

THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED TENANTS – LUKE 20:9-19

INTRODUCTION

1. How do you get through to someone who doesn't want to listen?
2. One of the obstacles that Jesus faced in trying to draw people to Him were hearts that were hardened and not open to hearing Him (**Matt. 19:8; Mark 16:14; Mark 3:5; 6:52; Heb. 3:8**).
3. As Jesus continues to move toward the cross, He does not stop reaching out, even to those who are seeking to destroy Him (**Luke 19:47-48; 20:5-8**).
4. Let us consider our need to have a heart that is open to hearing and yielding to Jesus as we consider Luke's account of the Parable of the Wicked Tenants.

DISCUSSION

I. THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED TENANTS

- A. In response to the Jewish leaders' refusal to answer Him, Jesus turns back to the crowd and addresses the people with a parable (**Luke 20:9**).
 - i. Recall that Jesus had been in the temple teaching the people before the Jewish leaders arrived to challenge His authority.
 - ii. This series of exchanges between Him and these men will continue in the presence of the crowds (**Luke 20:1,6, 19, 26, 45**).
- B. This parable is about a man, a vineyard, his tenants, three servants, and his beloved son (**Luke 20:9-16**).
 - i. The parable is simple and straightforward.
 - ii. It is a story about some tenant farmers who violently refuse to give what is due to the owner of the vineyard, even killing his son.
- C. The crowd, along with the leaders, seems to clearly hear and understand the implication behind Jesus' story and they are disturbed (**Luke 20:16, 19**).
- D. What is the meaning of Jesus' parable?
- E. We can easily identify who these characters are.
 - i. The owner is God, and the vineyard is the nation of Israel whom God had lovingly and patiently cared for (**Isa. 5:1-7; Ezek. 15:1-6; 19:10-14**).
 - ii. The corrupt tenants are the Jewish leaders who are resisting Jesus.
 - iii. The servants are the prophets - most recently John the Baptist.
 - iv. And of course, the beloved Son is Jesus.
- F. In the immediate context this is obviously foreshadowing Jesus' rejection and execution by the Jewish leaders (**Luke 19:47-48; 18:31-34; 9:22, 44-45**).
- G. But it also rehearses God's long and patient work to bless all nations through a people who have rejected Him over and over again (**Gen. 12:1-3; Rom. 10:21**).
- H. From the perspective of the early church, it foreshadows the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, the replacement of the Jewish leaders with the apostles and prophets of Jesus, and the inclusion of the Gentiles to the church, the Israel of God (**Acts 7:52; 13:45-47; 18:6 ;28:25-28; Rom. 11**).
- I. It was a hard message for people who had been rejoicing over the coming King to hear (**Luke 20:16; 19:28-40**).

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- J. As those who claim to be citizens of the Kingdom today, we would do well to examine ourselves and see if we are truly focused on bringing God glory or seeking our own **(Matt. 7:21-23; 5:13-16; John 12:42-43; 5:44; 1 John 2:15-17)?**

II. THE STONE THAT THE BUILDERS REJECTED

- A. In response to the people's reaction Jesus uses Scripture to reinforce God's testimony that He is the beloved Son whom God sent **(Luke 20:16-17)**.
- i. He quotes from Psalm 118 and asks what the meaning is **(Ps. 118:22)**.
 - ii. This same psalm has come up before not only in the mouth of Jesus, but also in the crowds **(Luke 13:35; 19:38)**.
 - iii. This passage Jesus quotes shows that God will vindicate His beloved Son, the one whom He has sent to reconcile all people to Himself.
- B. And just as He did in the parable, Jesus stresses that those who reject Him will suffer a terrible judgment from God **(Luke 20:18; Isa. 8:14-15; Dan. 2:45)**.
- C. His message and His meaning are not lost on the scribes and chief priests but, because of the crowds, they must bide their time and wait **(Luke 20:19)**.
- D. Jesus was asked where He got His authority, and His answer is seen again in this parable.
- E. Both we and Luke's original readers know that even though Jesus will be killed, God will raise Him up and exalt Him **(Acts 2:22-36)**.
- F. He is the foundation, the chief cornerstone in God's plan to save mankind **(Acts 4:11-12; Rom. 9:32-33; 1 Pet. 2:7)**.
- G. But the question to Luke's reader and us is what will we do with God's offer to save us in Christ Jesus?
- H. Jesus' parable reminds us that God is gracious and patient for all people, even with rebellious people, to turn to Him in loyal love and bear fruit **(2 Pet. 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:4)**.
- I. But God's patience has a limit and those who reject His offer of grace in Jesus will suffer the consequences **(Ps. 2:10-12; John 5:25-29)**.
- J. The challenge for us is to examine ourselves and humbly submit to the Lord's gracious rule and not presume on God's kindness **(Matt. 11:28-30; Rom. 2:4-5; 1:18-32)**.
- K. May we be mindful of the goodness and severity of God and not let pride blind us to our need for Jesus **(Rom. 11:17-25)**.
- L. May we trust in Jesus and be fruitful and labor to build up the body, the temple of God, and not tear it down **(Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Cor. 3:16-17)**.

CONCLUSION

1. Hard-heartedness is still a problem today, even among God's own people **(Matt. 19:8; Mark 16:14; Mark 3:5; 6:52; Heb. 3:8)**.
2. May we let the great story of God's love move us to not be hard-hearted, but open to hearing, understanding and yielding to the gospel **(Acts 16:14)**.