

Stewardship and Judgment | Matthew 21:33–46

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Date: 27 April 2025

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[0:00] Welcome to Ontario Community Church, where we are encouraging, equipping, and engaging lives for Christ.! I'm Pastor Patrick Daly, and each week I share sermons that balance the grace and love of Jesus Christ with the truth of the Word of God.

Together, we'll explore Scripture using observation, interpretation, and application. This helps us discover practical ways to live out our faith every single day.

Let's dive in together into God's Word. Alright, well good morning everyone. It's great to be here with all of you as we are going back into our sermon series through the parables of Christ.

Parables are so interesting. They're very unique. They're very simple, but yet they're full of depth. Today, as we are in this Easter season, let us remember first and foremost the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Let us recognize that it is Jesus who is the way, the truth, and the life. Jesus being born in a manger, Him teaching these parables that we are going over, the miracles that He performed, walking on water, calming the storm, healing the sick, raising people from the dead.

[1:22] It goes to show you the power of who our God is. That God is consistent in His Word. And God continues to speak to us through His Word and through others as well.

And we're grateful for our Lord and our God. You've just heard Mark Iseri read the parable of the wicked tenants from the Gospel of Matthew.

And we're going to go into this. Because it's a very interesting parable that shows us something of great significance. You see, this parable is found in the Gospel of Matthew.

It's found in the Gospel of Mark and in Luke as well. So when you see something that shows up three times, it's something that you should pay attention to. Amen? So we see this three times where Jesus entered in Jerusalem and He's confronting the religious leaders.

And the religious leaders, they realize that this parable is targeted. It's aimed directly at them. The Scripture says that they acknowledged or they realized that this parable was towards them.

[2:34] So stewardship and judgment. Let's go to that next slide. And I want to take a moment. Let's go one more. I want you to look at this image here.

You see here, what is this church? What is this? Like a vineyard, right? You see there, you know, you have grapes, you have the hills and all that.

I kind of think of Napa, California specifically, or Sonoma. Those kind of things where you can see that kind of imagery. And what we have in here are certain symbols from the text that they have certain representations.

So we have the vineyard then, which represents the people of God. It's representing Israel. We then have the fence, which is symbolic for God's protection.

You want to have a fence or a wall around your vineyard, right? Because in a lot of times in Scriptures, it's saying you don't want people stealing your crops kind of thing. That makes a lot of sense, right, why we have fences and walls especially.

[3:47] And then you have the winepress here, which you see that there's the fruit that's growing on the vine or in the vineyard. And there's this expectation from the Lord to an expectation of harvest.

So not only are we to bear fruit, there's this expectation, at least in this scene, where there must be producing fruit.

And in this case, we could just say making wine for this sake. You have the tower in the background then, which is representing God's care and provision for his people, right?

Like when you have a tower for a vineyard especially, you want to be able to look out, yes, at the beautiful sunrise and sunset. But you also want to be able to also protect if anyone is going into the vineyard.

Does that make sense, church? Okay. Now, we don't have the picture of the tenants or the servants or the son or the owners and the new tenants. But you still get at least the scene of what is going on.

[4:52] So we have the tenants, which is a representation of the people of God, their leaders, representing also the people of God.

We have also the servants, which represents the prophets that were sent by God. Then the son, which represents Jesus Christ as the, well, as the heir, as the messenger.

And then the owner, which is God the Father. And then new tenants. Well, as we know in scripture, that there is the mystery of Christ that is revealed, going from what used to be exclusive to the people of God, being available for everyone who believes in the Lord.

So, it is showing that from once the Jewish people, now going to all who believe in Christ. Does that make sense, church? Okay.

So, the new tenants is those who respond to Christ. I want us to go back here. Let's turn to the Gospel of Matthew.

[6:05] And I want you to see, knowing this, what we just went over, how beautiful this parable aligns with our understanding of God, His Word, and His plan for us.

Right? There was a master of a house, God, who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it. Okay? And He dug a wine press, right?

The expectation of producing fruit. And leased it to tenants, right? There's this idea of stewardship that's in there. The people of God were to steward God's promises.

And where did He go? So, the master went to another country, or the owner went to another country. When the season for fruit drew near, so there was a certain amount of time for fruit to be produced, He sent His servants to the tenants to get fruit, sending the messengers, the prophets, to go to the people of God to collect the fruit.

And what did the tenants do? They take His servants, and do they welcome Him in? No, it says, they beat one, they killed another, and they stoned another.

[7:27] Again, He sent other servants. I mean, if one servant got killed, if I was the owner, I'd be pretty upset. But continuing of sending servants here, giving more opportunity for the people of God.

