

The Chief Cornerstone

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[0 : 00] Let us turn back to the last reading that we read in Mark's Gospel on chapter 12. And we'll have a look at the whole of this parable this evening, or at least most of it.

And we can look at the verse that we have in verse 6. Verse 6, He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally sent him to them, saying, They will respect my son.

But those tenants said to one another, This is the year. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours. And in looking at this parable, there are three things that we find brought before us in the parable.

Firstly, we have God and the prophets. Secondly, we have a unique son. And thirdly, the chief cornerstone.

The chief cornerstone. And firstly, coming to God and the prophets. Now, all that we have here in this parable was common practice.

[1 : 13] It was common practice in Israel at this particular time. Much of the land had been divided into large estates and were owned by absentee landlords.

Something that we are very familiar with in the Highlands and Islands, anyway. Much of the land had been divided into these large estates and were owned by absentee landlords.

Tenant farmers were then employed to take care of the land and to produce crops for the benefit of these absentee landlords.

Examples have been found, have been discovered, of such contracts. And most of us know that wine is one of this region's main exports.

Now, under such conditions, disputes can easily arise between tenants and landowners, which is something else that we are familiar with in these parts.

[2 : 31] And so, when the time comes for the first harvest, the owner sends one of his servants to demand his share of the crop.

But the tenants were going to have none of it. They laid hold of the servant, beat him up, and sent him away empty-handed. And when we read verses 3 to 5 in the parable, we find there the tenants increasing rebellion against the landowner, until finally the landowner is left with no one that he can send except his son.

Now, Jesus is here. Jesus is here at this time. He could have understood very clearly what he was talking about.

The very same picture that he is bringing before them here. They had it in Isaiah, in the prophecy of Isaiah, chapter 5 and verses 1 to 7 that we have read.

Who were his hearers at this particular time? Well, we can go back. We can go back to the previous chapter, because there is no break here between chapters. And if we go back to verse 27 in the previous chapter, chapter 11, then we find who is here as where.

[4 : 04] And they came again to Jerusalem. And as he was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him. It was the Sanhedrin.

It was the religious leaders of Israel who were his hearers at this time. And they were familiar with the scriptures of the Old Testament, which was the only scriptures that they had at this particular time.

They could clearly understand what he was talking about. And therefore, when we go back to Isaiah, chapter 5, the portion that we read, we have there a vineyard.

We have there a vineyard. Planted. And a wall built around that vineyard with a watchtower and a winepress.

And Isaiah in that portion that we read reveals to us that the vineyard represents the people of Israel.

[5 : 06] And the owner and the planter of the vineyard was God himself. And the thrust of this parable, the thrust of this parable in Mark, is slightly different to the thrust of Isaiah's parable in chapter 5.

If we read this parable in Mark, the target of this parable is not the people, but the leaders of the nation, who would at that time be the religious leaders.

It was the leaders of the nation. And as Jesus speaks this parable to them, he was surrounded by nobody else but the leaders of Israel.

The leaders of Israel, the religious leaders of Israel. These are the people who were surrounding him at the time. And having taken this picture from Isaiah, Jesus begins to tell the story of the prophets.

God had sent. You see, the servants that we have in this parable represent the prophets.

[6 : 29] That the owner of the vineyard, God had sent. To call back Israel to a righteousness which would usher forth the fruit of godly living.

The fruit of godly living. And in this parable, the owner seems to send a ridiculous amount of servants. Yet this fits in well with the number of prophets that were sent by God, the owner of the vineyard, over a period of centuries.

And these prophets came to speak God's word into the life of the nation. Attempting to bring the nation back to God's word in order that the nation would produce fruit that would be pleasing to God.

And as we know, the nation failed to produce this fruit that would be pleasing to God. But God was demanding. And the prophets themselves were looked upon as being an unwelcome intrusion. Some of them were killed. Many of them were threatened with death. But here we have Jesus.

[7 : 59] God's beloved son. The last. He completes the last line of prophets.

