

# Mark 12:1-12

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[ 0 : 00 ] I don't know if anybody else feels this way, or maybe from time to time. I'm having just a crazy morning. In a very kind of microcosmic way, we were getting ready.

Sam and I were running late this morning trying to get the boys rallied. Sunday morning breaks their normal routine. They normally get up and they get to watch a cartoon while they eat their breakfast. Sunday mornings we throw them in clothes and throw them in the van and they eat on the run. And Judah really, really wanted, Sam had said he could get two animals, and he really wanted this one particular tree frog that he had. And so I was helping him and he really thought it was in his bucket and we couldn't find it.

We had this whole selection process of the replacement tree frog for the one he really wanted. And just in this little five-minute absolute frustration for me, I realized that's how my whole morning has been going.

And after that, got a call that the water wasn't functioning too well in the building this morning, which I'm sure many of you have already experienced. We're on a well.

[ 1 : 03 ] The filter was really dirty, so we thought maybe that was it. Threw a new filter in. That's not it. It seems that just generally in the county, the water table is really low. And so praise God for the potential rain that's coming to bring the water table back up.

The pumps are shut off, so there is no water in the building if you're wondering at this moment what's happening with that. But the time I would have normally spent just re-going over my notes, I spent running up and down the stairs and playing with the pump and trying to figure out what in the world was going on with that.

And I'm in this really bad habit. I wouldn't suggest any of you who are intending to preach to make notes like I do notes, because I essentially preach to myself all week. I'm just constantly looking at the scriptures, and literally in my head I preach to myself.

I don't picture you guys. I picture me, and I tell me what I need to hear from this particular text. And then when I go, oh, that was good, I write it down. But usually in this very abbreviated form that will just help jog my memory to say it the way I said it in my head.

And so it's really important that I go back and review my notes so I know what in the world I'm talking about. In fact, I do this to the degree that I've gone back thinking, for example, college Bible study right now is going through 1 Peter, which a bunch of years ago we preached through 1 Peter.

[ 2 : 22 ] Oh, like three years ago. And I got assigned a text that I'd previously done. I remember doing it. So I went and found my notes, and they made no sense to me. There were some references that made sense.

I mean, obviously I had some framework going on there, but why did I write that down? And what did I intend to say as a result? So that's kind of where I find myself this morning as I'm coming to my notes.

I looked at them briefly and went, I don't even know what that means. So let's pray together. For God's grace, for the preaching of his word this morning.

We always need it. We need it more. We feel our need for it more at some time. So let's pray together. Father, it is a blessing to get to come to your word.

For us to all hold copies of various sort, translation, some digital, some in paper, some big and some small in our laps this morning.

[ 3 : 19 ] And to have a church that celebrates the truth and desires to come around it and to align our lives with it is a great grace wrought by you.

Father, as we all come from different directions this morning with different levels of craziness in our day, I would ask that you be very gracious to us.

Still our hearts focus our minds that we might hear what you would say to us by your word this morning. There is no authority in my speaking except for the authority of your written word. Help us to cherish it. Help us to want to hear from you this morning. To desire to have our little worlds crushed by your astounding love to us.

And Father, help all of this, the great end of it all, be that we love you more as a result of what we do here together today, that we will proclaim your excellencies, that we will leave this place shouting to the mountaintops how great our God is.

[ 4 : 30 ] We pray all of this in Jesus' precious and holy name. Amen. So we are now in Mark chapter 12.

It is Wednesday of what's been called Passion Week. Jesus will be crucified on Friday. And we're going to spend a good majority of the rest of our time in Mark in Wednesday.

Quite a bit of the text itself is on Wednesday. Things are winding down in one sense and certainly winding up in another sense. He's entered Jerusalem on Monday, which we see at the beginning of chapter 11.

He cleanses the temple on Tuesday. Begins to make quite a hubbub in town already. And then Kyle last week preached from the very end of chapter 11.

And we see the confrontation that begins in Jerusalem with the scribes and the Pharisees, all these religious elite leaders that eventually leads to his crucifixion on Friday.

[ 5 : 32 ] And so that's where we find ourselves as we come to the beginning of chapter 12. So follow along as I read to you, starting in verse 1. And he began to speak to them in parables.

A man planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a pit for the winepress and built a tower and leased it to tenants and went into another country. When the season came, he sent a servant to the tenants to get from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.

