

Luke 20:9-19

⁹Then He proceeded to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard, rented it out to some tenants, and went away for a long time. ¹⁰At harvest time, he sent a servant to the tenants to collect his share of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat the servant and sent him away empty-handed.

¹¹So he sent another servant, but they beat him and treated him shamefully, sending him away empty-handed.

¹²Then he sent a third, but they wounded him and threw him out.

¹³“What shall I do?” asked the owner of the vineyard. ‘I will send my beloved son. Perhaps they will respect him.’

¹⁴But when the tenants saw the son, they discussed it among themselves and said, ‘This is the heir. Let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ ¹⁵So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? ¹⁶He will come and kill those tenants, and will give the vineyard to others.”

And when the people heard this, they said, “May such a thing never happen!”

¹⁷But Jesus looked directly at them and said, “Then what is the meaning of that which is written:

‘The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone’?

¹⁸Everyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces,
but he on whom it falls will be crushed.”

¹⁹When the scribes and chief priests realized that Jesus had spoken this parable against them, they sought to arrest Him that very hour. But they were afraid of the people.

Berean Standard Bible

1

Why is God so demanding? Luke 20:9-19

God is good, but demanding. 20:9-10

God is in partnership with us. 9 “planted a vineyard, rented it out”

God requires responsibility from us. 10a “collect his share of the fruit”

God is compassionate, but demanding. 20:10-15

God is long-suffering with us. 10b-12 “he sent another...”

God is very generous to us. 13-15a “I will send my beloved son”

God is justice, therefore demanding. 20:15-18

God is totally fair with us. 15b-16a “come and kill those tenants”

God has clearly warned us. 16b-18 “of that which is written”

God is kind, but demanding. 20:19

God enacts His plan for us. 19a “they sought to arrest Him”

God gives time to us. 19b “that very hour. But”

2

Is anyone in charge around here? Luke 20:9-19

There is a reason why God is in charge. 20:9-10

God is in charge because He is Creator. 9 “planted a vineyard”

God is in charge because He writes the rules. 10 “collect his share”

Sinners think they are in charge. 20:10-15

Sinners reject God’s Word, 10, 11, 12 “he sent a servant to the tenants”

Sinners reject God’s Son, 13-15 “threw him out... and killed him”

God will prove He is in charge. 20:15-19

Sinners will be judged. 16 “He will come and kill those tenants”

Saints will be justified. 16 “give the vineyard to others”

3

So far, so good, but look what’s coming. Luke 20:9-19

The Sovereign has limits. 20:9-16

The Lord suffers for others. 10-15

The Lord causes other to suffer. 15-16

The sinners have trouble. 20:9-16

Sinners cause trouble. 10-15

Sinners are in trouble. 15-16

The stone is a breaker. 20:17-18

Those who fall on this stone are broken. 17

Those on who the stone falls are broken. 18

4

What are you doing! Luke 20:9-19

What fruit are you bearing? 20:9-10

Be fruitful for yourself. 10 "harvest time"

Be fruitful for God. 10 "His share"

What sin are you committing? 20:10-15

Wrongly giving to others. 11 "treated him shamefully"

Wrongly keeping from others. 11 "sending him away empty-handed"

What legacy will you be leaving? 20:15-16

Be a loser. 16 "kill those tenants"

Suffer loss. 16 "give to others"

What breaking will you be experiencing? 20:17-19

Fall on. 18 "who falls on this stone"

Fall under. 18 "on whom it falls"

5

Retaking control. Luke 20:9-19

Reason for control. 20:9-12

God was in control. 9-10 "planted a vineyard... collect his share"

We took control. 10-12 "But the tenants beat... sent away"

Wresting for control. 20:13-15

God wants control. 20:13 "send my beloved son... respect"

We want control. 14-15 "the inheritance will be ours"

Result of control. 20:15-16

God will take control. 15-16 "He will come and kill"

We will lose control. 16 "give the vineyard to others"

Parable of control. 20:17-19

Jesus is in control. 17 "has become the cornerstone"

Give Jesus control. 18 "be broken" or "be crushed"

6

What kind of God do you want? Luke 20:9-19

God is good. 20:9-10

God is good to me. 9 "planted a vineyard"

God is good for me. 10 "collect his share"

God is kind. 20:10-12

God reaches out to me. 10 "sent a servant"
God is patient with me. 11 "he sent another"

God is love. 20:13-15

God sent His Son to me. 13 "send my beloved son"
God has a plan for me. 13 "respect him"

God is holy. 20:15-16

God executes justice. 16 "He will come and kill"
God keeps the plan. 16 "give the vineyard to others"

God is gracious. 20:17-19

God lays the foundation for me. 17 "the cornerstone"
God sets consequences for me. 18 "be broken... be crushed"

7

What went down. Luke 20:9-19

What went right. 9-10
What went wrong. 10-12
What went odd. 20:13
What went crazy. 20:14-15
What went straight. 20:15-16
What went real. 20:17-19

Other possible titles

This landlord has the tenants from Hell / for Hell
Dumbest criminals
Payday is coming
Your landlord is the Lord
Love your landlord
Failure, or fruitful
Crime and consequences
Mercy and Justice
When renters rebel
Warning! Don't mess with God
Survivor, will you be voted out?
In the vineyard, drunk with imaginary power
No further warnings
Storm warning

God is going to kick your butt
Live like you are a guest
The parabola of life / Your trajectory through life
A brief history of the universe – past, present, and future
When God's patience runs out, look out!
Use it, or lose it. Use it responsibly, or lose it eternally.

