

CHRIST HAS COME! RECEIVE HIM

DECEMBER 12, 2021

WORSHIP

God So Loved,
Hope Has Come,
This Kingdom

WELCOME

What gift do you want
to receive for Christmas
and why?

WORD

MATTHEW 21:33-37

³³ “Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who **PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A FENCE AROUND IT, AND DUG A WINE PRESS IN IT, AND BUILT A TOWER**, and he leased it to vine-growers and went on a journey. ³⁴ And when the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his fruit. ³⁵ And the vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶ Again, he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they did the same things to them. ³⁷ But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’”

**(READ MATTHEW 21:28-44
AHEAD OF TIME)**

Christmas is fast approaching, and you and I may already be attending parties left and right, and busy with its festivities. But the sad reality is that as we prepare for this holiday season, we can neglect and forget the most important things. The very essence of Christmas is Christ, and today we will focus on a parable that is succinct with our Christmas season.

In **Matthew 21:28-31**, Jesus talked about the parable of two sons who were told by their father to tend his vineyard. The first son refused, but he later changed his mind and went as his father has commanded. The second son however said yes but did not actually go. Jesus asked which of the two sons did the will of his father, and those listening to him said the first. Why did Jesus start off with this parable? Jesus was making a contrast between two groups: those you would least expect to obey the father, but they eventually would, and those who you think would obey but won't.

Then Jesus proceeds to the next parable in **Matthew 21:33-46** about a wealthy landowner. Jesus did so to further emphasize what He wanted his audience to grasp.

1. RECOGNIZE GOD'S PATIENCE (MATTHEW 21:31-36)

Let's get to know the cast of characters and who they represent. First, we read about the landowner representing God. This landowner owns a vineyard that he is cultivating, and this vineyard represents God's kingdom. We are then introduced to the vine-growers, who represent Israel's religious leaders of that time. Then we read of the slaves who represent the prophets and messengers of God of that time. Lastly, there is the son of the landowner who represents Jesus Christ.

The owner has a vineyard that he planted and deeply cared for. He built a wall around it and even hired watchmen to look over the vineyard. He rented this vineyard out to the vine-growers, and when the time of harvest came, he sent his slaves to collect the produce of the vineyard. However, instead of giving the produce peaceably, the vine-growers took the slaves, beat one, killed another, and stoned the third. **(v.35)** To this, the landowner sent another group of slaves, and the vine-growers did the same thing **(v.36)**! Jesus meant to shock his audience by this parable. By having the first incident, it would've been right for the landowner to have already called on the authorities to capture the evil vine-growers. Instead, the landowner sent another group of slaves, demonstrating patience in his approach to these vine-growers. However, we also see that the vine-growers were set in their ways as they did the exact same thing to the second batch of slaves. The landowner proceeds to send his son, thinking these vine-growers would respect his son and turn from their ways **(v.37)**.

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Like the vine-growers, we too take God's grace for granted. When we don't see God intervening in our lives, we mistake God's inaction for His indifference, and decide to continue in our ways. But God's patience towards us is so great, sending us messengers to remind and warn us to turn from our ways (**2 Peter 3:9; Hebrews 1:1-2**). God extends his patience toward us waiting for us to repent, however that wait will not extend forever (**Romans 2:4-6**). Let us not ignore God's patience towards us.

2. RELY ON GOD'S SON (MATTHEW 21:37-39)

The landowner sent his son to meet with the vine-growers, but instead of respecting the son, they thought that by killing the son they can seize the son's inheritance. Like the vine-growers, if we don't recognize God's patience towards us and persist in our stubborn ways, there will come a time that His patience towards us will run out. We see this in verses **40-41**, when the landowner himself comes to the vine-growers to call them to account in how they cared for the vineyard and their deeds towards the slaves and the son. The truth is that there will be a day of reckoning for all of us. If we don't do what God wants us to do, if we don't receive Christ like the religious leaders, what we have will be taken from us. Jesus prophesied of what would happen to Him, that He will be rejected by the religious leaders who built their life upon their religiosity and their own wills (**v.42; Psalm 118:22-23**). We need to rely on God's Son, our chief cornerstone. The truth is this, if we reject the Son who is the chief cornerstone, we reject the Kingdom. We are called to build our lives on Jesus Christ and God sent us the Spirit to help us to walk in accordance with God's ways (**Ephesians 2:20-22**). When we don't obey and listen to the conviction of God, we grieve the Holy Spirit (**Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19**).

3. REAP GOD'S REWARD (MATTHEW 21:43-44)

In **Matthew 21:43-44**, we read that Jesus now talks to the religious leaders directly. He said to them that if they don't make Him the foundation of their lives, this cornerstone will break them. When we resist God, He gives us to the consequences of sin. But if we turn to God and receive Him, we will reap God's rewards and be fruitful (**Matthew 3:8; Philippians 1:11**).

In **1 Peter 2:9-10**, we read that we are God's chosen people. The religious leaders rejected Christ and the Kingdom, but this event brought about salvation and redemption to us—the gentiles. The religious leaders knew that Jesus was speaking to them and in **Matthew 21:45**, they refused to turn from their ways and instead seized Jesus. What is the reason for Christmas? The reason we celebrate Christmas is because of Christ's sacrifice of being taken out of the vineyard, so that we could be taken into God's Kingdom for our redemption (**John 1:11-12**). Christmas reminds us that our Savior has come! Will you receive Him today?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Self-Check.

How has God been so patient with me?

2. Setting It Right.

When have I grieved or quenched the Holy Spirit the past week?

3. Living It Out.

Have I rejected or received Christ? Does my life show it?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for people who have hardened hearts and are content with their religiosity. Pray that they will come to the realization of their need for Jesus especially in this season. Reach out to them and gently share to them the gospel. Pray for them that the Lord will cause them to put their trust and security in Him alone.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

Upright and moral governance of Public Servants
A God-centered Philippines
Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

Worship and Training Center
Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

Deeper intimate relationship with God
Righteous living
Salvation of family and friends

MEMORY VERSE

John 1:11-12

He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.