And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Again, he sent to them another servant and they struck him on the head and treated him shapefully. And he sent another and him they killed.

And so with many others, some they beat and some they killed. He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally, he sent him to them saying, They will respect my son.

But those tenants said to one another, This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and the inheritance will be ours. And they took him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard.

[ 6 : 32 ] What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others. Have you not read this scripture? The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

This was the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes. And they were seeking to arrest him but feared the people for they perceived that he had told the parable against them.

So they left him and went away. This is God's word to us. It was written for his glory and our good. We would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands.

Jesus begins, verse 1, we see, to speak to them in parables. And I think it's important for us to note who it is that he's talking to.

Chapter 11, verse 27. It's the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Essentially, all of those at the top. The upper echelon of apostate Judaism is who he's speaking this parable to.

[ 7 : 38 ] And Jesus is such a masterful storyteller. I would encourage you at some point to take a brief break from whatever study you're doing in the scriptures and spend some time just studying the parables of Jesus.

Brilliant in every regard. Direct to the point. Speaks to these people in terms that they understood. Drew their minds to the exact place that he intended for them to go.

For us, it takes a little more work sometimes. We have to understand context a bit more. But boy, were these stories pointed and perfect in every regard. Now, we've seen parables serve some different purposes.

Back in Mark chapter 4, he's speaking in parables to the crowd at Barad. And in verse 10, it says that when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables.

And he said to them, to you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God. But for those outside, everything is in parables so that they may indeed see, but not perceive and may indeed hear, but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven.

[ 8 : 48 ] So Jesus has used the parables to veil the truth in a sense, to speak about the kingdom of God in such a way that only those whose hearts had been enlightened by the spirit understood what he was saying to them.

It was kind of a shrouding of the truth. But now, he's using a parable in a much more pointed fashion. These darkened, hard-hearted religious leaders fully understand that he is speaking about them.

We see this to be the case in verse 12. For they perceived, brilliant fellas, glad you figured it out, that he was talking against them.

These religious leaders, these apostates, these who were leading the people of Israel astray. And the story starts out with a man.

This man here is God who plants a vineyard, puts a fence around it, digs a pit for the wine press, builds a tower. And for us, these might seem like unimportant details, but all of these things were necessary for the flourishing of a vineyard.

[ 10 : 00 ] In fact, in this area, the valleys are very, very fertile, soft, good ground. The mountains are full of stones. It took a lot of work to prepare the hillsides, and this is where they grew.

Wheat in the valley, wine, grapes up on the hillside. They would have put a tower in the middle of it, so they could have guarded over it, from animals that would come and eat the grapes, as well as any marauders that would come and try to take over the vineyards.

They would build a pit and a wine press, so that they could process the grapes into something that was useful for their consumption. These things were all necessary, and so already he's catching them up into this story.

A man who builds a good vineyard. A right and a proper vineyard. But what does the vineyard represent in the story? What or who is the vineyard?

The vineyard is Israel. He's making here a direct reference to Isaiah 5, verse 1 and 2. You're welcome to turn there, or just listen.

[ 11 : 05 ] Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard. My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He dug it and cleared it of stones and planted it with choice vines.

He built a watchtower in the midst of it and hewed out a wine vat in it, and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. There are many other Old Testament references as well to this as a symbol, like Psalm 80, verses 8 and 9.

This is a psalm of Asaph. You brought a vine out of Egypt. You drove out the nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it. It took deep root and filled the land.

This symbol is used most often to speak positively about the Lord's planting of His vineyard, His keeping of it, His tending of it, the way in which He sustains it.

But it's also used to speak in negative about Israel, this vineyard that He had planted, and the way in which it lacked the proper fruit.

[ 12 : 11 ] We saw that Isaiah 5 at the end of verse 2. Looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes, which was not a grape that was good for wine making.

Again, later on in Isaiah 5, verse 7, For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are His pleasant planting. And He looked for, here's the fruit He's looking for, the good grapes, He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed.

For righteousness, but behold, an outcry. Again, Jeremiah 2, verse 21, Yet I planted you a choice vine, holy of pure seed.

How then have you turned degenerate and become a wild vine? They did not produce the fruit that was keeping with righteousness. They didn't produce the fruit that was proper for the people of God.

Now, much of this was because the tenants, those that were put in charge over this vineyard, speaking here of those with spiritual leadership, did not lead well.

[ 13 : 25 ] Now, Israel is certainly held accountable as a nation. Individuals will be held accountable as individuals in our church. You will be held accountable for the sins that you commit, both those of omission and commission, but I will be held accountable to a higher degree for the way in which I teach you to obey the Word of God.

What a weight that is, especially on a morning like this. So here we see in this parable a particular indictment against the religious leaders. Jesus is not dismissing Israel for their lack of following Him, but particularly as these men come to confront Him, which is not a new thing for Jesus, He's already

experienced this as He's traveled all over Galilee.

They've been sending men out to Him. They've already been trying to trap Him. He's been avoiding them all along. But here we see in this final week as things are coming to a head, the great climax of this redemptive story is about to happen.

The confrontations also increase. And so specifically, He's speaking against these men. Again, chapter 11, verse 27, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders who came to Him.

Listen to what He says in Matthew 23. You'd do well to turn here. Matthew 23. There's a well-known chapter where Jesus speaks out against the Pharisees, the woes.

[14:53] He says, woe to them, woe to them, woe to them. Beginning in verse 1 of Matthew 23, then Jesus said to the crowds and to His disciples, the scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, meaning they were given authority, they were religious leaders, over the people.

So, do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do, for they preach, but do not practice.

They were great hypocrites. The great picture of hypocrisy. And sadly, I think we too often reflect the way in which they live. Verse 4, they tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with a finger.

They do all their deeds to be seen by others, for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honor at feasts, and the best seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the marketplaces, and being called rabbi by others.

These men had taken these positions and used it for their own self-exaltation. The phylactery was a small leather box that carried the law of God on their foreheads, and their fringes were on their prayer shawls, and them having longer fringes was supposed to be a greater thing.

[16:16] They were more serious about their devotion to the way in which God had called them to live. It seemed that they were getting into a competition about who could be better and greater and be exalted by people.

Is this not the way that so many of us live? Do you identify in any way with these rulers? Piling up for yourself praise and exaltation.

Don't forget where we've been in Mark. Put yourself back in Mark 8. The ways in which that Jesus has now set Himself aside. He's teaching the disciples.

He's traveling towards Jerusalem. He's got this final few months with them moving along. And He says some incredible, shocking things about what it looks like to follow Him.

The high cost of discipleship. Chapter 8, verse 34. If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. You must die.

[17:20] You must lay down who you are if you want to be found in Christ and be found to be called His. Chapter 9, verse 35. If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.

Chapter 10, verse 31. But many who are first will be last and the last first. Chapter 10 again, verse 43.

But whoever will be great among you must be your servant. And who will be first among you must be slave of all. And He puts the great punctuation mark on all of this as Himself as the example.

He has yet to do this, but we're here coming to it in this week we're studying. Verse 45. For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.

This is what it looks like to follow Jesus. This is what it looks like to not be apostate and to follow God. This is not at all what these religious rulers were doing. They were the antithesis of this.

[18:23] The very opposite of this thing. And we see that even they are aware of it. By the end of His story in verse 12, they have perceived that He's talking about them.

The indictment is on them. And yet they fail to repent. They instead seek to kill Him at the appropriate time when they feel that they can get away with such an act.

And back in our story, verse 2. When the season came, He sent a servant to the tenants to get from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.

Now this whole practice of leasing out a property, even setting it up and then giving it to people to work was very common in this day. It's not entirely uncommon in our day either.

But the way that they would go about this exchange is that the owner of the land would get some percentage of the crop that was yielded. So that's all He's saying here is driving this story along.

He's bringing the people who are listening, particularly these religious leaders, along in this story.

[ 19 : 27 ] So they see there's a good vineyard built, there's tenants put over it, and when the fruit comes, the proper thing is to follow. The man who's gone away has sent somebody to collect what is rightfully his.

What would have been expected. Verse 3, And they took him, and they beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. So the servant is beaten and sent back.

Verse 4, Again he sent to them another servant, and they struck him on the head and treated him shamefully. And he sent another, and him they killed, and so with many others.

Some they beat, and some they killed. Now note for a moment this man with this vineyard and his great, great patience and mercy towards the tenants.

In fact, at this point, the people listening would have already been kind of enraged by the activity of this man. Why did he not go and destroy these tenants after they beat and sent away a servant the first time?

[ 20 : 31 ] The proper and right thing for them to have done on the first sending of the servant would have been to yield the crop, give to him what was rightfully his, and send it back, and they refused to do it. This was grounds for their very dismissal.

In fact, he would have had much room to punish, right? To destroy them and to drive them out.

Well, we see this man standing as a symbol for our Lord and the way in which he dealt with Israel with great patience, sending to them another, and another, and another.

Listen to the words of the Lord. Return to me. You are my people. I will be your God. These words echo all throughout the Old Testament. The way in which he beckons his people to come back to him.

And so, who are these servants in our parable? Who do they represent? They're the prophets.

They're the prophets. And what had the leaders of Israel done with the prophets?

All of you are scholars of your Old Testament. I know you know it so well. From Moses all the way to John, the baptizer, they largely rejected them.

[ 21 : 43 ] Largely rejected them. Some repentance. Some turning back. But for the most part, they rejected them. Some examples for you. Tradition holds that Isaiah was sawn in half and Jeremiah was stoned to death.

Ezekiel hated. Amos had to flee for his life. Zechariah was rejected and stoned. Micah was beaten.

And here in our Mark's Gospel account, John the baptizer was beheaded.

They rejected the messengers of God. They didn't want to hear what they had to say. Jesus sums this up again back in Matthew 23.

I should have had you keep your finger there. Beginning in verse 29. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, saying, if we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in the shedding and shedding the blood of the prophets.

They were so self-righteous they thought themselves above their forefathers who had done these things. Right? Who had destroyed these prophets. So they're building for them monuments. They're decorating these monuments and they're saying we would have nothing to do with the murder of the prophets.

[ 23 : 09 ] Verse 31. The indictment Jesus delivers to them. Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up then the measure of your fathers you serpents you brood of vipers.

How are you to escape being sentenced to hell? That's our Lord. Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes some of whom you will kill and crucify and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zachariah the son of Barakai whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.

Truly I say to you all these things will come upon this generation. So what is he saying to them?

He's saying I'm going to prove that you are as evil as your forefathers. You're going to kill me and then I'm going to send to you many people who are going to come and profess the truth of God and you're going to kill them too.

And we see this all play out in this prediction that happens here. that's who these men are. And boy the scathing way in which Jesus speaks to them.

He gives them no space to wiggle out of this whatsoever. Serpents brood of vipers evil men with evil intentions proclaiming to be men of God and yet were not in any way whatsoever.

[ 24 : 39 ] Now Jesus uses two titles of himself in the coming verses and we really need to hone in on this and really pay attention to this.

So we see the different slaves are sent. Kind of this amassing number of slaves. It would appear that this man runs out of slaves. He sends so many different servants to them that he's out. He's tapped out. No more servants to send because verse 6 says he still had one other. A beloved son. Who is this?

It is the Christ. It is Jesus. The beloved son. The man says they will respect my son but the tenants said to one another this is the heir.

This is the Christ. Come let us kill him and the inheritance will be ours. And they took him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. Jesus is coming and he is disrupting their little world of their religious eliteness.

[ 25 : 45 ] They are getting knocked down off of their thrones that they have set up. For the second time now Jesus has come and he has taken over the temple. It happens previously at the very beginning of his ministry.

We see that in John 2. This is the second time he's come back now and he's done it again. This courtyard of the Gentiles was a huge space and I would just love, oh would I love to see it.

I hope that when we get to heaven we somehow get the revelation of what that looked like and we watch the DVD or something of him driving out and controlling this massive, massive space.

He's totally disrupted and that's why they're coming to him and that's why as Kyle was talking about they're saying by what authority? You can't just come in and take over like this? He's putting them in their place.

He's disrupting all of this. And they don't want that. They want the temporary good. They want the temporary glory. They want him out of the picture so they can continue to persist in leading in the way that they have.

[ 26 : 49 ] Amassing for themselves. Getting all of the praise in that time. Jesus is the beloved Son. Remember back in Mark 1 when Jesus was baptized by John the baptizer.

We see this beautiful picture of the Trinity all in one place. Jesus being baptized. The Spirit of God descending like a dove and a voice coming from heaven that says, You are my beloved Son. With you, I am well pleased. Places this seal and this mark on him and his ministry really kicks off at this point. The amazing thing, beloved, and the reason I call you that, is that if you're in Christ, we are also now children of God.