He was a prophet who spoke God's word. In a way that none that had gone before him had spoken. No man ever spoke like this man. Which brings us to the second thing that we have here. The unique son. A unique son.

And verses 6 to 7 reveals to us that Jesus was much more than a prophet. He was the son of God's love.

Son of God's love. God's beloved son. And this brings home to us the uniqueness of Jesus.

[8 : 56] As God's one and only son. God has many sons and daughters. But he has these sons and daughters by the spirit of adoption.

He has only one unique son. And this is Jesus Christ. And already in this gospel.

This has been brought home to us twice. First. First. At Jesus' baptism. When the voice came from heaven. You are my beloved son.

With you. I am well pleased. Then again on the mount of the disfiguration. Again a voice from heaven. This is my beloved son.

Listen to him. And that was revealing to us that here was the great prophet that Moses prophesied about. Moses said that a greater prophet than him would come.

[10 : 08] And to him were the people going to listen. Or ought to listen. Or ought to listen. And with that.

With these two instances. God was confirming. That here. Was his unique. One. And only.

Son. And in this parable. Itself. Jesus is separated. From the rest. Of the prophets.

He is separated. From the rest. Of the prophets. As well as from the whole. Of the. As well as from the whole. Of the human race. Has been God's unique son.

He stands alone. He stands alone. As God's. Beloved son. The one. Who will always have the preeminence.

[11 : 09] Over. His other. His other brothers. His other brothers. And sisters. When the prophets were sent by God. They were sent by God. Sent by God's authority.

To bring God's word to the people. They had a divine right to be heard. And if the people.

Would not listen. To the prophets. To what the prophets were saying. Judgment would come upon the nation. And that of course happened.

When Assyria. Invaded. Samaria. In 722 BC. And Babylon invaded Judah. In 587 BC.

And Israel. Were taken into captivity. The temple was raised to the ground. The holy city was in ruins.

[12:08] And can you imagine. The people of Israel. Who had been. Down through the centuries. Aware of God's presence. In the holy city. And the temple.

And here they were. Exiled. In a foreign land. Who were they going to turn to? Who were they going to turn to? Well as we were mentioning before.

It was the messianic hope. That kept them going. In the days of their exile. God had promised. To David. That he would raise. To him a son.

That would reign. Upon his throne. Eternally. And this Jesus. Jesus. So that. Judgment.

Came. Upon the people. For their disobedience. To the warnings. Of the prophets. Jesus. However. Is on a different plane.

[13:07] To the prophets. He is not just. Simply a spokesman. For God. Carrying a message. On sheets of paper. God.

God. How is he on a different plane. To the rest of the prophets. Because he is the message. He is the message.

He is God's grace. To me and to you. He is salvation. He is the word.

And not only that. But he is the final word. As the epistle to the Hebrews. Reveals to us. This is God's final revelation.

Of himself. To this world. The revelation. That he is giving to us. Of himself. In Jesus Christ. His son.

[14:10] We are not going. To get another revelation. He. Is the final word. And if you or I. Want to know about God.

Or want to hear a word. From God. Then we have to listen. To the son. We have to listen. To this. Beloved. Unique. Son. Of God. And Jesus. In this parable. Is forecasting. His own death.

Is forecasting. His own death. You see. The son. Wasn't going to be shown. Any more respect. Than the servants. Were shown. Than the servants.

Were shown. And the tenants. Become suddenly aware. When the son. Is sent to them. They become suddenly aware. That this is their opportunity. To take possession.

[15:06] To take full possession. Of the vineyard. So what did that mean? What did that mean? Well it meant. That they would have to kill the son.

They would have to kill the son. With his body. With his body. Being thrown. Over the wall. Of the vineyard. And left to rot.

He was a threat. A threat. A threat. That had to be got out of the way.

And of course he was a threat. To these religious leaders. The leaders. Of Israel. At this particular time. He was turning. Their teachings.

Upside down. And if they were going to retain. The authority they had. They had to get rid. Of this son.

