

Remnant Life Church
October 15, 2017
The Parable of the Patient Landowner
Pt. 1
Matthew 21:33-44

- Parables are loved by most Christians for several reasons
 - They are most times easier to understand
 - They are more easily relatable for the 21st century Christian
 - They are a quick, concise story that has a powerful meaning
- This particular one is told in all three of the Synoptic Gospels
 - Mark 12
 - Luke 20
 - Matt 21

READ – Matt 21:33-44

The Setting:

- Jesus has made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem
 - He has overturned the money tables in the temple
 - Goes back to Bethany for the night (most likely to the home of Mary, Martha, and a very alive Lazarus)
 - He is confronted by the Pharisees about His authority
 - Then begins to teach using several parables
- This second parable of Jesus is presented in the style of an allegory
 - An allegory is a story where each character or primary component of the story represents someone or something real
- There are 6 allegorical meanings in this story
 1. The Landowner is God
 2. The vineyard is the nation of Israel
 3. The wicked tenants represent the Jewish religious leaders – the priests and people
 4. The servants sent represent the OT prophets
 5. The owner's son is Jesus
 6. The new tenants of the vineyard represent the true Church (including us today)
- We tend (understandably) to read the parables of Jesus from the human perspective and not God's
- We note this most especially in the names we give the parables
 - Human perspective: The parable of the prodigal son
 - God's perspective: The parable of the forgiving father
 - Human perspective: The parable of the workers in the vineyard
 - God's perspective: The parable of the generous boss
 - TODAY – human perspective: The parable of the tenants
 - God's perspective: The parable of the patient landowner

- In this parable we are given 4 foundational truths about the character of God and, with each truth, a lesson for us today

1. God is the owner

- In the most literal sense everything we see and experience in life God, as the creator, “owns” it all
- In this parable the tenants were placed in the vineyard to manage and work it
 - It was not theirs
 - They even got to keep the majority of what was produced
 - The owner only wanted a portion of the grapes
- But this reveals a primary root of sin - independence from God
- Gen 3:1-5** - *Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”*
- In other words...independent
- satan loves independent Christians
 - Gen 2:18** - *The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone.*
 - The word for “man” in the original Hebrew is for both singular man and the plural mankind
 - God was not only declaring that for Adam but for all of humankind
 - Why is it that one of the symptoms of depression, fear, acts of known sin in our lives is isolation?
 - He wants to try and remove us from the way God created us to operate best

- **Lesson: I don’t own anything; I just manage some of God’s property**

- The term “sharecropper” was put in use in the early 1920s
- It was primarily a southern term
- Families that lived and farmed a plot of land owned by someone else
 - They plowed, planted, cultivated, harvested, stored the crop
 - For their hard labor they kept a portion and the owner received the rest
 - But that crop was temporary so they had to do it all over again every single year at that same time
- In a very real sense that is what we are – sharecroppers for God’s land
 - But like the tenants we often mistakenly begin to think it is ours
 - Or that our efforts are the source of what we have
- One of the earliest words for almost every child is “mine!”
 - We laugh at the absurdity of the child’s thinking
- What must God think when we do the same thing?
- Every good thing in our lives is a gift from God – and it is all temporary

2. God is patient

- a. The owner of the vineyard sent a servant to collect the rent
- b. He was killed; then another is sent and he is beaten
- c. Today, if you fail to pay your rent you are evicted from the property and subject to arrest
- d. The Bible speaks often of the patience of God and the virtue of patience in our own lives
 - i. **Jas 5:7** - *Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains.*
 - ii. The apostle Paul tells us that patience is one of the qualities of life that we should clothe or wrap around ourselves every day – **Col 3:12**

• **Lesson: God will send many messengers to communicate His will for my life**

- e. This parable is also about us
 - i. We have each been given a “vineyard” to manage
 - ii. They don't look the same
 - iii. We don't all have the same responsibilities
 - iv. But He does require a return from His property
 1. Not all of it
 2. Not 90% or 50%
 3. Only 10% as a start
 - v. God's primary interest is not in your money – it's in YOU!
 - f. He sends messages and messengers to you all of the time
 - g. Even though we reject Him time after time He is patient and continues to pursue us with His love and His will
- In the 19th century, before radio or television, people in America found entertainment by listening to public speakers, called orators. One of the most famous and infamous was a gifted atheist by the name of Robert Ingersoll. He traveled around the country delivering speeches on the foolishness of believing in God. He often concluded his speech with a dramatic challenge. He would shake his fist to heaven and say, “If there is a God, I dare Him to strike me dead in 10 seconds!” Then he slowly counted to ten. Women fainted and God-fearing people rushed for the exits, fully expecting God to send a fireball and consume Robert Ingersoll. Well, nothing happened. Then Ingersoll would finish by saying, “Now how can anyone believe in God?” But one time, in a small Midwestern town, a godly woman laughed out loud and loudly said, “Mr. Ingersoll, do you think you can exhaust God's wonderful patience in just 10 seconds?” Ingersoll later died at the young age of 65 from heart failure. God was patient with him for many years but he was eventually required to give an account and pay for mishandling of his vineyard.