

Matthew 21:28-46

“The King’s Vineyard”

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Intro. God’s people are called to experience transformed lives through Christ. We are to repent and bear fruit for the kingdom. Repentance involves changing your thinking about God and your sin so you turn from your sin and yield to God. It is to be an on-going experience of the Christian-life. Yet, religious people often struggle to repent. How can you repent and bear fruit for God?

Study Guide Qs

Q1 *What are some specific areas/issues where professing Christians may be saying the right things but not doing the right things?*

Q2 *Repentance involves changing your thinking about God and your sin such that you turn from your sin and yield to God. Why is on-going repentance so critical to the Christian life?*

Q3 *Describe a time in your life where God revealed an area in your life where you needed to repent and you did.*

Q4 *Consider the spiritual fruit that your life is bearing. How would you like the yield to be different in the next season of life?*

Subject: The Parables of Two Sons and The Wicked Vinedressers

Object: Repent and bear fruit

Context: The cleansing of the temple and cursing of the fruitless tree reveal Jesus’ declaration of authority regarding true worship and faith [Mt. 21:12-27]. These parables call the religious leaders (and all people) to repent and bear fruit for the kingdom.

A. The Parable of the Two Sons [28-32]

1. We are to do God’s will (not simply talk about it) [28-31]: But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go, work today in my vineyard.’²⁹ He answered and said, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he regretted it and went.³⁰ Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go.

³¹ **Which of the two did the will of *his* father?”** They said to Him, “The first.” Both parables are set in the context of a vineyard [28, 33] and the vineyard is a picture of Israel [Is . 5:1-7] and God’s kingdom. Note that each child is called individually and asked to participate in the father’s work “today” (presently). The first says that he will not go and work in the father’s vineyard, but ultimately repents and does so [28-29]. The second says he will go, and

speaks respectfully calling his father “sir” but doesn’t go and work – his actions did not match his words [30]. Many religious consumers are like the second son in that they say the right things, but don’t do God’s will. Neither son in the parable is ideal, but only the first actually did the father’s will (although delayed). Empty words don’t satisfy God or man.

2. Those who believe, repent, and receive Christ enter God’s kingdom [31-32] Jesus said to them, assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. ³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw *it*, you did not afterward relent and believe him. Tax collectors and harlots were considered the most wicked sinners in the culture. They repented, believed and received grace and entered God’s kingdom through saving faith in Christ. In v. 32 “John” refers to John the Baptist who came with a message from God calling people to repent and receive God’s forgiveness. Tax collectors and harlots believed, and repented, but the self-righteous religious (leaders) saw it but didn’t repent and believe (receive Jesus as Messiah). Religious people tend to become self-righteous and find it more difficult to actually continue to repent and yield to Jesus. This pride becomes an obstacle to effectively bearing fruit for God’s kingdom.

B. The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers [33-46]

Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. ³⁴ Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. ³⁵ And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. ³⁶ Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. ³⁷ Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ ³⁸ But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’ ³⁹ So they took him and cast *him* out of the vineyard and killed *him*. ⁴⁰ “Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?” ⁴¹ They said to Him, “He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease *his* vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.”

1. God’s people are to bear fruit for the kingdom [33-41]

Jesus calls us to hear another parable [33]. We are to pay attention, understand and apply the lessons. The landowner [33] is God, and He has done His part to ensure fruit in His vineyard [Israel]. The owner puts vinedressers in charge, and will return to receive the fruit [33-34]. The religious leaders were the vinedressers who were charged with working for a fruitful yield for God. The owner’s servants were sent to receive the fruit were the prophets of God. The servants were rejected with anger and violence as they were beaten, killed and stoned [35-36]. This shows the patience and grace of the master. Yet, the servants refuse to give the master what is rightfully his. Finally, the vineyard owner sends his son assuming they will respect and receive the son [37]. This shows the love of the owner, for in real life the owner would have sent an army of mercenaries to depose the servants. The son is a reference to

Jesus, God's only beloved Son [Mk.12:6, Heb. 1:2]. Remarkably, the servants continue to refuse to yield, and see it as an opportunity to take ownership of the vineyard. So, they kill the son [38-39]. Jesus had told His disciples for six months about His death and resurrection, and now He reveals to the religious leaders their role. The parable reveals man's rebellion despite God's trust, provision, and kindness. The religious leaders correctly answer that the owner of the vineyard will come and bring justice, and will give the land to others who will give the owner the fruit that he is due [40-41].

2. You bear fruit by yielding to Jesus [42-46]

Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? ⁴³ "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. ⁴⁴ And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." ⁴⁵ Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them. ⁴⁶ But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet.

Jesus quotes Ps. 118:22-24 [42] [Ac. 4:11, 1 Pet. 2:7] a Messianic psalm that was related to Jesus' entry into Jerusalem a day before. The cornerstone was the most important stone in a building. The rejected stone (Jesus) is the stone that holds the kingdom together. Jesus declares that the Jewish leaders' rejection of Him as Messiah will result in the kingdom of God being given to another nation (the Church: Jews and Gentiles) that will bear fruit for God [43]. Whoever humbles himself and receives Jesus will be saved, but whoever rejects Him shall be judged [44] [Is. 8:13-15, Is. 28:16, Dan. 2:34-45]. The religious leaders realize that these parables related directly to them but they refuse to repent and seek to retaliate in anger.

C. How do you bear spiritual fruit and what is it? [Jn. 15:1-8]

Spiritual fruit is a natural (supernatural) by-product of a close relationship (abiding) with Jesus. Here are some examples:

1. Christ-like character (Fruit of the Spirit) [Gal. 5:22-23]

2. Worship (praise is the fruit of our lips) [Heb.13:15]

3. Spirit-prompted giving [Phil. 4:17]

4. Souls won for Christ [Jn. 4:36] Sharing your faith and a desire to see people saved

5. Spirit-prompted good works [Col. 1:10]

6. Unity with other believers [Ja. 3:17-18]