

# Parable of Vinedressers

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Date: 19 May 2024

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[ 0 : 00 ] Ready to jump into Mark here? Let's do it. So open up your Bibles. We're in the Gospel of Mark. And just a real quick review. We'll review kind of where we're up to at this point, as well as kind of give an overview of what we're going to be looking at this morning.

You know, one of the things they say about real estate, right? There's the three most important things about real estate. Can anybody tell me?

Location, location, and location, right? Many of us have heard that. When it comes to real estate, there's one thing that's so important. It's the most important three things, right? Well, when we study our Bible, the three most important things are context, context, and context.

We want to understand as we're reading the Bible, what's been going on before this passage? Who are the players involved? What's going on after? And so as we study through the book of Mark here, we're trying to, even though we're looking at maybe one passage this Sunday, we want to go back and make sure that we remember where we're at in this story, in the account.

And so here, Jesus has entered in Jerusalem. I think this is the Wednesday of Jesus' final week of ministry, before he's finally crucified and gives up his life as a sacrifice.

[ 1 : 36 ] But he entered into Jerusalem on a Sunday. And what's been going on since then? He came in, we call it the triumphal entry. It was actually very, somewhat subdued, even though there's a lot of excitement.

But he came in in a humble manner on a donkey. And then the next day, he comes in and he drives out all the profiteers, all the market-making and profiteering going on in the temple, or in the courtyard of the temple.

He's pretty upset about it. And then last week, we looked at an exchange in which Jesus had with the leaders, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders.

It includes the Pharisees and even the Sadducees. But these are the Jewish leaders. And they confront him and they ask him, who gave you the authority to do what you're doing here in Jerusalem?

And does anybody remember what Jesus finally said? I'm not telling you by what authority. He asked them a question which they cannot answer.

[ 2 : 43 ] And he says, neither will I answer you the question that you ask me. Where does this authority come from? Jesus, to this point, has managed the conflict with the Jewish leaders to avoid the intensity of the conflict up to this point.

But now things are ratcheting up. But he still doesn't want to give them enough ammo to accuse him at this point. So they ask him a question.

By what authority? If he says, God the Father sent me as God the Son, and that's my authority, then they've got the ammo they need to say blasphemy, which we'll see later actually does happen. But right now, Jesus is not quite ready for that to happen. And so he doesn't answer their question. But what we'll see today is that, and this happens right after their question, Jesus tells a parable, a story.

And in this story, he answers their question very directly. In fact, in really an accusatory manner, in even a threatening manner.

[ 4 : 02 ] But he does it in the form of a story, which really doesn't give them the ammunition that they need to do anything with. As we go through this, and we'll read through verse by verse here in a second, I'd like us to consider a few questions as Jesus tells this parable.

So what is this analogy, this parable? Parables are meant to represent some kind of truth. What does this parable represent? What's the analogy? Who are the characters in the story, and who do they represent?

Who do they symbolize? Other parts, the setting, we'll look at that. And then also, one question, and this happens in a lot of parables. Sometimes, the details of the parable are important. They symbolize something. And sometimes, there are parts of the story that are just, they're not meant to symbolize anything. They just make up the narrative. And so we'll ask some of those questions today.

So back to Mark chapter 12. We're going to read through the first 12 verses. Mark chapter 12 and verse 1. Then he began to speak to them in parables. A man planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a place for the wine vat, and built a tower.

[ 5 : 22 ] And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now at vintage time, he sent a servant to the vinedressers that he might receive some of the fruit of the vineyard from the vinedressers.

And they took him, and they beat him, and they sent him away empty-handed. And again, he sent them another servant. And at him they threw stones, wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully treated.

And again, he sent another, and him they killed, and many others, beating some and killing some. Therefore, still having one son, his beloved, he also sent him to them last, saying, they will respect my son.

But those vinedressers said among themselves, this is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours. So they took him, and they killed him, and they cast him out of the vineyard. Therefore, what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vinedressers, and give the vineyard to others. Have you not even read this scripture?

