

Have you ever understood something but you still didn't quite get it? That was me during an entire class in seminary. I took a class called Theology of Art. And outside of Hebrew is the most I've ever struggled with a class. It was hard but it helps me understand art in a way that I never had before. Especially Modern Art. We learned about what artists were doing when they seemingly just threw random paint splatters on a canvas. Or how a lot of postmodern art is deconstructing things. And how even though it looks like they just threw a bunch of sand on the ground that there's a purpose behind this piece. And there's a message that they're trying to convey and something they want you to reflect on.

And so the class helped me understand this kind of word in a way that I never had before. So now I can look at these weird pieces and understand. The problem is I still don't get it. I can know and see the point. Are you I can understand what's happening. But it's still just doesn't always work for me.

This morning we're going to see that there is a terrible Jesus taught that the crowd understood in the same way that I understand but they still didn't get what Jesus was doing. They understood it intellectually but it didn't move them to the action Jesus was hoping for.

And unfortunately this can be true for many of us as we study God's word. We can understand what it says. We might even be able to go into the backgrounds or to look at the Greek or the Hebrew words and yet we don't get what it says. This morning as we study Luke 20:9-19 I want us to understand and get what Jesus is doing. Because this is one of the most important parables that he teaches.

Fall before Jesus in worship before Jesus falls on you in judgment.

My mother-in-law told me she gets annoyed when pastors always preach three-point sermons.

So I needed to mix it up one week so this isn't true of me.

No, the real thing is that we're just looking at this Parable that Jesus is teaching.

And this Parable, like most Parables, has one primary idea.

And so I want to sit in this one point so that we can think through and marinate in why Jesus wants us to fall before him and worship in adoration before He falls on us in judgment.

In the context of this Parable is significant.

I want us to remember that Jesus is now in Jerusalem.

Everything in the Gospel of Luke has been building to this point.

He has arrived and He is here.

And His conflict with the religious Elite will culminate in His execution and crucifixion.

Right after the triumphal entry, we had the less triumphal entry where the religious leaders are beginning to butt heads and to doubt Jesus's Authority.

And so this Parable seems to be delivered towards them.

Jesus is directly responding to his doubters and his opposition.

And this is one of his very last parables.

He will teach one short parable about the fig tree.

But what is unique about this Parable is not just that it is one of the last Parables he speaks to the crowd.

This is the first parable teaches in Jerusalem.

And He appears to be teaching this Parable in the temple

if it takes place at the same time as is authority being challenged.

And most uniquely this is a parable everyone in the crowd seems to understand.

It is one of the few times that everyone gets what Jesus is saying.

Usually Jesus teaches a parable and its meaning is hidden.

Even the disciples His closest followers have to ask and have Jesus interpret it for them.

And they ask a few times Jesus why do you teach this way why do you keep it hidden?

There are a lot of different reasons for that.

One of which is that it wasn't time yet for them to understand that He was the Messiah.

And if they fully understood what He was saying they would reject Him and kill Him and it wasn't time yet.

But it's time now.

And everyone gets this story immediately.

Let's take a look at why.

Verse 9, **"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."**

This is a story of a vineyard.

A man plants and creates his own vineyard.

That man then rents it out to tenants and leaves for a long time.

Now to us listening it just sounds like a story of somebody owns a vineyard.

But already everyone listening would have had their ears pricked.

Some of them might have been excited because this is the first time they think they're going to understand one of Jesus' parables.

Because a vineyard is one of the main metaphors for Israel.

You see this because the man here isn't described as owning a Vineyard.

He isn't described as having a Vineyard.

He isn't described as inheriting the vineyard.

He plants the vineyard himself.

"A man planted the vineyard himself."

He does all of the work to create and to Fashion it with his own hands.

This is exactly how Israel is described

Throughout the scriptures.

Repeatedly God refers to Israel as a Vineyard that He has taken care to plant.

Isaiah chapter 5 is the primary passage where you hear this metaphor expounded upon.

God says **"let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his Vineyard: my beloved head of 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 forward to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes."**

And later in verse 4, he says **"what more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it?"**

Israel is the vineyard and God is taking great tender care. And Israel was proud to be God's Vineyard.

We know this because the historian Josephus describes that in the temple above the doors and the columns that actually go into the temple they were covered with golden vines.

And Jewish oral tradition tells us to those who gave expensive gifts could have a golden berry or a golden leaf placed among the vines.

They may even have their family's name written upon it.

And so when Jews would go into the temple they would see physically a reminder that they are God's chosen Vineyard.

But there is a problem.

Verse 10, **"When this time came he sent a servant to the tenants, so that they would give some of the fruit of the vineyard."**

Just like in Isaiah 5 God comes to his vineyard to get some of the fruit.

The man sends his servant to ask the tenants who have been caring for the vineyard to give some of its fruit.

To repay him some of what he owes and what is his.

"but the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed."

They do not just say no.

They do not just decline his request.
They do not just refuse to give what they should.
They beat the servant who dare ask.
They physically harm the messenger in the representative of the owner of the vineyard.

Verse 11, **"And he sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed."**

Their behavior escalates.
The master gives them a second chance.
But their sinfulness have made them bold.
Now they do not just refuse to give anything.
They do not just beat him.
They beat him and they treat him shamefully.
It doesn't tell a specifically what they did but you could imagine.

They may have stripped him I made him return naked.
They could have cut his beard and shaved his head and shame.
They could have thrown things on him that would have made him unclean.

But the point is that their behavior is worsening.
Again the master shows more grace and gives them another chance.
Verse 12, **"And he also sent a third. This one also they wounded and cast out."**

They do the same thing but now they are not just beating now they are wounding.
Now they are causing serious injury.
They're not content with beating them up now they need to really hurt these messengers.

And so if the vineyard is Israel.
And the tenants are the people and the leaders of the nation.
The servants that the master of the vineyard sends are the prophets.

They are the messengers who come to his people.
They are sent by God to say and ask Israel why aren't you acting as you should?
Israel why are you not giving God the worship that He is owed?
Israel why is it that you are filled with idolatry and sin?
Israel why are you oppressing the widow and the Immigrant and the orphan?
Israel why are you not obeying my commands?
Israel why are you not giving God the fruit that He owes?

The prophets were sent and came to call Israel to worship God.
They came not just to stand and offer condemnation.
They came not just to tell Israel about how terrible and sinful they were.
The prophets came to call Israel back to repentance.
The prophets came to offer Israel redemption and salvation
if they would turn from their sins.
That they would receive Grace if instead of worshiping idols and worshiping money they would worship the god of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob again.

And Israel is proud of their Prophets.
But Israel mostly treated their prophets shamefully while they were alive.
Even the great prophet Moses was mostly ignored by the people.
His face shined because he talked face to face with God and the people told him to cover it up there was too much.
The people ignored and harassed Elijah.
The king wanted to kill him.
And Elijah was so mistreated that he begged God to quit.
Jeremiah had his prophecies in his books burned and he was stoned to death.
Isaiah spent his whole life preaching many of his prophecies about Jesus and yet no one ever listened to him.
Yet, God did not destroy Israel.
He sent them chance after chance after chance.

He sent another prophet.
And then another.

Because our God is a gracious God.
We should fall before Him and worship because of His love and His grace that He shows us.
Because our God is still that gracious with us today.
It is not stand on a mountain with lightning bolts ready to throw them at you the moment that you sin.
Or the moment that you blaspheme against Him.
Or the moment that you ignore Him.

Instead of God just puts another person in your path calling you and inviting you to repentance.
Instead the Holy Spirit tugs and convicts your heart and invite you again to return to worship of God.
This is the God we worship.

The God who would and who does have every right to destroy our souls.
But He doesn't.
Because that is not who He is.
That's what the gods of in our stories are like.
That's the kind of God that we would all be if we were in charge.
But our God is a gracious God.
And our God is like the one in this story who continues to give people chances even when they do not deserve it.
Our God shows people grace even as we might beg Him to stop showing that person grace.
God continues to show us grace even though others would tell God that He is a fool to keep hoping that we might listen and change.
But our God does.
And He is worthy of our worship.

We should fall before Him and worship not just because He is worthy of it.

