



# gracefellowship

Series: The Kingdom of God  
Date: April 23, 2023  
21:33-46

Title: The Patient King (2)  
Passage: Matthew

Scripture: Matthew 22:1-14

We started this series last week focusing on the things Jesus taught about the Kingdom of God. Jesus was obsessed with talking about the Kingdom! He wants everyone who follows Him to understand the ways of life under His rule and reign.

So, last week we defined God's Kingdom like this:

**“The Kingdom is primarily the dynamic reign or kingly rule of God and derivatively, the sphere in which His rule is experienced.” – George Ladd**

We talked about the idea that the Kingdom of God is not simply a location- heaven- but is also a culture that Jesus came to introduce on earth. We are meant to live with a Kingdom of heaven mindset while we live out our days here on planet earth.

Then we said there are two big ideas to understand within the Kingdom of God:

**1. There is a King who establishes the Kingdom and He reigns with sovereignty.**

**2. God invites us to be citizens of the Kingdom and to live under the rule and reign of the King.**

To help us grasp these two things Jesus tells a story about a vineyard. Last week we heard a reading from Isaiah 5 that Jesus was drawing from. The audience listening to Him would have been intimately associated with the teaching.

**:: Isaiah 5:1-7**

**1 I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside.**

**2 He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit.**

**3 “Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard.**

**4 What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad?**

**5 Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled.**

**6 I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briers and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it.”**

**7 The vineyard of the LORD Almighty is the nation of Israel, and the people of Judah are the vines he delighted in. And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.**

In Isaiah’s teaching, God plants a vineyard (identified as Israel) and has the expectations that they will produce grapes in keeping with His culture and Kingdom. But we’re told that the vines He planted only yielded bad fruit. Then at the end of the story we are told that God looked for justice, but found only bloodshed; He looked for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.

The culture of God’s Kingdom was not being replicated within the nation He chose as His representatives. God is looking for them to take care of the widows and orphans, to be a place of refuge for the alien and stranger, to make right the things that are wrong in the world, but instead they are acting with selfish, evil intent and abusing power rather than bringing peace.

With that as the backdrop, Jesus tells his own story about a vineyard. But Jesus is going to change things up just a little.

**:: Matthew 21:33-46**

**33 “Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place.**

**34 When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.**

**35 “The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third.**

**36 Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way.**

**37 Last of all, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said.**

**38 “But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance.’**

**39 So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.**

**40 “Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?”**

**41 “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,” they replied, “and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.”**

**42 Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: “ ‘The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes’ ?**

**43 “Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.**

**44 Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.”**

**45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus’ parables, they knew he was talking about them.**

**46 They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.**

Because of the teaching in Isaiah we already know some things:

1. God is the landowner
2. Israel is the vineyard

God has done everything for the success of the vineyard: He put up walls, built a watchtower, dug a winepress...everything you would need to have a successful vineyard has been provided. God is sovereign over His vineyard.

Then He puts tenants in place to care for and cultivate the garden. These are the religious leaders at the time of Jesus. We know that because at the end of the story they say, “He’s talking about us!”

The problem with these tenants was they started thinking like owners instead of stewards. Rather than representing God in the way He expected, they started wanting control of the vineyard without the authority of God over them.

How many times have we taken that mentality?

“I know better than God.” Or...

“I don’t need God telling me what to do with my life.” Or even...

“I know what God says, but I don’t care and I’m not going to submit to Him.”

Back to the story:

At harvest time the landowner sent a servant to collect what was rightfully His from the vineyard. But they beat him and sent him away. The audience who was listening to Jesus tell this story would be thinking the next sentence out of

Jesus' mouth would be, "So the owner came with a mighty army and destroyed those unruly tenants." But that's not what Jesus says. Look at the text again.

**35 "The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third.**

**36 Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way.**

**37 Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said.**

**38 "But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.'**

**39 So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.**

We often live with the idea that God should deal with all injustice immediately and harshly. But more often than not, God doesn't operate that way. The One who has all power will harness it and work toward restoration of individuals and nations. Even to the point that He sends His Son to attempt measures of reconciliation.

God is not in the business of condemning people and eradicating them. If you live with the mindset that you just can't wait for the wicked people of this world to get what's coming to them at the final judgment, you do not have the heart of God!

Here's what Jesus tells us about the King of the Kingdom:

**The King is patient, giving excessive and unnecessary opportunities to repent and embrace His Kingdom.**

The King is patient and shows grace and mercy as He sends servant after servant to the farmers. These servants Jesus is speaking of are the prophets of the Old Testament. They gave the word of God to the people calling people to repent and turn to God. But by and large, no one listened to them. So, God even goes to the extreme of sending His Son. But the tenants rejected Him, also.

Which leads us to a personal question: If you haven't embraced Jesus as your King and become part of His Kingdom, how many times will you reject Him? God is being patient with you and giving you opportunities to hear His invitation to join His Kingdom. However, a day is coming when God's patience will run out, and you don't know when that will be for you.

Jesus asks the crowd listening to this story: "...when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"

The crowd answers the question:

41 “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,” they replied, “and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.”

Those who want the rule and reign of God are welcomed into His Kingdom. Those who reject Him will be sent away to an eternal destruction.

You might be saying, “Wait a minute, didn’t you just say a little while ago that God is not in the business of condemning people?” Yes! It doesn’t bring God joy to punish people. But because He is just, He must ultimately punish all those who reject His rule and reign in their lives. If God allowed sin to go unpunished and just gave everyone a free pass, no matter what they had done, He would not be just! But it doesn’t bring Him joy to cast people into hell.

Remember, hell wasn’t created as a place of punishment for humanity- it was created for the devil and his angels. Listen to what Jesus had to say about this in Matthew 25:

**:: Matthew 25:31-46**

**31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne.**

**32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.**

**33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.**

**34 “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.**

**35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in,  
36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’**

**37 “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?**

**38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?**

**39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’**

**40 “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’**

**41 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.**

**42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,**

**43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'**

**44 "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'**

**45 "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'**

**46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."**

Let me point out a few things from this passage:

1. Goats and sheep are different in that sheep will listen to the voice of their shepherd and follow the voice. Goats will hear the voice of the shepherd and go do their own thing! They are stubborn and unruly.
2. Did you notice the things Jesus was looking for? People who embraced the culture of the Kingdom of God on earth: feed the hungry, take care of the poor, visit those in prison, clothe the naked, take care of the stranger... Those who are turned away from God's eternal Kingdom are the ones who don't embrace the culture of the Kingdom on earth under the Lordship of Jesus.

**As subjects of God's Kingdom we are meant to produce fruit that is consistent with His character.**

What is our King like? He is merciful and gracious and kind and long-suffering and meek and humble and forgiving. We embrace His Kingdom as we bear fruit that is in keeping with the culture of heaven. We learn to do that by honoring His Word and honoring His heir. Recognize that while God is patient with you to come to Him, He is not eternally patient and a day of judgment will come where He will hold you accountable to what you did with His Son.

Over the course of this series we are going to look at Jesus' teachings about the Kingdom of God and I have two big prayers for this series:

1. Believers in Jesus will understand how to live as citizens of His Kingdom that brings the light of His Kingdom into daily life, changing our community.
  2. If you are not currently a follower of Jesus, I pray you find your way into the Kingdom and are forever changed by the power of God.
- Response
  - Closing Song