

## Three Relationships / Three Questions for us

1. Between the Owner and the Tenants

*Question: Are you an Owner or a Tenant?*

2. Between the Tenants and the Owner's Messengers

*Question: Are you L\_\_\_\_\_ or R\_\_\_\_\_?*

3. Between the Tenants and the Owner's Son

*Question: Is Jesus your cornerstone or the stone rejected?*

*"The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone?"*

*<sup>18</sup> Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him."*

## A fourth Relationship and Question

4. Between the Owner and his S\_\_\_\_\_.

*Owners Question:*

*Son's Response:*

### Suggested Questions for Small Groups

1. Look at Luke 19:28-48. How has Jesus provoked the religious leaders to ask their question (20:2) regarding his authority to act and teach? What emotions do you sense behind the scenes as this parable is told?
2. In Jesus' parable, what or who is represented by each of the following: The "vineyard", the "man who planted", the "tenants who rent the land", the "servants of the owner", the "owner's son" and the "killing of the son"?
3. What do you see as the motivations behind the abuse of the servants and killing of the son in the story? What are the motivations of the religious leaders in their actions toward Jesus?
4. What are your answers to the three questions Marty asked in his message?

Next Sunday, Easter Sunday, April 4, 2010: **Great Parables of Jesus**  
Part 7 - "The Parable of the Vineyard Workers"

Easter is a time when we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the death He suffered on the cross. This Easter Sunday we will look at one of Jesus' parables that exposes why God sent His Son, Jesus, to the earth. We will see God's heart of mercy directed toward those standing in great need of it.

# GREAT PARABLES OF JESUS CHRIST

**parable** l'parəbəl | noun

a simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson, as told by Jesus in the Gospels.

ORIGIN Middle English : from Old French *parabole*, from an ecclesiastical Latin sense 'discourse, allegory' of Latin *parabola* 'comparison,' from Greek *parabolē*.

FEB. 28 - THE PARABLE OF THE TENANTS

Luke 20:1-18

*One day, as Jesus was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders came up <sup>2</sup> and said to him, "Tell us by what authority you do these things, or who it is that gave you this authority."<sup>3</sup> He answered them, "I also will ask you a question. Now tell me, <sup>4</sup> was the baptism of John from heaven or from man?"<sup>5</sup> And they discussed it with one another, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why did you not believe him?'<sup>6</sup> But if we say, 'From man,' all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet."<sup>7</sup> So they answered that they did not know where it came from. <sup>8</sup> And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."*

*By what authority:* In a few days the rulers of the Temple will be seeking to arrest and kill Jesus. They oppose his message and hate the fact that the people are responding to it. These leaders find Jesus teaching in the Temple courts and publicly confront Him. They demand to know the source of His authority for denouncing their practices and disrupting the Temple's financial commerce. *Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man?:* Jesus answers these opponents by asking a question. He asks them if they think John the Baptist was authorized and sent by God or not. These leaders don't believe John was a prophet, but they don't want to say that publicly so they refuse to answer. Jesus refuses to answer their question directly, instead He hits them with a parable. *afraid of the people, for they all held that John really was a prophet:* The reason they refuse to answer publicly was that they knew that the people believed John was a Prophet of God and that his baptism was of God. Jesus knows of their disbelief in both John and Himself.

<sup>9</sup> And he began to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while.

<sup>10</sup> When the time came, he sent a servant to the tenants, so that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. <sup>11</sup> And he sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. <sup>12</sup> And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out. <sup>13</sup> Then the owner of the vineyard said, "What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him." <sup>14</sup> But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, "This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours." <sup>15</sup> And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? <sup>16</sup> He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others." When they heard this, they said, "Surely not!" <sup>17</sup>

But he looked directly at them and said, "What then is this that is written:

"The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone?"

<sup>18</sup> Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him."

**planted a vineyard:** One of the well known Old Testament metaphors for God's relationship with His chosen people, Israel, was a Vineyard. Isaiah 5:7 *The vineyard of the LORD Almighty is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are the garden of his delight.* The Vineyard is owned by God Himself. The Temple leaders understood that Jesus' parable was directed at them and the religious leaders who had preceded them. The parable is an indictment of their actions and decisions but more importantly, it's an unveiling of their ungodly desires of heart. They despise God's ownership and rule. They not only refuse to listen to His messengers, but they insult, abuse and even kill them.

**leased it to tenants:** Just like today, land owners often need to hire others to manage their property and crops. In this parable Jesus paints the picture of the vineyard owner (God) buying land and improving it with plants, winepress, fence and security. Then he chooses people (Israel's leaders) to which he will entrust his vineyard property (the people of Israel and His plan for them). In the parable the owner's expectation is obvious; his tenants will care for his property and produce the owner's crop from which they will receive compensation and from which the owner will gain a profit.

**he sent a servant:** At the time of harvest the owner sends a representative to gather his portion of the profit from the crop. The servant messengers in this parable represent all the prophets that God sent over the years to speak for Him to Israel.

**they also beat him and treated him shamefully and sent him away empty-handed:** Why would the tenant farmers do this to the owner's representative? Why did the leaders of Israel beat, despise and even kill the prophets which God had sent to them? Why would we despise and reject messages from God?

**And he sent yet a third:** In the parable Jesus tells, there are a series of messengers sent to the tenants and they are all mistreated, beaten and sent away. Luke 13:34 *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"*

**What shall I do?:** This soliloquy is at the center of the meaning behind this parable. It is a window into the heart and mind of the Godhead. The sin, violence and contempt of mankind toward God knows no shame. What will God do with His anger? What will God do about the injustice? What are the options? God can walk away and leave the renters to themselves - but that would be an injustice too. God could retaliate and gain retributive justice - that would be within His power and within His rights. But in Jesus' story the owner goes beyond His justifiable anger and chooses to attempt to win people by sending his own son - alone. This is an incredible decision.

**I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him:** Why would God do this knowing how the renters have previously acted? We hear the mind of God in Jesus' parable. The Owner hopes that the tenants will respect His beloved son, but they do not and Jesus knows this - He is the beloved Son and knows that these men will work to have Him silenced. Just as they and their forbearers abused and killed the prophets sent by God in the past, they will again kill God's messenger. Instead of respect and truthfully acknowledging the truth of ownership and their misdeeds, the tenants see an opportunity to seize ownership. They will kill the heir to become the heir themselves.

**What will the owner of the vineyard do:** He will come and exact justice. Then the Vineyard will be given into the stewardship of others appointed by God. At the very least Jesus is saying that the current chief priest and Sanhedrin leadership base is going to be punished and removed. Maybe Jesus is saying that the whole Temple system with its Jewish heritage is obsolete and a whole new covenant is beginning.

**The stone:** Jesus quotes from Ps. 118 here. Jesus is the stone that people will use in one of two ways. Either they will reject the stone as unfit for their building project or they will use Jesus as the cornerstone of their lives. It is a marvelous thing to consider the truth that God is accomplishing His will and plan in spite of opposition from the ones who should have been the very first to make Jesus the cornerstone of their lives.