THE STONE THE BUILDERS REJECTED

Mark 12:1-12

Key Verse 10

“Haven’t you read this passage of Scripture, The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone?”

**Introduction**



After Jesus was challenged by the religious leaders about who gave Him authority to cleanse the temple court, Jesus continued to teach them about who Jesus is. Today’s parable seems easy to understand. But it is very difficult to understand because it is the summary of the history of the whole Bible. This parable teaches us the basic relationship between God and his people and all mankind. Especially today we’ll learn God’s divine love toward all people. Praise God!

1. Read verses 1-3. In Jesus’ parable, who or what are the following referring to: a man, a vineyard, and some farmers? (1) What did the landlord do at harvest time? (2) What was the farmers’ initial response? (3)

1-1, Read verses 1-3.

Jesus then began to speak to them in parables: “A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. 2 At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. 3 But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

1-2, In Jesus’ parable, who or what are the following referring to: a man, a vineyard, and some farmers? (1)

***Jesus then began to speak to them in parables: “A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place.***

* In Jesus’ parable, a man refers to God the Creator and the Lord. A vineyard refers to what God invested in human beings that is the earth and all the resources available to conquer. Some farmers are tenants and many people listen to Jesus’ parable there, the Israelites or the religious leaders and all of us who had a mission from God to advance the gospel message for all nations.
* Jesus used this as an opportunity to teach them and any people there. “Jesus then began to speak to them in parables. .
* Out of His shepherd heart Jesus wanted to help them to know who Jesus is and who they were through today’s parable.
* It is a poetic description of the relationship between the Creator God and his people Israel. To have a well-maintained vineyard, one should give much care and attention to his vineyard.
* Here God made the beautiful and well-equipped vineyard, planting in it the choicest vines. To protect the grapes from thieves and stray animals, he built a wall around it.
* He dug a pit for the winepress so that at the harvest time the workers may be able to squeeze the grapes and produce the choicest wine.
* He even built an expensive watchtower so that they can watch out for the whole vineyard from on high.
* God made this beautiful vineyard and gave it to some farmers to take care of it and bear much fruit. Then he went away on a journey, entrusting the vineyard to their care.
* God did not consider the farmers as slave class workers who needed to be supervised moment by moment, but as manager class workers who can exercise their ability and free will with a sense of responsibility and mission.
* The owner had built the vineyard and provided everything for the tenants. The tenants didn’t have to do anything other than work the vineyard.
* If you ever start a business and have to rent space from an owner, you know that they don’t provide any furnishing, you have to provide all your equipment.
* But this owner was different in that he provided everything for the production of good fruit.
* Let us think about this parable from the farmers’ point of view. At that time, the unemployment rate was high.
* There were many farmers who were goofing around in the marketplace to be hired even as temporary workers.
* To these farmers, becoming stewards of this well-equipped vineyard was beyond even their wildest dream.
* But they became the stewards of the vineyard only by the generosity and grace of the owner.
* They must have given the owner many thanks for the privilege of being the stewards of the vineyard and bid him to have a long, pleasant journey, assuring him that he does not need to worry about the vineyard even a little bit and that upon his return he will see abundant harvest and much fruit.
* This parable tells us that God made the beautiful world and made men the stewards of God’s world.
* And God gave us freedom, privilege, responsibility and a holy mission to take care of the world as our vineyard so that we might bear much fruit for the glory of God as well as for our own happiness. This is indeed a wonderful grace to us.

1-3, What did the landlord do at harvest time? (2)

***2 At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.***

* At harvest time, the owner only wanted to see if they were taking care of the vineyard well and whether they bore good fruit or not. He sent a servant to them to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.

1-4, What was the farmers’ initial response? (3)

***3 But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed.***

* The tenants’ response to the owner is astounding. The owner did not make an unreasonable demand.
* The owner did not ask them to give him **all** the fruit of the vineyard but just some of the fruit of the vineyard.
* But the tenants beat the servant of the owner and sent him away empty-handed.

1. Read verses 4-8. What did the landlord persistently do for the farmers? (4-5) What did he do as a last resort to reconcile with them? (6) What did the tenants do to the landlord’s son? (7-8)

2-1, Read verses 4-8.

