

“What then will the owner of the vineyard do?”

A. Context of Jesus' Question

In the final parable recorded in Mark, Jesus asks the assembled leaders of Israel about the just result of an imaginary coup against the rightful owner of a vineyard. This thinly veiled story is pointed directly at these murderous men, and it is God's way of describing the ultimate, deadly outcome of their rebellion. It is a warning for anyone who thinks they can use God and then toss Him aside.

The Parable's Symbolism:

- **The Man/Vineyard Owner** = God
- **Vineyard** = Israel (Isa. 5:1-5)
- **Tenants/Renters** = the Jews and their leaders
- **Servant(s)** = God's prophets (Jer. 7:25-26)
- **Son** = Jesus
- **Others** = non-Jewish believers
- **Cornerstone** = Jesus.

B. LESSONS FROM TODAY'S PASSAGE: Mark 12:1-12 (NIV)

¹ He 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 went away on a journey. 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. 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.

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 scripture: "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; ¹¹ the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes?"**

¹² Then they 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.

MAIN THOUGHT: *When life gets gory, trust in God's story.*

How well do we recognize God's story intertwining with ours during times of pressure?

Surprises in Mark 12:1-12

- **God is more generous, gracious, and patient than we'd think possible.**
- **The people are more warped and guilty than we'd expect.** (both Israel & us)
- **God's sovereignty is on display in the parable, which is told to warn His enemies as they continue to resist repentance.**

Our Response:

- **Thank You** for Jesus' sacrifice. I put my faith in His life, death, and resurrection.
- **I'm Sorry** for my sins against You, and I willingly turn from them now.
- **Please** forgive me and fill me with your Spirit. Be my Savior and my Lord.

C. Study Questions for Small Groups or Personal Study

1. If you owned a garden or orchard, what would you grow?
2. If you had to entrust your home, business, or belongings to someone outside of your family, who would you choose and why?
3. When have you been rejected or mistreated while doing God's work?
4. Why do you believe God has been so patient with the Jewish people?
5. Who are God's servant-messengers today and when was the last time you received and acted upon such a message?
6. What spiritual fruit or tangible resources is God calling you to share in order to build His Kingdom? How?
7. Pray for the fruit of the Gospel to go out beyond your circle of comfort and beyond the walls of Journey. What creative ways is God enabling you to be his messenger?

D. Mapping My Story & God's Story in Me

On a large poster board or sheet of paper, map out the major life events you've faced thus far on Post-It notes. For each, write in how God affected you during that event. (i.e., My best friend moved away and I was depressed. God's Word became more real to me, and I started to seek after Jesus.) Let His Spirit lead you in prayer as you consider God's sovereign impact upon your life and direction.