Jesus is the Son of God. This complex, mind-blowing, Trinitarian truth and the ministry apprenticeship that we have going on here this afternoon. We're going to talk about the Trinity. It is such a difficult thing. It's clearly biblically taught. So hard to understand. We've got this equal, coexisting, three-part God and yet it exists in some hierarchy.

[ 28 : 04 ] The Son yielding to the will of the Father. The Father loving the Son. It's a complex deal. But this passes to us. We get to join in. Not that we're part of God, but we get to be part of this wonderful family and this communion that exists in that way.

John writes in 1 John, 1-3, See what kind of love the Father has given to us that we should be called children of God? And so we are.

The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. Beloved, we are God's children now and what we will be has not yet appeared, but we know that when He appears we should be like Him because we shall see Him as He is.

And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure. If you have placed your hope, if you have placed believing faith in Jesus Christ, you are a child of God.

And you see that the clear expectation as we've been studying through Mark is that we're also going to experience the kind of suffering that Christ experiences. We've seen this now a number of times throughout the text.

[ 29 : 20 ] Prosperity gospel, be damned. It's not the truth. We will suffer and we will die for our faith. We live in a comfortable place where this isn't a reality to us.

And the shameful thing is because most of us aren't living for Christ. Most of us have bought into this cheap grace idea. Right? You check a box.

Christian. You show up for an hour and a half. Maybe some bonus things. You plug in somewhere and do your monthly service. And you think you're good and right with God.

Discipleship is costly. It costs you everything. But it's worth it. Trade what you can't keep to that eternal thing that you cannot lose. Right? This is the high call of the gospel.

To be children of God. John very poignantly says the reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. We will be rejected by the world but we will be accepted by God.

[ 30 : 25 ] Isn't this a better thing? Here we see these scribes, these Pharisees, these elders, the religious leaders who were highly accepted by the world. Jesus said in Matthew 23, how will you escape hell?

How? This is what you're looking for in life. Your end is destruction. What a tragic thing. Place your faith in Christ. Accept what comes with that.

The high cost of discipleship and be called a child of God. It says in the text that they killed Him and then they threw Him out.

This is likely a reference to the wide rejection of Jesus by Israel. They threw Him out of the vineyard altogether. The vineyard itself did not contain Him any longer but they tossed Him outside of its walls and so Jesus opens the indictment up a bit more.

And then He asks the question in verse 9, what will the owner of the vineyard do? Now in the parallel text in Matthew 21, verse 41, they respond, they said to Him, He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give Him the fruits in their season.

[ 31 : 48 ] Now remember who He's talking to. He's talking to these religious scribes. These people who should have had all the answers. And they did in this case. In Matthew's account, they respond with the right thing.

Jesus has so caught them up into this story that they've yet to really realize that they're now delivering judgment on themselves. What's He going to do to these men who have treated Him so shamefully, who in every way have made themselves His enemy?

They say, who put Him to a miserable death? That's the right and proper thing to do. They understood capital punishment. Genesis 9, 6. God speaks to Noah and says, whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed.

For God made man in His own image. They would have been furious as much as they were engaging in this story, this fiction that's happening before them, at the way in which these tenants treated the man who owned this vineyard.

Put them to death. Come. Put them to death. Drive them out. Give the vineyard to other tenants who give Him the fruits in their season.

[ 32 : 59 ] And then Jesus brings another title into our scene in verse 10. Jesus is the cornerstone. He's the cornerstone.

Have you not read this Scripture? Now, when Jesus uses words like this, He's really mocking these men because they had read it. They clearly had read it.

These were the experts on the law. I can't hold myself in comparison to the way they understood the Scriptures. I'm not like this in my knowledge. We know men who are in our country we look to, we use their commentaries and go and source them for help in understanding the Scriptures.

So they knew this. They had read the Scripture. The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes.

Now, if you don't know much about this ancient architecture, the cornerstone was incredibly important for the building of a building because it had to be hewn, right? They chipped away.

[ 34 : 02 ] They built these things, blocks of rock. They built stones to be stacked. Incredible. I hope someday to get to travel and see firsthand some of this ancient architecture. That cornerstone was so important because it had to be laid out perfectly square on all sides because it built the walls out as well as the way in which the wall would be built up.

Right? So if it was crooked in any way whatsoever, the wall would lean or the walls would gap out or they would narrow in. The building wouldn't be put together properly. The cornerstone was key to the function of the entire building.

