



Teachings of the Teacher – A study in the parables of Jesus
The Wicked Vinedressers

Matthew 21:33-46

Lesson 19

The parable of the wicked vinedressers is Jesus' response to the chief priests and elders' challenge of Jesus' authority. They were the keepers of God's Word and yet did not believe His servants nor His Son. Thus they stumbled over Him and would one day be crushed by Him. Although we, as believers, have not rejected His Son, may our lives be lived in a way that, when He comes, we will have *fruit to render to Him*.

OBSERVATION: Read Matthew 21:33-46

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they were about?
2. Key words help us to better understand a parable. We have listed below key words of this parable. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text.
Key Words: words that refer to *Jesus, God (Lord), the landowner, the vinedressers, the servants, the son, and the chief priests/Pharisees*
stone and the phrase kingdom of God
3. The contrasting word *but* is used three times in this parable. Mark each time this word is used. Choose one of the times this word is used. Record what is being contrasted and the significance of the contrast.
4. The term of conclusion, *therefore*, is used twice in this parable. Mark each time this word is used. Choose one and record the conclusion stated.

CONSIDER THESE THINGS:

1. What is your favorite bedtime story about "good guys" and "bad guys"?
2. In what way(s) does it hurt to be told an uncomfortable truth?
3. Have you ever been given something that was taken away from you by someone else? What did it feel like?
4. How would you feel if you were extremely kind and giving to someone for a long time and that person repeatedly scorned your kindness?

THE PRELUDE TO THE PARABLE: Read Matthew 21:23-32

1. The teaching of the parable of the wicked vinedressers is preceded by Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The day began with praises from the people. But, upon entering the temple, the mood changed as Jesus *drove out all that bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers*. The following day, Jesus and His disciples returned to the temple. The *chief priests and elders* found Jesus *teaching*. What two questions did they ask Jesus? verse 23
 - a. What was Jesus' response?
2. The *chief priests and elders reasoned among themselves* and agreed upon an answer, "*We do not know*". What was Jesus' response to this?
3. *But what do you think?* Jesus followed His response with two parables. The first parable has been titled "The Parable of the Two Sons". Read Matthew 21:28-30 and answer the following:
 - a. What did the first son say:
do:
 - b. What did the second son say:
do:

4. *Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. In what way were the chief priests and elders similar to the second son?*
 - a. In what way were *tax collectors and harlots* similar to the *first son*?

Jesus expressed the point of the parable in verse 32. John the Baptist had come before Jesus *in the way of righteousness*. The perceived sinners *believed him*; the perceived righteous *did not believe him*. Their rejection of John was actually a rejection of the Father who had sent him. But God is gracious, and instead of sending judgment, He sent His Son. This leads to the second parable, the parable of the wicked vinedressers.

THE SERVANTS REJECTED: Read Matthew 21:33-36

1. Consider the care and preparation the *landowner* invested in the *vineyard* as recorded in verse 33. Describe what he did to make it ready for those who would *lease* his property.
 - a. God is the “beneficent landowner” of the earth. Meditate on just some of His creation and preparation; list a few of the things you appreciate.
2. *Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers. Why?*
 - a. What did the *vinedressers* do to his *servants*? verses 35,36
 - 1.) What do we learn from the following verses about the Jews’ rejection of those God sent to them?
2 Kings 17:13-14

1 Thessalonians 2:15
 - 2.) God is still sending His *servants* as messengers today. Many continue to lose their lives by the hand of the others. Why do you think the gospel is so offensive to some?
 - a.) What does 2 Corinthians 2:15,16 teach about this?

THE SON REJECTED: Read Matthew 21:37-41

1. The *vinedressers beat and killed the landowner's servants*. What did the landowner do next?
 - a. What truth does the writer of Hebrews record in Hebrews 1:1,2?

Challenge: Record a few things God has *spoken to us by His Son*.

2. What did the *vinedressers*:
say about the son?

do to the son?
3. However, THE SON, Jesus, cannot be eliminated as was the *son of the landowner*. What is the warning of Psalm 2:1-12.
 - a. As you consider this Psalm and the awesome power and plan of our God, what are your thoughts?
4. *Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers* (Matthew 21:40)?
What did the *chief priests and elders* answer?
 - a. The religious rulers at first did not understand that they were the targets of this parable. Why do you think we often miss the meaning of a message when it personally relates to us?
 - 1.) What can we learn from Proverbs 1:23-27 about the rejection of God's rebuke?

THE STONE REJECTED: Read Matthew 21:42

1. Jesus followed the parable with the reminder of Psalm 118:22,23. Read the following verses and record additional insight or truths they present.

Psalm 118:22-26

Isaiah 28:16

Acts 4:10-12

Romans 9:30-33

Ephesians 2:19-20

1 Peter 2:4-8

- a. What is the significance of the verses quoted in Matthew 21:42 as it relates to the parable of the wicked vinedressers?

THE RELIGIOUS RULERS REJECTED: Read Matthew 21:43-46

1. Jesus taught the conclusion of the parable after He quoted Psalm 118:22,23. What was His first conclusion? Matthew 21:43
 - a. Review 1 Peter 2:9,10. What do you discover about this *nation*?
 - 1.) What should be the attitude of those who have been given the privilege of being the new *vinedressers/nation*?
2. What was Jesus' second conclusion? Matthew 21:44
 - a. This conclusion and prophesy of Jesus relate to both the promise of those who stumble over Jesus as the Rock and those nations upon whom the Rock will one day fall and crush (Daniel 2:34,44,45). Consider the sovereignty of God as Jesus concludes this parable. What are your thoughts?
3. *Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them* (Matthew 21:45). What did they do?
 - a. Considering this is the week of Christ's betrayal, arrest, and crucifixion what did the religious rulers do to carry out their intentions?

REVIEW: Read Matthew 21:33-46

1. In what ways has this parable spoken to you about:
 - a. The preparation and care of God?
 - b. The improper response to God's provision?
 - c. Appreciation that the gospel has been made available to you?
 - d. Reception of rebuke?
 - e. God's sovereignty?
2. How have you been challenged by this parable?

*how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation,
which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord,
and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,
- Hebrews 2:3*

Observation Worksheet

Matthew 21:33-46

"Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. ³⁴Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. ³⁵And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. ³⁶Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. ³⁷Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ³⁸But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' ³⁹So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. ⁴⁰Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?" ⁴¹They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons." ⁴²Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?' ⁴³"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. ⁴⁴And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." ⁴⁵Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them. ⁴⁶But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet.