

Luke 20:13

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Preacher: Rev George MacAskill

[0 : 0 0] Seeking the Lord's blessing, let us now turn back to the portion of scripture that we read together in the Gospel of Luke, and chapter 20, and reading at verse 13.

Then said the Lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. It may be they will reverence him when they see him, but when the husbandmen saw him, the reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir, come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.

So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. What therefore shall the Lord of the vineyard do unto them? And so on.

Jesus here is in Jerusalem, from where he will in a short time be taken to just outside the city to a place called Golgotha, to the place of a skull, and there he will be crucified.

He has entered into the city of Jerusalem in a very triumphant way, riding upon the foal of an ass or a donkey, and the people taking branches of palm trees and going forth out to meet him and shouting, Hosanna!

[1 : 3 1] Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. But we are told by Matthew that when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the son of David, that they were sore displeased.

However, on coming to Jerusalem, he entered into the temple and he began to cast out them that sold within the temple and them that bought there, saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of robbers.

And when Jesus says that the temple has become a den of thieves or a den of robbers, he was quoting from a very famous temple sermon, which Jeremiah preached at the gates of the temple, and we looked at that sermon a number of weeks ago.

And you will remember that Jeremiah preached that sermon at the gates of the temple, when he said, It is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes.

And so here is Jesus, and he's quoting these words of Jeremiah. Jeremiah. The people of Judah were quite content if they attended the temple with their sacrifice.

[3 : 1 9] They gave no thought of how they lived the rest of the week. The rest of the week they were not obedient, but they were living sinful lives.

The people of Judah in the days of Jeremiah, they followed other gods. They burnt incense to Baal. They neglected their social responsibilities to the fatherless and the widows and so on.

But God requires not merely attending the temple, but he also requires a right behaviour from the people.

And it is only when that is present, that the worship of the temple becomes meaningful, and not an act of pretense.

And as it was in Jeremiah's day, Jesus saw people doing the same things in his own day. However, Jesus spent the rest of his time teaching them daily in the temple.

[4 : 36] But we read that the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him, and could not find what they might do for all the people, were there in the temple, and they were very attentive to the teachings of Jesus, listening to every word that fell from his lips.

And we are told here at the beginning of this chapter, that on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, that the chief priests and the scribes came upon him with the elders, and spoke unto him, saying, Tell us by what authority doest thou these things?

Or who is he that gave thee this authority? But Jesus responded by asking another question, by putting a question to them.

And he asked them, The baptism of John, was it from heaven or of men? And the chief priests and scribes and elders, they tried to trap Jesus, but now what has happened is that they themselves were trapped.

They did not believe that John's baptism was from heaven, and if they said that they did, it would make the people wonder why they themselves had not come to John to be baptized.

[6 : 14] Father John was the one who said that Jesus was the Christ.

If his ministry was heavenly, then why didn't they believe in Jesus? On the other hand, they could not deny John's baptism either, because if they did, the people would tear them apart, because the people who were following Jesus, and the people who were listening to Jesus, as he taught in the temple, who were so attentive to him in the temple, were the same people who had loved John the Baptist, who had followed John the Baptist.

those people of whom John pointed to Jesus Christ. So what they said was that they could not tell whence it was.

And Jesus said, unto them, neither tell I you by what authority I do these things. So that is the background to the parable that he begins here with in verse 9.

And here we find him, as we often find him in the gospel, he is teaching the people in this form, in this manner of parables.

[7 : 49] And this parable that we have here in Luke 20, is often referred to as the parable of the wicked tenants. But may I suggest that the main focus of this parable is really upon the rejection of the owner's son, and of the judgment that followed.

So may I suggest that this last full parable that we have in the gospel of Luke is very appropriate, as it focuses upon the rejection and death of the father's only son.

I think it is right to conclude that here Jesus is speaking about himself, he is speaking about the cross, and he is speaking about the judgment that there is to come.

