

Mark 12:1-12, Parable of the Tenants

See Mark 11:18, 27 for context. The chief priests, the scribes, and elders are challenging Jesus. They want to kill him, so they are looking for anything that will give them an excuse.

They are in Jerusalem, so it is coming up to the time when Jesus will die.

Who does each character in the parable represent?

- The vineyard is Israel (see Isaiah 5)
- The 'man' is God
- The tenants are the leaders of Israel – the chief priests, scribes, elders, etc..
- The slaves are the prophets
- The son is Jesus

What is Jesus saying about himself in this parable?

- He is more than a prophet
- He is going to die at their hands
- He is the whole crux/key to the faith.
- See Ps 118 for cornerstone reference

What is Jesus saying about his listeners?

- They are faithless, greedy (verse 7), guilty
- They will be rejected and punished by God, in favour of others (Gentiles)

What does their response to the parable show about them?

- They fulfill the parable in their response! Instead of 'respecting the son' (verse 6), they reject him (verse 12).

Application:

- This parable challenges us in how we respond to Jesus. Do we respect him as the son of our true 'owner'?
Have you felt the full weight of his warning about what happens to those who reject him?
- Do we challenge his authority over our lives because we don't like what he has to say?
- Is he the cornerstone of our community and our own lives?