[16:08] They had to get rid of this son. And so Jesus would suffer. The humiliation of death. By crucifixion. Which in these days.

In Israel. Meant the most disgraceful. Of death. Of deaths. As well as. Being the most agonizing. The body of the son.

Was thrown over the wall. Of the vineyard. And left to rot. Jesus. Suffered that death. Of crucifixion. Outside the walls. Of the holy city.

Why? Because. The idea then was. That if one suffered death.

Outside the walls. Of the holy city. That death was unclean. And that is revealed to us. In the epistle to the Hebrews. Chapter 13. And verses 11 to 12.

[17:07] Which tells us there. About the carcasses. Or the animals. That were sacrificed. They were taken. Without. Outside of the camp. To be burnt. They were unclean. And all the way.

There was a type. Of the death. That the son of God. Would suffer. He was a blasphemer. He was a threat.

To seize his reign. He was making himself. Out to be a king. His death. Was a.

Non-clean death. Because he was looked upon. As being. An unclean person. And Jesus would die. Bearing the sins.

Of a world. That was under the dominion of evil. You think the world today is bad. Well look back to the time of Jesus.

[18:06] War. Fear was common. Life was cheap. On the very light. On the very light. That God. Had set aside.

For himself. Israel. They were twisting. The world of God. To suit themselves. There was hardly. A light left.

The Romans. The Greeks. Were absolutely. Steeped. In idolatry. Goodness. Those are many. Gods. They were worshipping. It was a world.

That was in the grip. Of evil. Jesus died. Bearing the sins. Of this world. That was in the grip. Of evil. What loosened.

That grip. Upon the world. What loosened it? The gospel. The gospel. But what we see today.

[19:06] Especially in the part of the world. That we live ourselves. As the power of the gospel. Waves. So this demonic grip.

Is taking hold. Is taking hold. Satan. Satan thrives on confusion.

Within nations. And within the church. And we find the church today.

Interpreting. God's world. And this. Is what his first arrow. Was always aimed at. The world of God. We find him. Causing confusion.

Within the church. And we find the church. Interpreting God's world. In many different ways. Then you have the false faiths.

[20:05] That you. Find throughout your world. They all flow. From the one. Spirit.

The spirit. Of the enemy of God. The antichrist. To cause. Confusion. Within the world. God.

And so you have the secular world. Today. Calling. The church. Supposed to be church.

A community of faiths. Not one faith. But a community of faiths. Causing more confusion.

Church. We need. The power of the gospel. Once again. To visit us.

[21:00] Within this part. Of the world. That we live. The west. The power of the gospel. To once again. Loosen. This demonic grip. That.

Satan has. Upon. The part of the world. In which we live. And the amazing thing. Here is. That Jesus.

Is telling. These religious. Leaders. What they would. Actually. Do. To himself. He is. For telling. His own.

Death. To those. Who are going. To carry it out. That's what he is doing. In this parable. He was surrounded. By nobody else.

But the religious. Leader of Israel. And here. He is telling. Them about. His own. Death. The very ones. Who are going.

[21:58] To see. To it. That he would. Eventually. Be put to death. He is telling. These religious. Leaders. What they were actually. Going to do to him.

And the parable. Of course. Finishes. With the tenants. These corrupt tenants. Getting what they deserve. And we find. Jesus then.

Quoting. From Psalm 118. And verses 22. And 23. In that psalm. The very psalm. That the crowd. Had been singing. When he entered.

Into the holy city. Two days. Before this. He quotes. These verses. From the very psalm. That they were singing. Rejoicing. In seeing.

And mentoring. Into the holy city. Which brings us. To the third. And final thing here. The chief. Cornerstone. The chief. Cornerstone. Now.

[22:54] These two verses. That we have quoted. For us here. Are followed. In that psalm. Immediately. By the words. Blessed is he.

Blessed is he. That comes. In the name. Of the Lord. And the verses. That Jesus quotes here. Refers to the building.

Of Solomon's temple. The builders. Had found. This stone. But was the wrong.