[ 6 : 32 ] The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. And they sought to lay hands on him, but they feared the multitude, for they knew he had spoken the parable against them.

So they left him and went away. They knew that this parable was about them. You know, most of Jesus' parables were meant to kind of hide truth, and this was meant to be somewhat, you know, secretive or not totally explicit, but it was certainly meant to communicate something clearly, at least to the leaders.

So going back, so the context here, they just asked Jesus, where does your authority come from? He asked, well, where did John get his authority? Was it from God or was it from man? And they couldn't answer, and so he said, I'm not going to tell you either.

And so he continues to tell a parable, a story. And we've talked about parables in the past, and what was the purpose of Jesus teaching in parables? Why did he teach in parables generally, rather than just giving very explicit instructions about what he was trying to communicate?

Does anybody remember? It's because he actually wanted to hide the message to keep it somewhat secretive so that only those who were truly interested in the truth of the message would understand.

[ 8 : 05 ] They would seek to know. And so many times we see his own disciples come to him, and they said, hey, we heard your story. For example, the story of the seeds thrown, right? The sower, we call this the parable of the sower.

And they come back to him, and they say, hey, we heard the story, but we don't understand it. Could you explain it to us? And Jesus did explain it to them.

In this particular parable, here's the setting. We have a vineyard owned by the vineyard owner. There is, it says the vineyard owner prepares basically the land with three different things.

He puts a hedge or a fence around it to protect it from probably, I don't know, animals or maybe people that might come into the vineyard, steal the fruit of it.

A wine vat and also a tower, a tower. We have a cast of characters. We have the owner himself.

[ 9 : 11 ] We have these people called the vine dressers. That's what it says in my New King James translation. I think others call it tenants. And a tenant was just someone who would lease land.

They would farm the land for the owner, and there would be some kind of deal where the ones doing the farming would maybe keep half, and the other half they would give to the owner based on his ownership of that land.

We have some messengers sent. We'll ask the question, well, who are those messengers?

Servants from the owner. And then we have the owner's son, who is finally sent last, who they kill.

And then there is one more group of people that is just barely mentioned, at least here in Mark. And this is the new tenants, the ones who will be given the land to custody in place of the wicked tenants.

So the first thing, and we're going to go through and look at each of these and who they represent. The first thing I'd like to bring up, if you open up your Bibles or turn back in the Old Testament, we're going to look at Isaiah chapter 5.

[10:25] And the reason we're going to look at that is because this is a passage that certainly all of these leaders, these are the, remember, these are the Bible scholars of the day who studied the Old Testament scriptures.

And I wanted to make it clear that these scholars, these leaders, would have certainly known exactly what Jesus was talking about when he told this story.

As soon as they heard just the beginning of this story, I'm sure light bulbs were going off, bells were ringing. Wait a second, I've heard this story before.

There's this passage in Isaiah, Isaiah chapter 5, and we'll read the first seven verses of this passage.

It's about Israel. This is Isaiah prophesying to Israel, but talking about the Father and Israel as his people. We'll read it here, Isaiah 5, 1.

[11:35] Now let me sing to my well-beloved. By the way, keep that name. This is talking about, this is Isaiah singing a song to the Father.

He's calling him the well-beloved. We'll keep that in mind for later. A song of my beloved regarding his vineyard. My well-beloved has a vineyard on a very fruitful hill.

That's interesting, on a hill. You know, Jerusalem is on a hill. That city of Jerusalem, and specifically the temple itself, on what we call today the Temple Mount.

He dug it up and cleared out its stones and planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, and he also made a winepress in it.

So he expected it to bring forth good grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes or sour grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Israel and men of Judah, judge, please, between me and my vineyard.

[12:49] So that was the story, right? He just tells a very simple story about someone who had a vineyard. And he expects for it to produce fruit, but it doesn't.

And so he's asking to Israel, Isaiah, the prophet, speaking on behalf of God to Israel, judge, you judge. I'm the judge. God is the judge, right? But I'm asking you to be the judge in this instance. Now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, please, between me and my vineyard. What more could have been done to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes?

And now, please, let me tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned, and I will break down its walls, and it shall be trampled down, and I will lay it waste.

It shall not be pruned or dug, but there shall come up briars and thorns. I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain on it. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel.

[13:56] Makes it very explicit, right? What is the vineyard? This is the people of Israel. And the men of Judah are his pleasant plant. He looked for justice, but behold, oppression.

For righteousness, but behold, a cry for help. You see, this was, I think, 700 years earlier. Isaiah the prophet had spoken to Israel at that time.

And this was the time of the original kingdom that was built, started with Saul, King Saul, and then eventually transferred to David and his son Solomon, and then on through the line.

And things started to go poorly after that. But Isaiah was prophesying destruction coming because Israel was not producing the fruit that God was looking for.

And eventually this prophecy comes to pass in which Israel is, or Jerusalem anyway, is destroyed along with the temple. Just like is described here.

[15:00] That vineyard is laid waste. And here he gives the justification for why that happened.

And these men who Jesus is talking to are very familiar with this passage and very familiar with this story.

The story rings a bell. It's similar to what Isaiah had said. So Jesus continues on with his story in verse two, Mark chapter 12, verse two.

Now at vintage time, he sent a servant to the vinedressers that he might receive some of the fruit of the vineyard from the vinedressers. Hey, you have this vineyard?

You have it for a reason, right? You plant your vine and you do all these things. You don't just plant. You actually put some protection around it. Even put up a watchtower.

And by the way, this is something that was common at that time. You would put up a tower in your vineyard and it's really a way to look out for thieves, people who might come and steal your crop.

[15:57] Especially during harvest time when the fruit was ready to be harvested. So what does the fruit itself symbolize?

And we go back to that passage in Isaiah and the last verse that we read. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel and the men of Judah are his pleasant plant.

And he looked for what? This is the fruit that he was looking for. He looked for justice. That's the fruit he's looking for. He wants to see justice in the land.

But behold, he found instead wild grapes or oppression. He was also looking for righteousness. But behold, instead just a cry for help.

Really from the oppressed, right? Those who were looking for help who were not receiving it because of the unrighteousness in the land. And the fruit that God was looking for both then and at this time is justice and righteousness in the land.

[17:00] You know, these are common themes that we see not just here in Isaiah 5 but all over the Old Testament. In fact, you know, God had set up this whole system of laws and regulations that it was important for the people of Israel to do.

But he was constantly frustrated because even though they kept faithful to many of the ritualistic parts of their faith, the righteousness and justice was not there.

Isaiah 11, or Isaiah chapter 1, verse 11 says this, To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me? He said, you guys are doing the sacrifices.

I told you to do them. But what is the purpose? Says the Lord, I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and of the fat of fed cattle.

I'm done with it. I've had enough. I don't really care about it anymore. This is what he told them to do. I do not delight in the blood of bulls or of the lambs or goats when you come to appear before me.

[18:10] Who has required this from your hand to trample my courts? Bring no more futile sacrifices. Incense, it's become an abomination to me. The new moons, the Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies.

I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts, my soul hates. They are a trouble to me.

I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you. Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood.

Wash yourselves. Make yourselves clean. Put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes. Cease to do evil. Learn to do good. Seek justice.

Rebuke the oppressor. Defend the fatherless. And plead for the widow. You see, the faith of ancient Israel had been turned into no longer righteousness and truth and justice, but had been turned into just rituals that were completely dead without any fruits of righteousness and justice towards God.

[19:27] Proverbs 21.3 says this, To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice. You know, they put a lot of emphasis into these rituals.

Man, we see the same thing today, don't we? A lot of churches. Lots of rituals. Lots of tradition. We'll do these things. But the love of the Lord, a lot of times, is completely missing.

Micah 6.6 says something similar. And I like how this one ends. Micah 6.6 says this, With what shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the high God?

Shall I come before him with burnt offerings? With calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body, for the sin of my soul?

You know, he has shown you, oh man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? But to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.

[20:42] See, even back then, during that time, when the law, it was a required thing to do these things, to do the sacrifices, to do the kosher meals, to make sure that you follow all these rules and regulations.

But what was of utmost importance was doing what is right, doing what is good, and walking humbly with God. And Jesus was seeing the same thing that happened way back hundreds of

years ago, the exact same thing now.

In fact, we'll look at this passage in Matthew chapter 23, which takes place after what we're looking at today. But Jesus in Matthew 23, that's the woes passage or chapter in the Gospel of Matthew. And he says this, Matthew 23, 23, Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin.

You're keeping the law just like I asked you to. You're paying your tithes even on the little planter boxes in your windowsills. You're being very careful about that.

[ 22 : 01 ] But you have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith. These you ought have done without leaving the others undone.

It says it's not like these laws and regulations that I gave you are unimportant, but there are weightier matters of the law and you should know that. And so the pattern continues.

We're going to be fastidious about keeping these regulations, these rituals. Because, hey, they're easy to do. But I'm going to go sleep with my neighbor's wife and I'm going to go steal from my neighbor's vineyard and do live however it is that I want.

Devouring widows' houses, Jesus accuses the Pharisees of in Matthew chapter 23. So the same thing happens over and over and over again in Israel, even up to this point.

Back to Mark chapter 12, we'll look at verse 3. And they took him and they beat him. This is part of the story. They took him and they beat him and they sent him away empty-handed. And again, they sent another servant and they threw stones at him.

[ 23 : 17 ] They wounded him in the head and they sent him away shamefully treated. And they sent more and they killed them and they beat them. Killed more of them. Who are these servants representing?

I think it's obvious to most of us. These are the prophets that God had sent over the years, over and over, many, many years. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea.

Many prophets that Jesus had sent to give a message to his people. Turn back to God. And over those many years, instead of embracing those messengers, instead of saying, you're right, we need to honor God, we need to bear the kind of fruit that God is expecting from us.

Instead, they abused the messengers. Hebrews chapter 11, we call that chapter the hall of faith. It talks about people of faith in the Old Testament.

And one of the groups of people of faith is the prophets. And it describes, I think, well, how they were treated. Hebrews 11, chapter 32, and what more shall I say for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah and also of David and Samuel and the prophets who through faith they subdued kingdoms, they worked righteousness, they obtained promises, they stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword.

[ 24 : 45 ] Out of weakness they were made strong, they became valiant in battle, turned to flight the enemies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection.

Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two. It's actually Jewish tradition says that Isaiah the prophet was sawn in two or sawn in two by one of the kings of Israel.

They were tempted, they were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy.

They wandered in deserts and mountains and dens and caves of the earth. Anyone remember the story of Elijah? He went and he fled from Ahab and Jezebel to live for a time in the caves.

God fed him through ravens, I believe it was. Where did all this persecution of these prophets come from? Was it from the enemies of Israel? Almost never, right?

[ 26 : 01 ] Almost never. It was almost always from the Jewish people themselves. Many times the kings were the leaders of Israel. verse 6, therefore, still having one son, his beloved, he also sent him to them last, saying, they'll certainly respect my son.

And we know who that is, that son. God's only begotten son. Notice that this vineyard owner, he has one son. Just like God the Father has one son.

As it's described in John, the only begotten son of the Father. This is talking about Jesus himself. Sent to them, to warn them, saying, I'm looking for fruit.

And that's what Jesus' ministry on the earth was all about. Repent, turn towards God. I want you to bear fruit, Israel. Notice here what this passage, what Jesus in this story calls the son.

He calls him my beloved. Isn't that interesting? Another illusion, back to Isaiah, chapter 5, in which, in that case, it's the Father that's called the beloved.

[ 27 : 16 ] Another evidence that the Father and the Son are what? Are one. Verse 7, But those vine dressers said among themselves, this is the heir.

Come, let us kill him. And the inheritance will be ours. This is one of the, as I was studying through this, I was asking the question, is this something that relates to something that these Jewish leaders were actually doing?

They really think, hey, we know this is the heir and if we kill him, then we'll just inherit Israel and Jerusalem for ourselves. I think that's probably not the case.

I don't think that these leaders thought that, in fact, they were at least ostensibly, right, looking for the Messiah to come and restore the kingdom of Israel to them.

But they certainly did want the power and the prestige for themselves. Verse 8, So they took him and they killed him and they cast him out of the vineyard.

[ 28 : 17 ] Remember, Jesus had been telling his disciples, this is exactly what was going to happen. He told them three times to his disciples, we're going to go to Jerusalem, the leaders, they're going to persecute me and you and they're going to kill me.

And then I'll rise from the dead. Interestingly enough here, what do these wicked tenants, what do they do with the son when they kill him?

They cast him out of the vineyard. And really, the vineyard, I think, is meant to represent Israel, but even more specifically, right, the city of Jerusalem.

This is the center of the Jewish nation. When Jesus was killed, he was taken outside of the city to a little mount called Golgotha, which is where he was killed, taken out of the city.

They took him and they killed him and they cast him out of the vineyard. Therefore, what will the owner of the vineyard do? Now what? When we read in Isaiah, what did the owner of the vineyard do?

[ 29 : 22 ] He actually destroyed the vineyard. We actually know from history and from reading on, we have the benefit of being able to look back at the history of Isaiah, but Isaiah prophesied what was going to happen to Israel and we know that the Babylonians came in and they destroyed Jerusalem.

They destroyed the temple just like Isaiah had said would happen because of the lack of fruit from Israel. In that case, the city was destroyed.

The vineyard itself was destroyed. But here Jesus says, he will come and he will destroy the vine dressers and give the vineyard to others.

These are the leaders of Israel he's talking about. I am going to destroy the current administration, the current custodians of the vineyard and I'm going to give them, give this vineyard to somebody else.

So, who's this, who's this other group that he's talking about? You know, many say that this must be a reference to the Gentiles, right? Because we know the story that God eventually cuts off Israel and he, the Bible says he grafts in the Gentiles as his new chosen people.

[ 30 : 52 ] I think there's at least some truth to that because that did happen. But I want to look at one verse and this is the similar passage, this is the same account in the book of Matthew and there's one little extra detail that I think will help us to look at this more clearly.

Matthew 21, verse 43 says this, Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.

The kingdom of God will be taken from you, the leaders, the current leaders, the current administration over the nation of Israel and will be given to another nation, another group of people who actually bear the fruits that God is looking for.

And whenever you see that word kingdom, it should always in your mind, who are the inheritors of the kingdom that had been prophesied for millennia? Who are the ones to inherit the kingdom? Was it the Gentiles? No. The kingdom was to be inherited by Israel, by the sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In fact, the Old Testament prophets said that when the kingdom is established by the people of Israel, the people of Israel will have the authority and the Gentile nations of the earth will what?

[ 32 : 24 ] Will serve them. They will be like the top dogs, the top nation of the earth in that messianic kingdom. And so, I don't think it's quite correct to say that what Jesus is describing here

is his transfer of the vineyard, if you will, which really is the people or the nation of Israel and really, he's describing what?

The kingdom to the Gentiles. A big picture thing to keep in mind the difference between the body of Christ and the age of grace today which is a Gentile looked at or described as a Gentile group of people and then the people of Israel.

People of Israel were promised an earthly kingdom on the earth and we today in the age of grace promised a heavenly kingdom. But this fits right in with what we've seen already with Jesus' he's working with this ragtag group of young men and women, I guess not all young, but many of his disciples were younger, and telling them and giving them promises and saying, hey, if you will come and follow me and give up some of these earthly things and I'm going to give you a special place and a special position in the coming kingdom.

He told his 12 disciples, you'll sit on 12 thrones ruling over the 12 tribes of Israel in this coming kingdom. Other people, he promised, if you're willing to give up certain things and go through, endure through the tribulation period specifically, I'm going to give you 30 and 60 and 100 fold of what you may have had here in this current age.

In the Old Testament, when the Old Testament prophets spoke of a new reign or a new kingdom, they many times mentioned a group called the remnant of Israel.