Commentary

A very different, but very similar, teaching of Jesus helps us to identify the elements of this parable. We find that parallel teaching in John 15:1-8, where Jesus says:

¹"I am the true vine, and My Father is the keeper of the vineyard. ²He cuts off every branch in Me that bears no fruit, and every branch that does bear fruit, He prunes to make it even more fruitful. ³You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. Just as no branch can bear fruit by itself unless it remains in the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me.

⁵I am the vine and you are the branches. The one who remains in Me, and I in him, will bear much fruit. For apart from Me you can do nothing. ⁶If anyone does not remain in Me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers. Such branches are gathered up, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸This is to My Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, proving yourselves to be My disciples.

There is one other clue that helps us clarify this parable, and it is found at the close of the parable, where we read, "the scribes and chief priests realized that Jesus had spoken this parable against them" (Luke 20:19). Ironically, these religious people immediately, but unwittingly, put into practice what Jesus predicted in the parable when "they sought to arrest Him that very hour" (v19).

So then, even though this is a parable that Jesus does not explain, He hardly needs to explain it. We can clearly identify the component elements of the parable.

The one who planted the vineyard (v9) is God the Father.

The vineyard (v9) is the place of His provision and blessing.

The tenants (v9) are those who enjoy God's blessings (initially the Hebrews).

The owner's share (v10) is our worship, tithes, obedience and righteous living.

The servants (v10, 11, 12) are those who faithfully go to the tenants.

The owner's beloved son (v13) is Jesus.

The tenants reject of the servants and of the son (v14-15) is the rebellion of sin.

The owner's vengeance (v16) is God's rejection of the Jewish nation.

The re-allocation of the vineyard (v16) is His blessings to the whole world.

Then, there is the parable within the parable (v17-18)

The rejected cornerstone (v17) is Jesus.

To be broken on this cornerstone (v18) is repentance.
To be crushed by the cornerstone (v18) is to cast into judgement.
Those who enjoyed God's blessing, but rejected His Son (v19) knew it was about them.

Old Testament reference to the vineyard

¹I will sing for my beloved a song of his vineyard:
My beloved had a vineyard
on a very fertile hill.
²He dug it up and cleared the stones
and planted the finest vines.
He built a watchtower in the middle
and dug out a winepress as well.
He waited for the vineyard to yield good grapes,
but the fruit it produced was sour!
³"And now, O dwellers of Jerusalem
and men of Judah,
I exhort you to judge
between Me and My vineyard.
⁴What more could I have done for My vineyard
than I already did for it?
Why, when I expected sweet grapes,
did it bring forth sour fruit?
⁵Now I will tell you what I am about to do to My vineyard:
I will take away its hedge,
and it will be consumed;
I will tear down its wall,
and it will be trampled.
⁶I will make it a wasteland,
neither pruned nor cultivated,
and thorns and briers will grow up.
I will command the clouds
that rain shall not fall on it."
⁷For the vineyard of the LORD of Hosts
is the house of Israel,
and the men of Judah
are the plant of His delight.
He looked for justice,
but saw bloodshed;
for righteousness,
but heard a cry of distress

Isaiah 5:1-7, BSB

Old Testament references to the stone

¹³The LORD of Hosts is the One
you shall regard as holy.
Only He should be feared;
only He should be dreaded.

¹⁴And He will be a sanctuary—
but to both houses of Israel
a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense,
to the dwellers of Jerusalem
a trap and a snare.

¹⁵Many will stumble over these;
they will fall and be broken;
they will be ensnared and captured.”
Isaiah 8:13-15

¹⁶So this is what the Lord GOD says:
“See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a tested stone,
a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation;
the one who believes will never be shaken.
Isaiah 28:16

²²The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.
²³This is from the LORD,
and it is marvellous in our eyes.
²⁴This is the day that the LORD has made;
we will rejoice and be glad in it.
Psalm 118:22-24

New Testament reference to the Stone

³⁰What then will we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; ³¹but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. ³²Why not? Because their pursuit was not by faith, but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, ³³as it is written:
“See, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling
and a rock of offense;
and the one who believes in Him
will never be put to shame.”
Romans 9:30-33 (Isaiah 28:16)