Not just because He is deserving of it.
Not just because it is the right thing to do.
But we should do so in response to all of the grace that he has shown us.

This is what the gospel is.
We obey and we follow God.
We submit to His commands to love Him with all our heart our soul and our mind and to love our neighbors as ourselves not because we are trying to earn anything.
Not because we are trying to bear fruit.
Not because we are trying to earn eternal rewards.
But we do so as a response to the grace that He has shown us.
Because He has been so gracious and so kind and so loving to us.
We freely receive it and then we respond with kindness and love and devotion to him.

The beauty of the Gospel is not just the Jesus gives us chance after chance after chance.
It is not just that God sends messenger after messenger after messenger.
The beauty is what God does and how God treats those who continue to ignore Him.

Verse 13, **"then the owner of the vineyard said what shall I do?"**

Now what would any of you do if this was your vineyard?
They are stealing your property and beating your people.
What would you do?
I would be gearing up for a fight.
I would be calling the authorities.
I would be calling an army.
I would be ready to bring justice and judgment on these people who continue to do what is wrong.

But what is the owner of the vineyard do?

"I will send my beloved Son; perhaps they will respect him."

God's response is to send Jesus.

God's response is not to send a flood or a fire of judgment but to send His beloved Son.

God Himself comes down not in judgment but in Grace.

Not to be served but to serve us.

To give us another chance to fall down and worship him.

And this is exactly what God has done in Jesus.

Jesus is the son of God.

Jesus is the second person in the Trinity.

Jesus is God Himself and He has come down to visit the vineyard.

He has come down to Israel to see if they will give God worship.

Because Israel has not listened to the prophets.

Israel is not listen to their kings.

Israel has not listened to their priests.

Israel is not listened to God's word.

Maybe they will listen to God's Son.

Maybe if He comes and the heavens split and God's voice announces

"this is my beloved Son with him I am well pleased."

Maybe if He works miracle after miracle to show and to prove that He is not a charlatan, He has not an Illusionist, He is God.

Maybe if He brings people back from the dead they will see that He has power over life and death.

Maybe if He stops the wind and the waves they will see He has power over nature.

Maybe if He heals all the sick that you bring to Him every single disease and sends them away as new you will see that He has power over your very bodies.

Maybe if He shows and speaks and prophesies and knows your own thoughts you will see that He is God.

And maybe if He does all of this not to show you how much better He is than you or how awesome He is,

Maybe if He does all of this out of grace and love they will listen.
Maybe if He says no let the snotty nose children and the crying baby come to me it is for them that the kingdom of God belongs to.
Maybe if He does so and refuses riches and refuses honor and wanders around like a homeless man.
Maybe if He comes proclaiming that the kingdom is for those who are far off.
Maybe if He comes and He says that salvation is not just for the righteous it is not just for the Pharisee it is not just for the Scribe it is for the prostitute and the tax collector and the Gentile.
Maybe if He comes and says the kingdom of God is for all who are poor in spirit and broken it is for you that I have come to show you Mercy.

Maybe if Jesus does that they would listen.
And Jesus has done all of that.
And Jesus has done much more than that.
I love the end of John if we knew all the things that Jesus did and said it would fill up all of the books and all over the world.

But the crowd is going to respond much like how the tenants responded the story.

Verse 14, **"but when the tenant saw him they said to themselves this is the air. Let us kill him so that the inheritance may be ours. And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him."**

They received the Beloved Son not with love not with repentance but with hate and murder.
And this is Jesus again saying very clearly how the crowd is going to respond to Him.
They will not stop with the beatings in the woundings and the opposition they will murder Him.
Jesus is prophesying about His death on the cross.

And this shows us not just the wickedness of the tenants or the wickedness of the crowd but they're foolishness.

These guys seem to think that if they kill the vineyard owner's son that then they'll get the vineyard.

As if you could show up to the courthouse and claim property because you killed someone's whole family so needs to go to somebody to go to you.

It shows how blind they are and how much they've missed it.

The rest of the verse, **"what then will the owner of the vineyard do to them?"**

The owner has shown unbelievable patience and grace.

But now what will he do?

They have killed his beloved son.

