. Second, God expects his people to bear fruit—**v.34.**
Matthew 21:34 When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.
1. He expected Israel to bear fruit by taking his message to the rest of the world.
 2. He expects us to do the same.
John 15:1-2 ¹ "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.
- C. Third, failure to bear fruit brings God's judgment—**v.40-41.**
Matthew 21:40-41 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."

1. Israel lost their privileges—Nation and Temple destroyed.

2. What about us?

Revelation 2:4-5 ⁴ Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. ⁵ Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place.

D. Fourth, Jesus is the cornerstone—v.42.

Matthew 21:42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: "'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"

1. He was Israel's Messiah, but they rejected him.

2. He is the cornerstone of the church today.

1 Peter 2:4-5 ⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-- ⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

E. Fifth, there are consequences for rejecting God's cornerstone—v.43-44.

Matthew 21:43-44 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. ⁴⁴ He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed."

1. Israel's consequence was loss of God's kingdom—v.43.

2. Jesus uses a metaphor for this in verse 44.

CONCLUSION

A. Are we bearing fruit with the privileges God has given us?

B. Remember what happened to Israel.