The owner who planted the vineyard obviously stands for God. And the vineyard stands for Israel. And especially Israel as a nation of privilege, as a nation of the people of God.

Paul in his letter to the Romans says of the Jews, what advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way, chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

[9 : 29] And when Paul speaks there of the oracles of God, he is making reference to the word of God. The Jews had the whole of our Old Testament.

And that was a great privilege that was given to them by God. The other nations round about did not have the word of God.

This was a privilege that was given by God to Israel, to the Jewish people. But when you think of this privilege of having the Old Testament, let us for one moment consider ourselves.

Because we have not only the Old Testament, but we have the New Testament. We have the whole Bible. We have the whole revelation of God.

And the thing is, do we realise the advantage and privilege that belongs to us when we have in our hands and before us the whole revelation of God?

[10 : 48] When we have before us the word of God? The prophet Amos speaks and he says, Behold, the days are coming, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.

It is a terrible thing to have a famine. It is a terrible thing to have a drought. It is a terrible thing to be without food or water.

But there is something worse than that. And Amos says that it is something that is coming upon the land of Israel.

a famine of hearing the words of the Lord. And as we look upon our own land in our own day, there is no doubt that there are places where that famine has already begun, where there is a famine of hearing the words of the Lord.

We should grasp and hold on to the great privilege that we have when we have the word of God and when we have the gospel proclaimed to us.

[12 : 22] It is our duty to teach our children the word of God. It is our duty to make our children familiar with the word of God.

It is our duty to teach them from the word of God. It is a great privilege that we have.

And so here in this parable the vineyard stands for Israel's place of privilege as the people of God as those who had the word of God.

Throughout the Bible we find Israel brought before us under this picture or image of a vineyard. So the people around Jesus and that heard him would recognise that he was talking about them and that he was talking about them and their relationship to the owner of the vineyard.

In other words that he was talking about them and their relationship to God. The tenants or the husbandmen in the parable were the spiritual leaders of Israel the chief priests and the scribes and the elders the servants those who were sent out in the parable they represent the prophets the prophets that God had repeatedly sent to Israel the prophets who had come and who had proclaimed the truth of God who had warned the people who had urged the people to faith and to repentance.

[14 : 22] But we know from the Old Testament history that those servants those prophets that were sent received nothing but rejection and persecution and abuse.

And that is a reminder to us also that we are to expect hostility to the gospel and we are to expect persecution and abuse for preaching the gospel and for witnessing in the name of Christ.

But what strikes out here in this parable surely is this the long suffering owner. And who does the long suffering owner represent?

Well he stands for God and it teaches us how patient God is in waiting for us to repent.

The apostle Paul asks in his letter to the Romans he says despises thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long suffering not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.

[15 : 47] So that if you ask well why is God long suffering? He is long suffering because he is giving you the opportunity to repent to come to faith to come to put your trust in Christ his provision for sinners.

But there are many and what do they do with the long suffering of God and the forbearance of God? They despise it. And so you have to ask yourself are you among those who despise the riches of God's goodness and forbearance and long suffering towards you.

However may I suggest that the main focus of this parable are in the words of our text and in the words of verse 13.

after the owner had sent so many servants to the vineyard and they were ill treated they were rejected they were abused yet here he comes and he says what shall I do?

Everything that I have done so far in sending servants to them they have rejected and they have abused them what shall I do?

[17 : 31] And he come the answer I will send my beloved son. The writer to the Hebrews tells us God who at sundry times and in diverse manners speak in time past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son.

In other words he is telling us that this is God's final voice to us. He has sent prophets to Israel they rejected but he says there is one final voice that I am going to send to the most privileged people and it is the voice of my son Jesus Christ.

So that what Jesus is doing here when he's teaching them this parable is he's telling them a story about himself. He is the beloved son of the father.

This was testified at the time when Jesus began his public ministry when he was baptized when a voice came from heaven thou art my beloved son in thee I am well pleased.

