

# Life Changing Community Group Discussion Questions

week of 10/4/26

## Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You today with grateful hearts, knowing that You are a God of extraordinary patience and mercy. As we open Your Word together, we ask that You would soften our hearts and open our eyes, just as You longed for Your people to see and hear in the days of the prophets. Lord, we confess that we do not always understand Your ways, and we are prone to think of You through the lens of human logic rather than through the lens of Your grace. Would You, by Your Holy Spirit, reveal to each of us what You want us to receive from this time together? May our discussion draw us closer to You and to one another. In the name of Jesus, who is the cornerstone of all things, we pray. Amen.

## Ice Breaker

What is your all-time favorite game show, and would you ever want to be a contestant on it?

## Summary

In this sermon, the Pastor Mark walked through Jesus' Parable of the Wicked Tenants from Matthew 21, challenging listeners to examine whether they truly understand the character of God the Father. The chief priests and Pharisees answered Jesus' question about the vineyard owner with what seemed like the obvious and logical response: that He would bring those wicked tenants to a wretched end. But that answer was completely wrong, because it reflected a fundamental misunderstanding of who God is. The farmer in the parable is no ordinary farmer. He sends servant after servant, and ultimately sends His own Son, not out of naivety, but out of extraordinary, patient, and persistent love.

Pastor Mark drew on Hosea 11, Nehemiah 9, Isaiah 5, and Psalm 118 to show that this parable is the story of God's long-suffering grace toward Israel and, by extension, toward all of us. The tenants' rejection of the son did not end the story, because the stone the builders rejected became the cornerstone. The resurrection was always the Father's plan. The right answer to Jesus' question was not a cry for judgment but a cry for mercy: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' The sermon closed with a call to receive God's grace through confession, reminding the congregation that the way to the Father is not through hard climbing and diligent performance, but through humble acknowledgment of our need for Him.

## Key Verses

- Matthew 21:33-41
- Psalm 118:22-23
- Hosea 11:1-9
- Isaiah 5:1-2
- Nehemiah 9:16-17

## Questions

1. When Jesus asked the chief priests and Pharisees what the vineyard owner would do to the wicked tenants, they gave what seemed like the obvious answer. Why do you think that answer felt so right, and what does it reveal about how we naturally think about justice and consequences?

2. The farmer in the parable kept sending servants and ultimately his own son, even after repeated violence from the tenants. What does this unusual behavior tell us about the character of God the Father? Does it challenge or comfort you, and why?
3. Pastor Mark pointed out that this parable is not only the story of Israel's unfaithfulness but also our story. In what ways do you see yourself in the wicked tenants, and how does that recognition affect the way you approach God?
4. Hosea 11 captures God crying out, 'How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel?' and Nehemiah 9 recounts God's repeated patience with a rebellious people. What do these passages add to your understanding of the parable Jesus told?
5. Pastor Mark said the right answer to Jesus' question would have been, 'I pray the owner of the vineyard would have mercy on them.' Why is it so difficult for us to respond to wrongdoing, including our own, with a prayer for mercy rather than a demand for judgment?
6. Psalm 118:22 declares that the stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. How does the resurrection of Jesus change the way we read the ending of this parable, and what hope does it offer to those who feel like they have been rejected or have failed?
7. The sermon closed with the reminder that the way to the Father is through confession, not through hard climbing and diligent performance. How does that truth reshape the way you think about your relationship with God this week?

## Life Application

This week, set aside a few quiet minutes each day to pray the prayer Pastor Mark offered as the right answer: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' Let that simple, honest confession replace any tendency to earn your way back to God or to assume you are beyond His reach. Additionally, consider whether there is someone in your life toward whom you have been withholding mercy or a second chance. Ask God to give you a small measure of the same patient, persistent love that the Father in the parable demonstrated, and take one concrete step toward extending grace to that person this week.

## Key Takeaways

- God's character is defined by extraordinary patience and mercy, not by the swift judgment we might expect or even feel is deserved. The farmer in the parable kept extending grace long past what any human standard of fairness would require.
- The Parable of the Wicked Tenants is not only the story of Israel's unfaithfulness. It is our story too, and we must be careful not to repeat the mistake of the chief priests and Pharisees by failing to recognize our own need for God's mercy.
- The resurrection of Jesus, foreshadowed in Psalm 118, means that the rejection of the Son by the tenants was never the final word. The stone the builders rejected became the cornerstone, and no act of human rebellion can ultimately undo God's redemptive plan.

- The right response to God's question about what we deserve is not a demand for judgment but a humble cry for mercy. The way to the Father is through honest confession of our need, not through religious performance or self-justification.
- Knowing the Scriptures and knowing the character of God are inseparable. The chief priests and Pharisees were religious experts who still gave the wrong answer because they did not truly know the God they claimed to serve. We are called to pursue a living, personal knowledge of who God is.

## Ending Prayer

Lord God, we thank You for this time together in Your Word. We are reminded today that You are not the God we might have invented on our own. You are better, more patient, more merciful, and more persistent in Your love than we could ever imagine. We confess that we have sometimes thought of You through the lens of human fairness rather than through the lens of Your grace, and we ask Your forgiveness for that. Thank You for sending servant after servant throughout history, and thank You above all for sending Your Son, Jesus, who became the cornerstone even after being rejected. May we leave this place carrying a deeper understanding of Your mercy, and may that mercy overflow into the way we treat the people around us. When we are tempted to demand a wretched end for those who have wronged us, remind us of the farmer who kept sowing, kept hoping, and kept loving. And when we feel too far gone to return to You, remind us that You are already watching for us, ready to receive us back. We pray all of this in the name of Jesus, the cornerstone of our faith. Amen.

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*A Note About These Questions: These small group questions are developed from each week's sermon with the assistance of Sermonshots, which incorporates AI technology. The resulting questions and content are reviewed and edited by the pastor before being shared with the congregation.*