Okay? He sent other servants, more than the first. And did they welcome Him in? No. They did the same to them. And finally, He sent His Son, the heir.

He sent His Son to them, saying, They will respect My Son. Right? That makes perfect sense. They're being disrespectful. They're doing all these terrible things to these messengers that I'm sending.

Surely they would respect My Son. They're living in the vineyard. They're being there. They're dwelling there. Well, this is not the case. When the tenants saw the Son, they said to themselves, This is the heir.

Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance. Thinking that the death of the Son, they would, by killing him, they would gain.

[8:34] But here's the thing. And just as we talk about in this Easter season, evil thinks it can win. But in the end, evil does not win.

When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants? He said to them, He will put wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who give him the fruits in their season.

That is a very important thing, church, when we read that. Because it's representing the old covenant, the old system in which the Jewish people had prior to the new covenant.

But it's all based in this kind of vineyard language, as it were. Those who will give him the fruits in their seasons, which goes to show the importance.

Church, it's important for us to recognize to believe in Jesus Christ, the death, burial, and resurrection. It's also important that upon believing in him, we are to bear fruit.

[9:42] We are to be molded by our Lord and our God, being transformed, right? The transformation of mind, the transformation of heart, the very essence of who we are should be on a trajectory of being more like him.

That doesn't mean we're going to be perfect, though, does it? Are any of us perfect in here? Don't raise your hand. We'll talk later, right? But the reality is, nobody is perfect.

But God continues to mold us. He continues to make us like him. And so that's a very pivotal point there. Jesus said to them, have you not read in the scriptures?

It's in the Gospel of Luke, where the Pharisees actually interject and said, this isn't the case. But Jesus is still saying in here, have you not read the scriptures? The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. Therefore, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing fruit, which goes to show, paving the way for salvation to be available for all who believe.

[10:49] And in that belief, we are called to be transformed, to grow in Christ, and to live and love like Jesus Christ. Amen? Does this make sense, church?

Okay. And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him. And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard this parable, they perceived that he was speaking about them.

And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds because they held him to be a prophet. I want you to think for a moment. That language about tripping over a stone and breaking, how many of you know Daniel 2, verse 35?

It's in your notes. Where it talks about a stone that gets thrown into a great statue. Some of you know what I'm talking about. The statue is made of bronze and iron and copper, and it shatters to pieces.

It's actually a direct connection to Daniel, which is representing all of the kingdoms of the world will be shattered against God. Nations, people, groups, people without the stone will not prevail.

[11:54] So it's this wonderful tie-in with the Old Testament and just with lots of scripture in this. And so it's very interesting that in Daniel, where you have this stone, that's a very small stone, it takes down this giant statue and then grows into a mountain.

What in the world's happening there? It's representing the kingdom of God, just like we've talked about the mustard seed, right? The seed that gets planted into the ground and it grows into something that is more powerful, something that is great, because that's how God works.

It gets planted and it expands. And so the stone being our foundation, it expands. Do you build your life on Jesus Christ?

Is he your firm foundation? Is he the anchor for your life? And it's interesting in this language when it's saying that someone who falls, trips and falls on the stone is very similar to the idea of the stone being cast upon this statue and shattering to pieces.

Does that make sense, church? Do you understand? I sure hope that you do. And so in all of this, the vineyard is planted with care.

[13:07] God entrusts his people. The servants are beaten and they're killed. It's prophetic rejection. The son is killed outside of the vineyard, which foretells of Christ's crucifixion and judgment comes and the wicked tenants are destroyed.

And then there is the cornerstone prophecy, which Christ is the new foundation and the kingdom is transferred for all who bear fruit.

So not we must believe in the Lord, but we also must grow in him and be moved to do good in his name. So what does all of this mean then as we go into this?

Here at Ontario Community Church, we use what is known as the OIA method. O as an observation. What in the world is going on in the text? I is for interpretation. What are the lessons we can learn?

And thirdly is the application. What do we do about this? So let's go to that next slide. It is the I interpretation. What can we learn and interpret from this? The first thing is that God sends people even when we reject them.

[14:11] God's patience is showing that God is not quick to anger because he is continually sending these prophets to speak to the people to get them to change, to get them to see their evil ways and to turn to the Lord.

That's a pattern that we see and we also can recognize that mercy is shown before judgment that God does extend mercy. It's much like when we think about salvation here for the Christian. God gives a certain amount of time but not forever. That's an important thing. And so in 2 Chronicles, it's in your notes, chapter 36, verses 15 through 16, it mentions that time and time again he sent messengers.

Again, showing the mercy of God. In Hebrews, chapter 1, verses 1 through 2, in time past, God spoke now through his son, which is talking about Christ, from prophets to Christ.