And again coming nearer to this moment when he was on the Mount of Transfiguration there came a voice out of the cloud saying this is my beloved son hear ye him.

[19 : 18] Jesus as the beloved son is a precious person in the story of redemption. Hear us among other places.

Jesus proves to us that he knew his own divine identity. He knew who he was. Although the chief priests and the scribes and the elders doubted whether he had any divine authority whatsoever, Jesus knew who he was, that he was and always will be the father's beloved son.

But the son in the parable was not only beloved of the father, but the son in the parable was sent on a mission.

And he was sent on that mission by the father. What shall I do? I will send my beloved son.

Now as we already noted when Jesus is in telling this parable he is speaking of himself as the beloved son who was sent by the father on a mission.

[20 : 41] That is what is true of Jesus Christ, the beloved son of the father, the beloved son of God, that he came on a mission, that he was sent by the father on a mission.

And the gospel tells us what that mission concerned. The gospel tells us that he came to seek and to save that which was lost.

And the father as well as his son knew that this was going to be a costly mission. The father and the son knew that he came on the mission to give his life as a ransom for many.

The son under the image of a shepherd says I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. Jesus knew that he was not going to be treated any differently than the prophets that went before him.

However, their mission was to call Israel to faith and to repentance. Although in the process many of them met with death at the hands of the people.

[22 : 02] But Jesus knew this beloved son knew that the only way by which sinners could be saved was for him to make atonement for them by his death by him dying.

He knew that he was sent forth by the father that his mission was to die to die as the substitute for his people.

John the Baptist saw this when he told his disciples when he identified Jesus as the Christ and he says to them behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

Now in this parable the father is sending the son on the mission and he says it may be they will reverence him when they see him.

Now we are not to conclude from that that when God the father sent his son on the mission that he expected the people to show him any reverence towards him.

[23 : 26] When God the father sent his son on a mission he sent him to die however what the parable shows us here is the indifference and rejection with which the people received the son.

You would think that they would reverence the son but instead of doing that they were indifferent and they rejected him and the gospel records for us that he came unto his own and his own did not receive him instead they completely rejected him and ultimately they crucified him they said come let us kill him Jesus knew exactly why he was sent and that his mission would end in his sufferings and death and already the religious leaders at the temple had rejected him they were denying his divine authority and refusing to acknowledge that he came from the father and now they were already plotting to kill him and the question for you is do you respect the father's only beloved son what does it mean for you that the father sent his only beloved son on a mission to die for the salvation of sinners like me and you you know if tonight you are rejecting the beloved son you are no better or may

I suggest actually that you are worse than the tenants that we have here before us in the parable and it is worse because you have gospel light which they did not have they only had the old testament that does not excuse them there was plenty light there to bring them to salvation in Christ but you have a greater light because you have the whole revelation of God and to those to whom much is given much will be required so may I suggest that if tonight you are rejecting the beloved son that you are worse than the tenants or the husband men that is brought before us here in the Bible because you are rejecting greater light in verse 15

Jesus asks a question what therefore shall the Lord of the vineyard do unto them because they had cast this son out of the vineyard and they had killed him and so he asks what therefore shall the Lord of the vineyard do unto them and he answers he shall come and destroy these husband men and shall give the vineyard to others now in context what Jesus is saying here is that they would lose their spiritual leadership and that he would take the vineyard the privileges away from the Jews and that he would give it to the Gentiles that's in context and Luke here tells us that when they heard this they said

God forbid or they said surely not but while they were saying surely not Jesus looked directly at them and he said to them what is this then that is written the stone which the builders rejected the same has become the head of the corner they said surely not you know this reminds us that we must hold on to what we have received and we must not think that the day may not come that there will not be a famine of the word of Lord in North Tulster or in Lewes it may have begun already where the gospel once thrived and where the gospel once was in power has become a wilderness to the gospel and to the word of