[ 34 : 25 ] The remnant. It wasn't the whole nation that was going to inherit this kingdom, but it was a group of people who are a remnant. They're kind of the leftovers, right?

You think about when you have a meal and there's a few things left over, that's the remnant.

There's a remnant of Israel that will remain faithful, the prophets had spoken of.

Jesus says this in Luke chapter 12, verse 32. He uses this phrase, he calls his own disciples, his own disciples, the little flock.

He says, do not, this is Luke 12, 32, do not fear, little flock, for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. See, the kingdom was going to be taken away from the existing administration because they weren't bearing fruit.

They were interested more in profiteering in those courtyards than in actually upholding justice and righteousness. So he had, there's the big flock, right? The whole flock of Israel, but then there's this subgroup, Jesus called the little flock, those who would be faithful to him, those who would bear the fruits of righteousness and justice that he was looking for.

[ 35 : 41 ] Those are the ones that he was planning to give the kingdom to. Verse 10, have you not even read this scripture, the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone?

This was the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes. Here, Jesus is just quoting from Psalm chapter 118. Whenever you see, and I don't know, maybe it's just the New King James version, but in mine, it's all caps, which means it's a quote from the Old Testament.

And this Psalm 118 is actually something that was commonly sung during Passover. And so this was not only something that the Jews were familiar with because they would sing it every year during Passover, there's actually, I think, seven chapters.

I think it was Psalm 111 to 118. This was the last one. So actually on Passover day or night, they would actually sing this last Psalm.

I think it's the Psalm of David. And so they were familiar with it. And this passage that he's quoting here comes from that, Psalm 118. And remember, this is Passover week.

[ 36 : 47 ] So many people are here for the Passover. But it says this, Psalm 118, verse 22, the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes.

And the people were already familiar with this. Remember when they came in to Jerusalem, when Jesus entered into Jerusalem on that donkey? And what did the people say? Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Remember that? Well, that's right here in Psalm 118, that same passage. And so there's this reference to this stone that was rejected by the builders and you think, well, here's, you have builders building a house, right?

And the first, what's the most important part of building a house? It's the foundation, right? So back then, they used these big foundation stones. They would put them out, make sure they're even and flat, level.

But the most important stone was the very first one that you laid and it set the tone for the whole foundation. You call that the foundation stone, the chief cornerstone, usually right there on one of the corners of the building.

[ 37 : 52 ] And so, there's this description of a cornerstone that was rejected by the builders, the ones who were in charge of the building. And they rejected that cornerstone.

But that stone would become the chief. And this is a common theme throughout both the Gospels and on into the rest of the New Testament is that Jesus himself is that chief cornerstone.

The son, the one that was sent, the one that was sent and killed, he has become the chief cornerstone. Peter preached this in Acts chapter 4 on Solomon's porch.

He said this, Acts chapter 4, verse 10, let it be known to you, he was preaching to the crowds of Israelites there at the time, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by him, this man stands here before you whole.

This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone. He's saying, you guys were the builders.

[ 39 : 05 ] You rejected the cornerstone. That's Jesus, the one that you killed and he now is the chief cornerstone and it was an opportunity, right?

What was Peter preaching? Receive Jesus as Messiah. It's not too late, not yet and if you receive him, we'll get our kingdom that was promised.

Would you guys do that? And some of them did, right? But we know that many didn't and because of that there was a pivot that took place.

We'll finish up verse 12 here, and they sought to lay hands on him but feared the multitude for they knew he had spoken the parable against them. So they left him and they went away. They're just that they knew.

It was so obvious, right? It was so obvious that he was rebuking them, that he was even threatening them. In the passage in Matthew, there's another thing that Jesus says.

[ 40 : 06 ] He says that those who fall on the stone will be broken but those on whom the stone falls, they will be crushed into powder.

Wow. That's a threat. And so they were enraged because they knew he was talking about them. But they didn't really have much to go on.

He was just telling a story. One question to ask here and then we'll get ready for our Lord's Supper is who's the ones being condemned here?

Because there's lots of reference, right, to the leaders but is Israel, like the nation of Israel, included in this? You know, I think that the leaders, and the Bible speaks to this, right?

