**I Am that Man**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Mark 12:1-12**

**Wednesday Evening**

**July 10, 2019**

Mark 12:1-12

1 Then He began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a place for the wine vat and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country.

Saints, Jesus’ stories, also called parables, always used something familiar to help people understand something new. This method of teaching compels listeners to discover truth for themselves. The moment Jesus spoke of a vineyard, the well-versed religious leaders surely recognized the correlation with Isaiah 5:1-7, where Isaiah described Israel as a vineyard. Isaiah’s parable described judgment on Israel;

**Isaiah 5:1-7**

1 Now let me sing to my Well-beloved A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard: My Well-beloved has a vineyard On a very fruitful hill. 2 He dug it up and cleared out its stones, And planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, And also made a winepress in it; So He expected it to bring forth good grapes, But it brought forth wild grapes.

3 "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, Judge, please, between Me and My vineyard. 4 What more could have been done to My vineyard That I have not done in it? Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes, Did it bring forth wild grapes?

5 And now, please let Me tell you what I will do to My vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned; And break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. 6 I will lay it waste; It shall not be pruned or dug, But there shall come up briers and thorns. I will also command the clouds That they rain no rain on it."

7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, And the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. He looked for justice, but behold, oppression; For righteousness, but behold, a cry for help.

Saints, Jesus’ parable described judgment too. The situation pictured in this parable was by no means unusual. Galilee had many such estates with absentee owners who had hired tenant farmers to care for the fields and crops. The tenant farmers paid their “rent” by giving a portion of the crop to the landowner, who would send servants at harvesttime to collect it.

The main elements in this parable are as follows:

**1. The man who planted the vineyard—God**

**2. The vineyard—Israel**

**3. The tenant farmers—the Jewish religious leaders**

**4. The landowner’s servants—the prophets and priests who remained faithful to God and preached to Israel**

**5. The son—Jesus**

**6. The others to whom the vineyard was given—the Gentiles**

Saints, Israel, pictured as a vineyard, was the nation that God had cultivated to bring salvation to the world. The religious leaders not only frustrated their nation’s purpose; they also killed those who were trying to fulfill it.

They were so jealous and possessive that they ignored the welfare of the very people they were supposed to be bringing to God. By telling this story, Jesus exposed the religious leaders’ plot to kill him, and he warned them that their sins would be punished. God then made a sovereign choice to save us!

**Romans 9:1-17**

1 I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, 2 that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh,

4 who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; 5 of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen. 6 But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel,

7 nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." 8 That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. 9 For this is the word of promise: "At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son."

10 And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac 11(for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), 12 it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger."

13 As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated." 14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! 15 For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." 16 So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.

2 Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that he might receive some of the fruit of the vineyard from the vinedressers. 3 And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. 4 Again he sent them another servant, and at him they threw stones, wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully treated. 5 And again he sent another, and him they killed; and many others, beating some and killing some.

Saints, when the grape harvest came, the absentee landowner sent servants to collect the rent—generally this amounted to a quarter to a half of the crop. All of these servants were either beaten up or killed.

In Jesus’ parable, the servants that were sent to the tenants refer to the prophets and priests whom God had sent over the years to the nation of Israel. Instead of listening to the prophets, the religious leadership had mistreated them and had stubbornly refused to listen.

6 Therefore still having one son, his beloved, he also sent him to them last, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

Saints, with all the servants having been mistreated or killed, the landowner had only one messenger left—his beloved son. This son was sent to collect the fruit in hopes that the farmers would respect the son.

This son refers to Jesus. This is the same description God used at Jesus’ baptism (1:11) and at the Transfiguration (9:7). The son was sent to the stubborn and rebellious nation of Israel to win them back to God.

7 "But those vinedressers said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' 8 "So they took him and killed him and cast him out of the vineyard.

Saints, the tenants probably thought that the arrival of the son meant that his father (the landowner) had died. In Palestine at that time, “ownerless” or unclaimed land could be owned by whoever claimed it first. Thus they reasoned that if they murdered the son, they could get the estate for themselves.

9 Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vinedressers, and give the vineyard to others.

Saints, what would the landowner do in this case?

All agreed that the landowner would come, kill the tenants, and lease the vineyard to others who would care for it. Over hundreds of years, Israel’s kings and religious leaders had rejected God’s prophets—beating, humiliating, and killing them.

**Matthew 23:37-39**

37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! 38 See! Your house is left to you desolate; 39 for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' "

Most recently, John the Baptist had been rejected as a prophet by Israel’s leaders (11:30-33). Next Jesus, the beloved Son of God, already rejected by the religious leaders, would be killed. Jesus explained that the Jewish leaders would be accountable for his death because in rejecting the messengers and the Son, they had rejected God himself.

God’s judgment would be spiritual death and the transfer of the privileges of ownership to others, namely, the Gentiles see:

**Romans 11:25-32**

25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; 27 For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins." 28 Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.

29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. 30 For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, 31 even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. 32 For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.

In this parable Jesus spoke of the beginning of the Christian church among the Gentiles. God would not totally reject Israel; in ancient times he always preserved a remnant of faithful people.

**10 Have you not read this Scripture: 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. 11 This was the LORD's doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes'?"**

Saints, Jesus quoted from Psalms118:22-23. Like the son who was rejected and murdered by the tenant farmers, Jesus referred to himself as the stone rejected by the builders.

**Psalm 118:22-24**

22 The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. 23 This was the LORD's doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. 24 This is the day the LORD has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Saints, the cornerstone is the most important stone in a building, used as the standard to make sure the other stones of the building are straight and level. Israel’s leadership, like the builders looking for an appropriate cornerstone, would toss Jesus aside because he didn’t seem to have the right qualifications. They wanted a political king, not a spiritual one.

Yet God’s plans will not be thwarted. One day that rejected stone will indeed become a “cornerstone,” for Jesus will come as a king to inaugurate an unending Kingdom. And he had already begun a spiritual Kingdom as the cornerstone of a brand-new “building,” the Christian church (Acts 4:11-12; 1 Peter 2:7). Jesus’ life and teaching would be the church’s foundation.

**Acts 4:11-12**

11 This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' 12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

**1 Peter 2:6-8**

6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." 7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone," 8 and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense."

They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

**12 And they sought to lay hands on Him, but feared the multitude, for they knew He had spoken the parable against them. So they left Him and went away.**

Saints, when the Jewish leaders realized that they were the wicked farmers in Jesus’ parable, they wanted to arrest him. But the presence of all those people, hanging on Jesus’ every word, caused these religious leaders to fear a riot if they were to forcibly take Jesus away. There was nothing to do but go away somewhere to gather new ideas and think of new questions to try to trap Jesus.

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**