And so in all of this, it just means that God doesn't give up easily on you. God is merciful and he gives, he gave the people of God lots and lots of time. In the same way, he gives us the opportunity to turn to him in faith.

[15:34] The second thing then is rejecting the son leads to what, church? To judgment. The murder of the son goes to show the depravity, right?

It goes to show the depth of the rebellion of these people. And the stone imagery then is showing that Christ, well, he is showing a new system, a new way of doing things.

Instead of following the law, it is now about grace. Going from the old system to the new system. In Psalm 118, 22, the very reference that Christ is using, the stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

And then as I mentioned in Daniel chapter 2, the stone became a mountain that filled the whole earth. Do you see the pattern when it comes to the stone here? And then in Acts 4.11, Jesus is the stone.

If you need it more clear, in Acts 4.11, Jesus is the stone that the builders rejected. How powerful. How powerful is that?

[16:47] And so Jesus dying on the cross, right, his death, burial, and resurrection is the cornerstone for our salvation. We think of that as the firm foundation in which we build our lives.

Let us not be like the fool who builds their house on the sand. Who does that anyways, right? You want to build your house on the firm foundation then. And then thirdly, the kingdom is given to those who will bear fruit.

The tenants then, they failed to steward all that they were given. Right? Fruitfulness is a sign. It's kind of this outward expression of faith to the Lord.

You're going to have to produce fruit. Right? I will tell you, believe in Jesus Christ. That's the call for us. Be saved, but also be transformed.

Grow in Christ and do good in his holy name. Bear fruit. And what does bearing fruit look like? It's being transformed from the inside out, knowing that you're becoming more like Jesus in what you say and in what you do.

[18:04] And in the gospel accounts, it mentions in Matthew and John, every tree or every branch that does not bear fruit, he cuts off. And certainly, that's a heavier one, isn't it?

But we are called to bear fruit. Let that be an encouragement for you. How is your fruit? Are you producing fruit? If you're not, let this be a call for you to produce fruit.

We then go into the application then. How can I apply and live this out in my life? Well, the first thing is to, well, it's pretty obvious.

What does it say, church? Receive the Son. Don't reject Him. Jesus, we have to acknowledge who He is.

That He is what we need in our lives. That Jesus Christ, again, is the way, the truth, and the life. God extends an invitation for each and every one of us to come to the feast.

[19:11] Will you respond to that? Receive the Lord and integrate Him into every part of your life. Having Christ as the center of your life.

maybe you're resisting God's call for your life. Don't do that. Listen to God's call because I'm here to tell you that Jesus provides a better way.

A better way than what the world has to offer. A better way than what, when we think of this constant fighting, brother against brother, left versus right, and denominations fighting against one another.

There is an ugliness in that when really what matters is us coming to the Lord, coming before Him and being molded. Let's remember that.

Don't reject the Lord. I know it's so important for us to recognize that God is constant and He does not fail us.

[20:18] I've said it before and I'll say it again. Man can and man will fail you. But God will not fail you.

That's important. The second thing then is to let the stone establish and shape your life. He is the foundation for our lives.

Consider Christ as the most important stone that you have when we talk about this foundation.

When we're considering that prophecy of Daniel and this tie-in with the parable, the stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

And in the same way that this stone can destroy a statue or people can trip on it and get destroyed, those are the ones that are going against the stone.

Well, let us consider when we have the stone as our foundation. Not only having it as our foundation, but continuing to let the stone grow just like the mustard seed, right?

[21:30] Being planted and growing or the stone going from a small stone into a mountain, growing and transforming your life. When we think of leadership, when we think of family or finances, every part of our life will be transformed by Jesus.

That is the beautiful thing. And when we think about it, I'm sure that many of you may know someone that is close to the Lord. Someone that you know who you have seen has been transformed and it's remarkable.

There's one individual, I won't give him the name. If he's watching, he'll probably make fun of me, but there's a gentleman that I know who was really like the gothic dark type of person who was listening.

And there's nothing wrong with dressing in black. I do it all the time, okay? But he was living a very worldly life where there was such division in his marriage and in his relationships.

people prayed for him. His wife, he started attending church and it was kind of this rebellion that was happening.

[22:40] And over a few years, it was little by little where God was transforming the man to where he became a believer in Jesus Christ, to where he became baptized.

And he's a much different man. If you knew him, I've known him for about a decade. From when I first met him, he was kind of scary, I admit, to where he is now, a very loving man.

Now, he doesn't understand everything about scripture. Who does? But God is continuing to work in him in his life. And in the same way, you might identify as someone who is rebelling against the Lord.