Those who have more authority, those who are in a position of more responsibility, they are more responsible. And so I think that's definitely the case.

[ 41 : 09 ] But if we look back at Acts chapter 2, going back to Acts, this is what, this is what, I think it was Peter again said to the people talking about Jesus.

It says, In him being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands have crucified and put to death.

Peter was laying Jesus' crucifixion at the feet of all of the Jews, saying, You guys are the ones who did this. Now, here's our opportunity.

You can repent and you can receive him. You rejected him at the first and really this is part of God's plan that he would be rejected and lay down his life as a sacrifice for many, but now we have the opportunity.

Repent, receive him as Messiah, and we'll receive the kingdom that was promised to us. So the context of this big picture is this is something specifically for Israel, right?

[ 42 : 11 ] And so, they're promised the kingdom and the kingdom was going to be taken away from the existing leadership and given to a new group of people. The old administration was going to be judged as described in this passage, destroyed.

But is there any way which we can apply this, I guess, to us in the age of grace? And there's a lot of, you know, among a lot of Christians today, there will be talk of, well, nations being judged by God, right?

And there are a lot of wicked nations in this world, right? Except for America, right? America's a righteous nation, right? Not like all the rest of the nations. Okay, I see a few smiles.

No, America is just, in fact, in many ways, leading the way in wickedness, leading other nations towards wickedness. But, what we see, at least this is my view, during the age of grace is God's withholding judgment.

He's not judging nations. Sometimes there's a hurricane or a tsunami or something like that and people will say, oh, that's the judgment of God. I think, if it really was the judgment of God, it would be a little bit more precise than it was.

[ 43 : 27 ] A lot of times, you know, these are just, I don't want to say random acts of nature, but these are, you know, obviously God-designed nature. But they're not intended to be judgments.

These are just, really the results of sin in the world. God's, what we see in the age of grace is God's withholding judgment. Now, we see later on that God actually does.

He judges Israel. He gives them a year or so to repent and then He judges them and it says that He casts them aside and He puts His grace, He puts His affection on a new group of people called the Gentiles and that is us who He offers love and salvation.

But, just because God's withholding His judgment against nations now, and the Bible says that in the future, right, He is going to judge the nations. There's coming a day in which, we call it the second coming.

Jesus is going to judge the nations of the world. But just because He's withholding His judgment right now, some people think, well, I don't have to worry about judgment.

[ 44 : 36 ] But the Bible says that He's appointed unto man once to die and then what? Judgment. Everyone has to face judgment day, whether it's the judgment of a nation or just standing before God like we all are appointed to.

So we shouldn't think, no one should think that they will escape the judgment except for one thing, right? What God did for us.

And that's what we're here to remember today, this morning. You know, we're going to take the Lord's Supper here in just a second.

One of the risks, right, of doing something like this as a tradition or on a regular basis is that it becomes a religious ritual that is empty.

We saw all those warnings, right, about the sacrifices and all their fastings that they did and their ritualistic prayers. And God said, I hate it. You know what I want from you?

[ 45 : 41 ] I want you to just live uprightly to love your neighbor, practice mercy, and to walk humbly with me. And that's the way that it is today. In fact, you know, God actually, in this age of grace, He took away all those laws, those ritualistic things so that they wouldn't be in the way.

And what do we do? Right? We add more back in. We just come up. We create more. So we have something, a time of remembrance to remember the Lord and what He did for us.

And we turn it into a religious ritual, the Eucharist, a sacrament, something that will give us some kind of favor with God.

And that's not what this, that's not what this is at all. God wants us to walk humbly with Him and that's the most important thing that matters in our lives with Him.

But He's poured out His grace on us. We don't have to, we don't have to walk uprightly. In fact, He, He united us with Him that we, through our union with Him, would be transformed and changed.

[ 46 : 54 ] to be like Him. So I'll invite the elders up. We're going to pass this out in just a second. I'm going to give out a little bit of instruction.

