

## The Parable Of The Wicked Tenants.

Mark 12:1-12.

Sunday morning, August 3, 2008.

### I. The parable explained.

#### A. The vineyard

1. A piece of land preferably on the south facing slopes of a hillside.
2. The hedge: A thick hedge of thorny bushes; or a fence, or a wall enclosed the vineyard to keep intruders out as well as unwanted animals such as foxes.
3. The wine vat or press: two excavations made of stone work or hewn out into the rock. One situated above the other on the hillside. The upper one, generally large and shallow, was used to tread the grapes. The lower one, smaller and deeper, to collect the juice of the trodden grapes.
4. The tower: An observation post located on the highest spot in the vineyard. It was used especially at the time the grapes were near to being harvested to keep intruders away as well as foxes and jackals.
5. The vinedressers: These were tenant farmers or sharecroppers. They leased

the

vineyard; they would do all the work, and receive half or two thirds of the proceeds for their labor. The other half or one third would go to the owner.

6. Israel is the vineyard, built and prepared by God. They are not their own, not independent owners; they are sharecroppers, meant to bring forth fruit for the Master's use.

#### B. The master's servants.

1. They would have been sent following harvest time to collect their master's share of the proceeds.
2. The tenants now act as though they are masters and owners. They treat the master's servants as thieves and intruders, beating and treating them shamefully and even killing some and casting them out of the vineyard.
3. These are the Lord's servants the prophets, sent to Israel throughout her history. "Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?" Acts 7:52.

#### C. The master's son.

1. At last the master sent his own son thinking they would respect him.
2. Instead they kill him, foolishly thinking that now the vineyard will belong to them.
3. So the master comes with an army and destroys the sharecroppers, and he gives the vineyard to others.
4. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Master's Son. Three things surrounding the "Christ Event." are predicted.
  - His shameful treatment, suffering and death at the hands of these sharecroppers, Israel, is predicted
  - We are told of the judgment that followed the final rejection of the Son, and the giving of the vineyard to others, (the Gentle church).
  - We are told of the supernatural raising up of the Son, as a rejected stone, to the position of chief cornerstone. This looks upon His resurrection and exaltation at the Father's right hand.

## II. The Application.

### A. The precept of fruitfulness.

1. We are not our own, and the vineyard of this world is not our own; we are sharecroppers and tenants and servants, called to cultivate a harvest for the master's use. How you relate to your brothers and sisters, especially the poor and weak and needy ones among them, is of the utmost importance in this regard, for they constitute the individual vines in your vineyard.
2. Fruitfulness is our calling.  
Scripture uses the Vine, the Fig tree, and the Olive tree to this effect.
  - Vine: John 15:1-8. The Vine and the branches. Unfruitful branches removed.
  - Fig tree: Mark 11:12-14, 20, 21. Cursing of the barren Fig tree
  - Olive tree: Romans 11:16-24. The breaking off and the grafting in of branches on the trunk of the Olive tree. Fruitfulness is essential.

### B. Patience in the process.

- “See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and the latter rain.” James 5:7. So is the Lord.
1. Observe how the master sends servants again and again, and finally sends His own Son.
  2. Observe how the fulfillment of the judgment on the wicked tenants did not come about in history until a whole generation of Christian ministry had preached repentance and the forgiveness of sins to these wicked tenants. (Some 40 years went by). Observe the closing of the book of Acts in this regard.
  3. Look at the parable of the Fig tree in the vineyard in Luke 13:6-9. “Sir, leave it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it.” Vs. 8.
  4. Listen to Peter's explanation of the tardiness of the Lord in returning: “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” 2 Peter 3:9.

### C. Punishment and reward are certain.

1. The master suffers long, but he will come and destroy those wicked tenants.
2. The fruitless branches are pruned from the vine and are burned Joh. 15:2, 6. The barren Fig tree is cursed and comes to a sudden withering. Mk. 11:21. The barren branches of the Olive tree were broken off. Rom. 9:19,20. The tares are gathered out of the Lord's field and burned. Matt. 13:40-43.
3. The field which bears fruit in response to the heavenly blessing of rain, receives blessing from God; but if it brings forth thorns and briars, it is near to being cursed and burned. Hebrews 6:7,8.
4. “Behold, I am coming quickly (suddenly), and My reward is with Me, to give everyone according to his work.” Rev. 22:12.