Music and songs

Songs about the beauty of God's creation, v9

Creation sings the Father's song (Getty)
Everything that has breath praise the Lord, Ot 49
From the mountains... Hear our praises, Ot 27
God of wonders, Ot 7
Greatness of our God (Newsboys)
How big is God (Gaither)
How excellent Your name, Ot 99
My God is so big
Our God is a great big God, 1475
The earth is the Lord's

Songs about God requiring us to be fruitful, v10

He has shown all of you, SiS 59
In my life Lord... Lord be glorified, 5 / SiS 577
Let the flame burn brighter, Ot 44
You are the vine, we are the branches,
Reign in me, P&W 446
Rise up, you people of power, P&W 517
Seek ye first, SiS 96

Songs about the death of Jesus, v13-15

He paid a debt He did not owe,
My worth is not in what I own... At the cross, (Getty)

Songs about the justice of God, v15-16

Ascribe greatness to our God the Rock... all His ways are just, 331
When He rolls up His sleeves... our God is an awesome God, Ot 50

Songs about what is written in Scripture, v17

Ancient words, Ot 94
Red letters (D C Talk)
So many books, (Michael Card), Ot 81
The Book (Michael Card)
Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, Ot 63

Songs based on the rejected stone, v17-18

I go to the Rock, Ot 100
In Christ alone... the Cornerstone, this solid ground, Ot 4
My hope is built... On Christ the solid Rock I stand, H
The building block (Noel Paul Stookey)

Matthew 21:33–46	Mark 12:1–12	Luke 20:9-18
³³Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a tower. Then he rented it out to some tenants and went away on a journey. ³⁴When the harvest time drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his share of the fruit. ³⁵But the tenants seized his servants. They beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. ³⁶Again, he sent other servants, more than the first group. But the tenants did the same to them. ³⁷Finally, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said. ³⁸But when the tenants saw the son, they said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and take his inheritance.’ ³⁹So they seized him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.	¹Then Jesus began to speak to them in parables: “A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a wine vat, and built a watchtower. Then he rented it out to some tenants and went away on a journey. ²At harvest time, he sent a servant to the tenants to collect his share of the fruit of the vineyard. ³But they seized the servant, beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. ⁴Then he sent them another servant, and they struck him over the head and treated him shamefully. ⁵He sent still another, and this one they killed. He sent many others; some they beat and others they killed. ⁶Finally, having one beloved son, he sent him to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said. ⁷But the tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ ⁸So they seized the son, killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.	⁹Then He proceeded to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard, rented it out to some tenants, and went away for a long time. ¹⁰At harvest time, he sent a servant to the tenants to collect his share of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat the servant and sent him away empty-handed. ¹¹So he sent another servant, but they beat him and treated him shamefully, sending him away empty-handed. ¹²Then he sent a third, but they wounded him and threw him out. ¹³‘What shall I do?’ asked the owner of the vineyard. ‘I will send my beloved son. Perhaps they will respect him.’ ¹⁴But when the tenants saw the son, they discussed it among themselves and said, ‘This is the heir. Let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ ¹⁵So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

⁴⁰Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard returns, what will he do to those tenants?" ⁴¹"He will bring those wretches to a wretched end," they replied, "and will rent out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him his share of the fruit at harvest time." ⁴²Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is from the Lord, and it is marvellous in our eyes'?" ⁴³Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. ⁴⁴He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed."	⁹What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants, and will give the vineyard to others. ¹⁰Have you never read this Scripture: 'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. ¹¹This is from the Lord, and it is marvellous in our eyes'?"	What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? ¹⁶He will come and kill those tenants, and will give the vineyard to others." And when the people heard this, they said, "May such a thing never happen!" ¹⁷But Jesus looked directly at them and said, "Then what is the meaning of that which is written: 'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone'?" ¹⁸Everyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed."
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⁴⁵When the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they knew that Jesus was speaking about them. ⁴⁶Although they wanted to arrest Him, they were afraid of the crowds, because the people regarded Him as a prophet.	¹²At this, the leaders sought to arrest Jesus, for they knew that He had spoken this parable against them. But fearing the crowd, they left Him and went away.	¹⁹When the scribes and chief priests realized that Jesus had spoken this parable against them, they sought to arrest Him that very hour. But they were afraid of the people.
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Thought starters for personal reflection or group discussion

1. Many people have written God's Position Description for Him (health, wealth, happiness, peace). Why does He seem to ignore them?
 2. Why do you think God passes the requirements for health, wealth, happiness, and peace, back on us? Are we supposed to do God's job?
 3. Read Luke 20:9-10. What is the vineyard God gives us; and what is the fruit He expects of us?
 4. The tenants refused to give God His due (v10-12). What is a recent example of people being anti-God? Why doesn't God zap them?
 5. What does it mean to fall on the cornerstone and be broken (v18)? How can this be a good thing?
 6. What does it mean to have the stone fall you and be crushed (v18)? Why is this a bad thing?
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