

In Luke 20:9-19, Jesus tells the parable of the tenants, revealing the heart of God as the owner and planter of the vineyard. God lovingly established Israel, nurturing and providing for them, expecting a harvest of righteousness and devotion. Yet, throughout history, the leaders entrusted with spiritual care failed to yield the fruit God desired. Instead of responding to God's messengers—the prophets—with repentance and faith, they rejected and mistreated them. Ultimately, God sent His beloved Son, Jesus, hoping for a different response, but He too was rejected and killed.

This parable is not just a story about Israel's past, but a warning and invitation for all who hear. God expects fruit from His people—lives marked by holiness, love, and faithfulness. The religious leaders, meant to shepherd the people, became possessive and self-serving, forgetting their role as stewards rather than owners. The fruit God seeks is not mere religious activity, but transformed hearts and lives that reflect His character.

Jesus, the Son and the cornerstone, is the foundation upon which God's kingdom is built. The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone, and everyone must decide how they will respond to Him. To fall on Jesus in humility is to be broken and remade; to reject Him is to face judgment. This choice is not just for Israel, but for the church today. Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 10 that the stories of Israel are written as examples and warnings for us. We are called to examine our own lives, to avoid idolatry, immorality, and grumbling, and to trust in God's faithfulness to provide a way out of temptation.

God's desire is for a people who bear good fruit, who respond to His love with obedience and surrender. The invitation is to fall on Christ, to let Him be the cornerstone of our lives, and to live as fruitful members of His kingdom.

### Key Takeaways

1. God's loving investment in His people comes with the expectation of fruitfulness. He has provided every resource and opportunity for growth, yet He looks for hearts that are truly devoted and lives that reflect His holiness. Fruitfulness is not optional; it is the natural result of abiding in God's care and responding to His grace. [47:29]
2. Spiritual leadership is a sacred trust, not a possession. The religious leaders in the parable failed because they saw themselves as owners rather than stewards, seeking their own gain instead of God's glory. True leaders shepherd God's people with humility, remembering that all authority and responsibility are given by God and must be exercised for His purposes. [49:35]
3. Rejection of God's messengers is a recurring tragedy in the story of God's people. The prophets were sent again and again out of God's compassion, but were met with resistance and violence. This reveals the danger of hardening our hearts to God's correction and the importance of humility and repentance when confronted with truth. [54:51]
4. Jesus is both the Son sent in love and the cornerstone upon which everything stands or falls. To fall on Him is to be broken in repentance and remade in grace; to reject Him is to be crushed by the weight of judgment. The parable calls for a personal response to Jesus, not just intellectual agreement but wholehearted surrender. [59:42]

5. The warnings and examples from Israel's history are meant for the church today. We are called to learn from their failures, to avoid idolatry, immorality, and complacency, and to trust in God's faithfulness in temptation. God always provides a way out, and our response should be one of vigilance, gratitude, and dependence on Him. [69:31]

#### Bible Reading

Luke 20:9-19 (ESV) — 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. 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. And he sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out. Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.' 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.' And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others." When they heard this, they said, "Surely not!" 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'?

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

The scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him at that very hour, for they perceived that he had told this parable against them, but they feared the people.

Isaiah 5:1-4 (ESV) — Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard:

My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.

He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines;

he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it;

and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.

And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah,

judge between me and my vineyard.

What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it?

When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?

1 Corinthians 10:1-13 (ESV) — (Condensed for space; read in group as needed)

Paul reminds the church that Israel's history is a warning for us: to avoid idolatry, immorality, and grumbling, and to trust God's faithfulness to provide a way out of temptation.

#### Observation Questions

In the parable, who does the owner of the vineyard represent, and who are the tenants? What does the vineyard itself symbolize? ([45:37])

What was the response of the tenants each time the owner sent a servant, and finally his son? ([43:36])

According to Isaiah 5:1-4, what did God do for his vineyard, and what kind of fruit did He expect? ([47:29])

How did the religious leaders react when they realized Jesus was speaking about them in this parable? ([44:52])

#### Interpretation Questions

Why do you think Jesus chose to use the image of a vineyard and tenants to describe God's relationship with His people? What does this say about God's care and expectations? ([45:37])

The tenants rejected and mistreated the servants and the son. What does this reveal about the human heart and our response to God's correction or invitation? ([54:51])

Jesus says, "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." What does it mean for Jesus to be the cornerstone, and why is this significant for both the original audience and for us today? ([59:42])

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10 that Israel's story is a warning for us. What specific dangers does he mention, and why are they still relevant for the church today? ([01:09:31])

#### Application Questions

The sermon said, "God's loving investment in His people comes with the expectation of fruitfulness." What kind of fruit do you think God is looking for in your life right now? Is there an area where you sense God is asking for more? ([47:29])

The religious leaders saw themselves as owners, not stewards. In what ways can we fall into the trap of acting like owners of our time, resources, or ministries, instead of stewards? How can we shift our mindset this week? ([49:35])

The parable warns against rejecting God's messengers and hardening our hearts. Can you think of a time when you resisted correction or ignored a warning from God or a fellow believer? What would it look like to respond with humility and repentance instead? ([54:51])

Jesus invites us to "fall on Him" and be broken and remade, rather than be crushed by judgment. Is there an area of your life where you need to surrender to Jesus as the cornerstone? What is holding you back from wholehearted surrender? ([59:42])

Paul warns against idolatry, immorality, and grumbling. Which of these is most tempting for you right now? What practical step can you take this week to trust God's faithfulness and choose a different response? ([01:09:31])

The sermon said, "Fruitfulness is not optional; it is the natural result of abiding in God's care and responding to His grace." What is one way you can intentionally abide in God's care this week—through prayer, Scripture, or another practice?

Think about someone in your life who may be resistant to God or struggling with faith. How can you be a faithful messenger of God's love and truth to them, even if it's difficult?