So we got some juice, and it's not wine, by the way, so if you're not familiar, if you're new here, we do juice and not wine. And the bread, and we'll pass them out both at the same time.

Just hold on to them, and we'll take them together. I'll read from the passage in Corinthians. So we'll take it all together.

This is for anybody who's a believer in Christ, anybody who's trusted in Christ. Sometimes there's a question about age, and I'll just leave that up to the parents if you'd like your kids to.

And remember, this is just a time to remember what the Lord did for us. You can remember what the Lord did for you at any age, right? I'll leave that up to the parents.

[ 47 : 56 ] What is this for? What are we doing? Scripture says that this was an opportunity, and we'll read the Scripture in a second, but this is an opportunity to remember what Jesus did for us.

It's a time of remembrance, and also to proclaim the Lord's death to each other and to others until He comes again. What is it not for?

This isn't to make you acceptable. This isn't to offer some kind of, some people call it a means of grace. We already have received all the grace we're ever going to get.

This isn't a way to have our sins forgiven or washed away. If you're a believer in Christ, that's already been accomplished. This doesn't make you more righteous if you do it.

It doesn't make you any less righteous if you don't. And the last thing is, this is not a time for us to remember our sins and sit in anguish about them, even though some of us have plenty of sins in the past that still cause us much anguish.

[ 49 : 08 ] I'll go ahead and pass these out. Do we have enough people here? John?

All right. There you go. I'll just let you grab what you need here. Yeah, we'll do them both at once.

Yeah. So just grab a piece of the bread and the cup and just hold on to it. Yeah, here.

You got it? All right. And while they're passing out, I want to go back to actually this, our memory passage, our memory verse. Romans 8.1.

You know, the world is full of a lot of pain and suffering and misery and injustice. And there's one reason for that.

[ 50 : 14 ] One overarching reason. And that's what the Bible calls sin, right? And a lot of times we think of sin as something that's out there, something that people impose upon us, but really, for those, especially for us Christians, you know, hopefully, you know, we've taken account of our own lives and seen that a lot of that pain and suffering in the world came through our hands.

The things that we have done, the things that we have said, we have certainly contributed our part to the sea of suffering in the world. And so, because of that, we stood condemned.

Our own sin condemned us. Our sin that we committed on purpose condemned us. And so, because of that, we're guilty on death row, as it were.

But here's what Romans 8.1 says. Romans 8.1, this is our memory verse. There is therefore now, because of what Jesus accomplished, there is therefore now no condemnation to all those who are in Christ Jesus.

If you have put your faith in Christ Jesus, you cannot be condemned anymore. Who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the spirit. Those who are in Christ Jesus, their life is not in the flesh anymore.

[ 51 : 45 ] You're positionally, you live in the spirit. Our life is in the spirit, which the spirit is God. Our life is in him.

Here's what verse 2 says. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. You see, there's this law out there, and it makes sense. It's a very, it's a, it makes, it's a lot, it's logically sensible, right?

It's reasonable. The law that says, if you sin, if you commit the crime, you have to pay the punishment. That's the law. The law of sin and death. But the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from that law of sin and death.

That law that says, the soul that sins must die. Verse 3, for what the law could not do and that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh on account of sin.

He condemned sin in the flesh. Our sin that we committed condemned us. But he accomplished something on that cross by shedding his blood for us.

[ 52 : 55 ] He condemned the sin. He turned it right around. We call it the great exchange in which God took our sin on himself for those of us who were willing to give it to him.

And he gave us in return what? A perfect righteousness. Not half a righteousness. I'll give you half a righteousness. You earn the other half.

It's perfect. That's what he did for you and me. For those of us who are willing to put our faith and trust in him. So we'll do this together.

Everybody, we'll start with the bread. And I'm going to read here from 1 Corinthians 11. Oh, I guess I should get some myself here. Thanks. Yeah, and the elders, you guys want to grab some?

Yeah. You got it? This is what Paul says, 1 Corinthians 11, 23.

[ 53 : 57 ] For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the same night in which he was betrayed, he took bread. And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, take eat.

This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me. in the same manner, he also took the cup after supper, saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood.