Shape. And the wrong size. To be used. In the building. Of this. Great building. And so. The stone. Is rejected. In the end. The builders. Discover. That this is. Exactly. The stone. They need.

[23:50] To hold. The whole. Of this. Building. Together. And so. This. Rejected. Stone. Becomes.

The most. Important. Stone. In the whole. Of that. Building. In the whole. Of the. The building. In the whole. Of Solomon's temple. And you see.

God's. Beloved. Son. Is rejected. And crucified. And what does God do?

He makes this. Rejected. Son. Son. The very. Foundation. Of his. Redemptive. Purposes.

And the crown. Of all his. Redemptive. Plans. And God. Reveals. That. In raising him. From the state of death.

[24 : 50] On the third day. On the third day. And you see. The resurrection. The resurrection. Proves. Proves. That his.

Rejecters. Those who. Rejected him. Had passed. Judgment. Upon. Themselves. Peter. Makes this. Clear. In the.

Sermon. That he. Gave. After they. Had. Healed. The lame. Passion. The lame. Passion. Who was near. The temple. And Peter.

Puts it. This way. He says. The stone. He was talking to the religious leaders. In Israel. Of the day. The stone. He said. Rejected. By you.

Builders. Has been made. God. Has made. The head. Cornerstone. There is. Salvation.

[25 : 45] In no one else. He says. For there is. No other name. Given under heaven. Amongst men. Through which. We must be saved. Peter.

Makes it. Very clear. And in Jesus. God. Has fulfilled. God. Has fulfilled. His plan. To bring. Salvation. To all nations.

And. To all. Tongues. The vineyard. Has been taken. From the rebellion. His tenants. And has been handed. Over to the world.

Of Jew. And Gentile. For the glory. Of his son. In order. That every knee. Shall bow. And every tongue. Shall confess. That he is Lord.

Over all. That he is Lord. Over all. And what comment. Does Psalm. 118.

[26 : 40] Pass on that. The Lord. Has done this. And it's. Wonderful. In her eyes. And supposing. You and I. Were to go into.

An art gallery. And we were to pass. Judgment. On a Van Gogh.

Or a Rembrandt. Masterpiece. Thinking that. There were nothing. Special. All that would reveal. All that would reveal. Would be our ignorance. Would be our ignorance. The conclusion. That we would come to.

About these paintings. Would take nothing away. From the paintings. But it would tell much. About us. It would tell much.

[27 : 36] About us. Of us. And this is. Precisely. What the parable. Of the tenants. Is doing. It tells us. About a people. Who passed judgment.

On Jesus. Rejecting him. And finally. Crucifying him. And the verdict. They come to. Takes nothing away.

From Jesus. But it says. Everything about them. And here they are. Already having decided. His fate.

Having decided. His fate. Not realizing. That their judgment. Actually. Decides their own. And this remains.

Through. To this day. This remains. Through. To this day. Whatever. Conclusion. You or I.

[28 : 37] Come to. Above Jesus. It is not. Going to add. Anything. To Jesus. Greatness. Neither.

Is it going to diminish. You years. But it will make. All the difference. In the world. To me. And to you. To me.

And to you. And in this parable. Jesus. In this parable. Jesus. Gives the answer. To the authority. Question. That we find. At the end. Of the last. Chapter. He didn't answer them. Then. About. That. Or for that question. About authority. In that last chapter. But he's answering it here. All authority. He is revealing to us.

[29 : 32] Belongs to God. When God. The father. Has passed. All authority. Over. Into the hands.

Of his son. Into the hands. Of his son. And Jesus. Makes clear. Through this parable. That those. Who pass. Judgment. On him. Are passing. Judgment. On themselves. They're passing. Judgment. On themselves. So. So whatever.

Conclusion. You. Come to. On this evening. About this. Jesus. Jesus. It determines.

The direction. That your life will take. In the here and now. And it also determines. Where you will spend eternity. so the question is what do you think of this man Jesus Christ what are you going to do with this man Jesus Christ let us pray