[28 : 43] God where humanism is now in the increase we must not think that these things cannot come upon us and upon our community here it can come we cannot say surely not this is what these people said surely not yet in 70 AD it came it came they lost their leadership and the place became desolate it came and the vineyard that once belonged to them were given to the Gentiles but why they were saying surely not Jesus looked directly at them and said what is this then that is written the stone which the builders rejected the same is become the head of the corner that comes from psalm 118 the very psalm that they were singing earlier as he rode into

Jerusalem on the donkey and he shouted blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord that also came from psalm 118 and Jesus is now bringing them back to that psalm psalm 118 what is this that is written the stone which the builders rejected the same has become the head of the corner now Jesus knew that this prophecy would be fulfilled in himself because he was the stone which the builders rejected this is what the people of Israel were doing especially the chief priests and scribes and elders they were rejecting the corner stone of their salvation the wicked tenants who killed the owner's son were like the builders who rejected the chosen stone they were acting against the beloved son the

Bible says therefore thus saith the Lord God behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone a tried stone a precious corner stone a sure foundation he that believeth shall not make haste Peter quotes it in his verse later behold I am laying inside on a stone a corner stone chosen and precious and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame well do you believe that Jesus Christ is the corner stone of salvation listen to the warning that Jesus gives in verse 18 whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken but on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder you see Jesus knew better than anyone what would happen to those who rejected him and the truth is that so many people got tripped up when they encountered

Jesus the image is common in the New Testament Jesus Christ is brought before us in the New Testament as a stone that people stumble over there are many truths of this given to us in the New Testament instances where this truth is spoken of remember at the temple Simeon what did he say Simeon blessed them that is Mary and Joseph and the child Jesus and said unto Mary his mother behold this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel and for a sign which shall be spoken against Paul reminds the Jews but Israel which followed after the law of righteousness hath not attained to the law of righteousness wherefore because they sought it not by faith but as it were by the works of the law for they stumbled at the stumbling stone as it is written

Peter says but unto them which be disobedient the stone which the builders disallowed the same is made the head of the corner and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence even to them which stumble at the word being disobedient whereunto also they were appointed perhaps Paul sums it all up for us when he says but we preach Christ crucified unto the Jews a stumbling block and unto the Greeks foolishness and so we ask you tonight is Jesus a stumbling block to you or is he foolishness to you Jesus said that people would trip over him and that the people who would trip over him would be broken that seems to refer to something that happens in this life itself but if you refuse to accept

[34 : 42] Jesus as a beloved son of God who died to save sinners who has worked out salvation for sinners if you refuse to accept him eventually something much worse will happen then that you will be broken in this life and that will be at the final judgment Jesus Christ will crush you completely whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken but on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder he is giving us that image which brings before us the awfulness of that final judgment for those who have stumbled and those who have rejected those who have abused those who have cast out his salvation my friend do not stumble over the stone of salvation do not fall under the judgment of

God but believe in the beloved son Jesus Christ for there is no other way of salvation but that which was proclaimed by the prophets and to you in the gospel come in faith and repentance and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ do not despise the forbearance do not despise the long suffering and the goodness of God what shall I do I will send my beloved son and he came and he dealt with sin and he has opened a way of salvation for sinners like me and you and he is calling us tonight through the gospel to come in repentance and to put our faith in him it's a day of privilege it's a night of opportunity it's a time that is quickly passing us by do not err by putting it off till tomorrow but come now and put your trust in the stone and rock of salvation put your trust in

Jesus Christ the beloved son sent by the father to work out salvation for sinners like me and you do not go on in your life rejecting him casting him out because the day shall come and you will appear before him and unless you have put your trust in him he will reject you and he will cast you out and you shall be crushed under his judgment why should that happen to you when in his love long suffering and mercy he extends the gospel offer to you tonight may the Lord bless our thoughts let us pray