Maybe you have rebelled before. Or does no one here rebel anymore, right? We've all had our moments where we rebelled against God and we thought we could do it on our own. We thought that the world or that our own way, our own understanding was better than what God offered.

What God offers is not just salvation, but transformation. The ability to love, right? When I've talked about the peace that surpasses all understanding, when I've talked about the inexhaustible joy that comes from him, there is so much.

[23:58] And so, let your life be dedicated for the Lord. And so, in the same way where you've heard that story, you either have the rock as your foundation or the sand, well, you can either, you're either built by the stone or you're shattered by it.

That's another way to look at it. And the third thing, then, is to grow and to bear fruit as witness to others. It's a call for us to believe in Christ, to grow in him, but to go out into the world and to share in the good news of the gospel.

Talking about character change, your life-changing love, justice, and mission. All of these things are part of the transformation that happens.

Now, here's the thing. As we come to Christ and as we grow in Christ, there comes a point where you gotta live it out. If you receive, right now, a check for a million dollars and it was legit, you wouldn't tell people about it?

I mean, I know technically you probably shouldn't because people would come after you for it, but just for the sake here, you would most likely want to tell people about it. Right?

[25:28] If you think of a debt that's been cleared or receiving a wonderful gift, we can think of all these things here on the earth. When we think about this, well, think about a far greater gift that comes from above.

Think of a far greater gift that comes from Christ. Wouldn't you want to go out to the world and tell your friends and your family of the transforming power of Jesus Christ?

Saying, look, I believe in Jesus. I'm going to declare his name. And maybe you might be in a situation where you just can't speak the words.

How many of you have been in that situation? You go out and you want to share the good news of the gospel and it's not allowed or it might ruin the relationship.

Right? Do we have any of those? Don't raise your hand. Please. But I'm sure for a lot of us we've had those situations where it might be your workplace. It might be Uncle Steve if there's anyone named Steve here.

[26:34] Or Uncle John. Whatever it is. There might be that family member you just don't talk about the Lord when you go over to his house. It may not be the words that you say.

It can certainly be the actions that you do. Doing everything in excellence for the glory of God. Let your schoolwork or your job performance let that reflect the light love and truth of Christ.

And so in everything that we are we're called to share in the gospel message by words through actions living and loving like Jesus.

Because you want to have people who see Christ in you as you live your life. Do you realize that people can come to Christ just by the way that you live your life?

Say, you know what? There's something that's different about you. I don't know what it is. There's something that's different about you. What is it about you? And you allow for that conversation to happen because that's some of the most powerful ways that we evangelize is through relationships.

[27:51] Breaking bread together. As I mentioned in the Easter message where Jesus was on the road with Emmaus with the two disciples and they broke bread together. They talked about the scriptures and they understood.

And then Christ disappeared just randomly. But it was to show that their hearts were on fire for the Lord. And as we come to Christ, as we get baptized, as we grow in Christ and we start understanding the deeper things of God, let us be moved to serve the community, to serve the church, and to live like Jesus Christ.

that is so important for us. In Galatians chapter 5 verse 22 and 23 mentions the fruit of the Spirit. In Matthew 28, 19 which talks about fruit through making disciples. And so can we go back to that vineyard picture real quick?

As we close here, I want you next time you go visit a vineyard or you look at an image, it's just a generic image, you can see lots of pictures of vineyards, consider this concept of stewardship that with our time, our talent, and our treasure, we are to steward what God has given to us.

[29:26] Consider the stone and let that be the foundation for your life. And when you hear the word of God, the words of someone's testimony, receive Jesus Christ.

Receive salvation from the Lord through belief. Grow in him and be moved to do good in his name. Ask yourself this question then.

Will you be a faithful tenant inheritance? Or will you let that opportunity pass away? Let's pray together. And Father, we thank you for this time and this opportunity to go through this very unique parable that not only shows the old and the new covenant, but also shows your mercy, how you send, how you sent your messengers to the people of God, but also how you send people to us to

change our minds and metanoia, to repent, to come to believe in you.

Father, I pray let there be comfort where comfort is needed. Let there be understanding where understanding is needed. And may we not be like those wicked tenants that rejected the messengers and rejected the son.

Instead, may we be in tune to your calling, to your invitation, to believe in you, to be saved, the invitation for salvation, but also the invitation to grow, to live out this faith essentially to produce fruit.

[31:17] We love you, we praise you, we glorify you, and we honor you. we thank you for this time together. It is in the name of Jesus that we pray and we all say together amen.

Amen. Thank you for listening for this week's message from Ontario Community Church. I pray that you are encouraged and strengthened in your walk with Christ.

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