Verse 16, "He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others."

He has shown grace after grace after grace.

But now it will be time for judgment.

Now they will have to face justice.

They will be destroyed and pay for their crimes.

They will not inherit the vineyard.

In fact, the vineyard is going to be given away to someone else.

They have forfeited their right to it.

"When they heard this, they said, "Surely not!"

The crowd is so offended by this turn of events that they can't help but cry out.

They actually interrupt Jesus as He is teaching.

His parables do not typically get interrupted.

But this one does.

And it does because they cannot believe Jesus would say this.

Jesus is implying that Israel will lose their special status.

That they will no longer be the vineyard of the Lord.
That another nation, or another people will be chosen by God instead.
This is so radical.
It is so offensive, that they cannot help but boo and tell Jesus He is wrong.

Now the full implications of this are complicated.
But the main idea is that Israel will no longer be the sole place the kingdom of God manifests.
This is Jesus foreshadowing that the Kingdom of God will go to the gentiles.
That those like us who are not a part of Israel, can be God's people.
The doors of the kingdom and the vineyard will swing open wide for those who fall in worship of Christ.

Verse 17, "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"?

I love that Jesus looks right at them.
He confronts their objections.
And Jesus quotes Scripture.
He quotes Psalms 118:22.
We read from part of this Psalm for our call to worship.
Most of the people understood this Psalm was about the Messiah.
The crowds quote this Psalm in the triumphal entry.
When they cry out **"Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."**

Here Jesus is claiming to be the stone rejected by the people.
He tells the story of a stone no one wants.
The builders of a building are looking for materials.
And they throw one stone away because they cannot imagine a use for it.
They reject it as worthless and unhelpful.

But at the end, they need it to be the capstone.

The capstone would be like the very last stone they put it place.
Picture the middle and last stone placed in an arch.
They look around for the perfect stone that will fit,
And they finally find it in the stone that they rejected earlier.

This is foreshadowing the resurrection.
Jesus was rejected and thrown into a tomb because they did not want Him
But He will return.
And He is exactly what the world needs because only Christ can bring
salvation.
People can reject Him, but they will not stop Him.
They can oppose Him, but they will not quiet Him.
They can even kill Him, but they will not keep Him in the grave.

**Verse 18, "Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces,
and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him."**

This is the heart of the parable.
It is our only point this morning.
We have to fall upon Jesus in worship.
Because those who do not, will face justice.

This is Hebrew poetry so the point repeats.
Those who stumble over Christ will fall.
Those who Christ falls on will be crushed.
The point is the same in both.
Those who do not submit to Christ will be judged.

They will face judgment and justice.
And the wages of sin are death.
We all deserve punishment.
Fairness is all of us being righteously punished forever.

But the amazing thing is that even God's judgment is gracious.
He does not bring His judgment right away.

Still He wants.

The return of Jesus is delayed to give people more chances to repent.
But we should not mistake the grace of God for permission to sin.
We should not think that God will let the wicked go unpunished.
We must fall before Jesus in worship, or Jesus will fall on us in judgment.

Verse 19, **"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."**

Right away they recognize what Jesus is saying.
They realize that they should worship Jesus or be crushed.
And they want to kill Him right now.
The only thing holding them back is that the people don't support them.

They understand the parable, but they don't get it.
They will not repent.
Instead, they move forward fulfilling it.

What amazes me is that Jesus lets them kill Him.
He knows what is in their hearts.
He knows what they are thinking.
He knows what they are going to do.

But He lets them.
And as He lays dying He will forgive them.
Because He actually dies for their sins.
The wicked tenants in the parable believe murdering the son will give them an inheritance.
The crazy thing is, they are right.
Killing Jesus does bring about their inheritance.

Salvation is often described in terms of inheriting.
Through Christ we inherit salvation.

Through Christ we inherit eternal life.

Through Christ we get the inheritance of the saints.

Through Christ we gain an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.

And it is an inheritance because we do nothing to earn it.

It comes to us through the death of Christ.

All we must do to gain it is have faith in Him.

To put our faith and trust in the nailed God.

CONCLUSION:

Fall before Jesus in worship before Jesus falls on you in judgment.