4 Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. 5 He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

6 “He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’

7 “But the tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ 8 So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

2-2, What did the landlord persistently do for the farmers? (4-5)

***4 Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. 5 He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.***

* He sent another servant(4) and still another(5), and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.”
* They forgot the generosity and grace of the owner. They were forgetful. As we learned in 11:25-26, we need to forget others’ wrongdoings and forgive others.
* But we should not forget one thing. We should not forget the grace of God upon our lives. We should not forget who we were in the past and how God changed each of us into his precious children and servants by his grace and purpose.
* Forgetting that they were the tenants, they fell into an illusion that the vineyard was their own. Being forgetful then, they became rather unthankful to God for providing for them.

2-3, What did he do as a last resort to reconcile with them? (6)

***6 “He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’***

* Now the owner had no more servants to send. He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He decided to send his son last of all, saying, “They will respect my son.”
* God did not repay their evil with evil. Instead, he showed his unfailing love and respect toward them by sending his beloved Son Jesus.

John 3:16-17 reads,

*“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”*

2-4, What did the tenants do to the landlord’s son? (7-8)

***7 “But the tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ 8 So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.***

* They should have repented from their hearts, being moved by the riches of God’s kindness, tolerance and patient love toward them.
* Instead, they hardened their hearts and decided to kill the son and claim the vineyard as their own possession.

1. Read verses 9-12. What will the owner of the vineyard finally do? (9) What does it mean to become the cornerstone in regard to Jesus’ death and resurrection? (10-11) How did the religious leaders’ respond to the parable? (12)

3-1, Read verses 9-12.

9 “What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. 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’[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24685a)]?” 12 Then the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away.

3-2, What will the owner of the vineyard finally do? (9)

***9 “What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.***

* In this way, they invited God’s wrath upon themselves. Those tenants refer to Israel and the religious leaders who had a murderous intention to kill Jesus.
* When they rejected Jesus, in AD 70 they were destroyed and killed. The Gentiles were privileged to be given the vineyard to work for the gospel of God.
* But amazingly God did not give up the Israelites. Rather the book of Romans shows that they will return to God with repentance at His time. Praise God!

3-3, What does it mean to become the cornerstone in regard to Jesus’ death and resurrection? (10-11)

***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’?”***

* These verses are a quotation from Psalm 118:22, 23. The Jews wanted Jesus to be a political messiah and restore the kingdom to Israel.
* But Jesus did not fit into their blueprint. They rejected Jesus and threw him away on the cross. But God made Jesus the rejected stone, the capstone.
* God raised Jesus from the dead. God made Jesus the capstone, the foundation of his world salvation work.
* When Jesus was crucified, his ministry with the twelve disciples seemed to have been terminated, and the salvation work of God was no more.
* But this was not the case. After Jesus’ ascension, the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples and transformed them into bold witnesses of Jesus Christ.
* To God’s people, the fact that God made Jesus the rejected stone the capstone is truly marvelous.
* The early Christians in Rome lived a holy life before God. Then they became a stumbling stone to the ritualistic Jewish religion, and a direct challenge to the immoral Roman people.
* They were rejected by the Jews and the Romans. They could not have public meetings openly. So they gathered in underground caves, called catacombs.
* They were persecuted and tortured and killed. But thanks to their holy lives of faith, the Roman Empire was pioneered. The Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.
* Likewise, often we are rejected by ungodly people as being conservative simply because we strive to live holy lives of faith, carrying out God’s holy mission.
* Oftentimes we feel like rejected stones. But that is not all. Through our holy lives of faith and mission, God is raising our children to love the Bible.
* The Lord has done this and it is marvelous in our eyes. It is marvelous to see that the number of Bible-believing children among us keep increasing.

3-4, How did the religious leaders’ respond to the parable? (12)

***12 Then the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away.***

**Conclusion**

Let’s give thanks to God and give our fruits of repentance and offer our 1:1 Bible study as a sign of our repentance. Let’s thank God for giving us this great country and pray that this nation may fulfill God’s mission as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

**One word: THE STONE THE BUILDERS REJECTED**