

THE OWNER AND THE TENANTS

“Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my son, whom I love; perhaps they will respect him’.” —LUKE 20:13

After Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem, He was teaching every day in the temple courts. Among the listeners were the chief priests, scribes and elders who were secretly trying to kill him. Jesus knew this and told a very poignant story about the tenants of a vineyard.

A man planted a vineyard, rented it out to some farmers and went away for a long time. At the harvest, he sent a servant to collect his share of the fruits. The tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. The owner sent another servant and they beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Then a third servant and he, too, was wounded and thrown out. The owner thought if I send my son, surely they will treat him with respect, but when the tenants saw his son, they conspired together, and thinking they would receive his share of the inheritance, they killed him. Then Jesus said the owner would come to the vineyard, kill those tenants, and give the vineyard to others (see Luke 20:9-16).

Throughout the Old Testament, Israel is referred to as God’s vineyard. Isaiah 5:7 says, “The vineyard of the LORD Almighty is the house of Israel...” The Jewish leaders knew this parable was about them. It summarized the story of Israel from Abraham to Christ where God had sent servant after servant. He sent godly priests, kings, prophets, but again and again, the Israelites rejected God’s word and purposes. God then sends another servant, His Son, whom He loves and they want to kill Him. This illustrates the incredible patience of God, in which messenger after messenger He sends. It illustrates the love of God in that

He sends His Son, and the holiness of God, in which He judges their rebellion and sin.

The heart of this parable is depicting tenants who want to be owners, and it has a much wider application than simply applying to Israel. It extends to any situation where divine generosity is answered with human contempt. It applies to the history of Christendom, to nations and individuals, to anyone who has known the blessings of God, but responds with disobedience and rejection.

One day each of us will give an account of himself to God, because we have an owner who demands accountability of His tenants. The problem is we want to be owners of our own destinies, but we were never designed to function alone or be complete in ourselves. We were designed to be tenants who live in submission to an owner who loves us; who is big enough, capable enough and kind enough to implement His will in our lives.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, I depend upon Your will in my life. Help me to completely submit to You, so that I may experience Your will to the fullest measure. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Is my life entirely submitted to God?