Without it, the building could not hold together. It could not be properly built. This is further significant because he's quoting here Psalm 118, 22, and 23.

Now I know all of you have great memories. So you're remembering a number of weeks ago when Clay spoke at the beginning of chapter 11 about the triumphal entry.

And they called out all the people called out Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes! in the name of the Lord. And guess what they're quoting there? Psalm 118, verse 26.

[ 35 : 17 ] Just a few verses after this very thing that Jesus is quoting. The stone that the builders project has become the cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes.

So by the profession of the people as he came in on Monday, he is that cornerstone. And this may be the point we don't know exactly, but this may be the point at which in their minds it turns and they get, oh, aha, he's talking about us.

Oh, he's saying he's the cornerstone. And it mentions there in verse 12 that they feared the people. So they left him and they went away.

Very clever of our Lord to quote from Psalm 118, 22 and 23 in this case. Now you remember verse 9, pulling us back up, you remember in verse 9 that the tenants are going to be destroyed and the vineyard is going to be given to others.

In Matthew's account it says that the tenants will give him the fruits of their season. The others will be new tenants that will give him fruits in their season. So who is Jesus referring to when he talks about the others?

[ 36 : 31 ] Who is this vineyard going to be given to? I think specifically and firstly we need to understand to the apostles.

Already there's been some authority shift. Hasn't there? Jesus has been teaching them along the way correcting their thinking. He's given them charge to go out and preach the gospel of the coming kingdom.

He's given them the ability to cast out demons and to heal people. There's already been a bit of a power shift in the structure already and it will only increase as he sends his spirit the helper to come along.

Jesus says that the apostles are going to do greater works than he does. They're going to become the new leaders. The new tenants over Israel being God's people.

Remember that 21 verse 43 of Matthew Therefore I tell you the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits.

[ 37 : 31 ] producing good works. These would be the new heralds of the truth. The guardians of it. So specifically the apostles and then beyond that to us.

We're in that lineage now as those who believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ. That message has passed across the generations and we are now those heralds of the truth.

If you don't believe me I think you do. But just in case you don't let's turn to 1 Peter together.

Chapter 2. The scriptures are such a wonderful web interweaving of symbolism written across so many years by so many different writers but all inspired by the spirit of God.

1 Peter chapter 2. I'll begin reading in verse 4. As you come to him him is Jesus here a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

So as we come to Jesus Christ the living stone this cornerstone we are also stones being built into a house to offer what?

[ 39 : 18 ] Sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Fruit bearing good fruit good works preaching the gospel loving our neighbors. Verse 6 For it stands in Scripture Behold I am laying in Zion a stone a cornerstone chosen and precious and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.

So the honor is for you who believe but for those who do not believe the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone Does that sound familiar? Verse 8 And a stone of stumbling and a rock of fence they stumble because they disobey the word as they were destined to do but you are a chosen race a royal priesthood a holy nation a people for his own possession Why?

That you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light That's why we exist church Once you were not a people but now you are God's people Once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy verse 10 is borrowing from Hosea What a beautiful beautiful picture this is of us being built into a holy dwelling place for God Do you see the great juxtaposition here in the story?

Jesus is using this story directly as an indictment against these men that he's talking to but it broadens out as he talks about who he is and we have a great understanding now on this side of all

of the gospel realities who we are now in him this is why we're created this high cost of discipleship for us to walk in all of us all of us a holy priesthood all of us are meant to be going and sharing going and doing it's not reserved for my position in this church all of you have been given this responsibility my job primarily is to help you go do your job 2nd Corinthians chapter 5 makes the point again and I'm going to close with this 2nd Corinthians chapter 5 beginning of verse 17 therefore if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation the old is passed away behold the new has come all this is from

God who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation understand that we are enemies of God and the ministry of reconciliation is that we help people make peace with God verse 19 that is in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation therefore we are ambassadors for Christ God making his appeal through us we implore you on behalf of Christ be reconciled to God so if you are in Christ you have the ministry of reconciliation to be about the work of bringing people to peace with God and understand beloved this is a big deal just before this in 2nd Corinthians Paul said that we no longer regard anyone according to the flesh and what he's meaning there is that they see people as eternal beings no one's life gets snuffed out and it ends there they go on forever and where do they go on to we should really want to know this we should be really concerned about this with everyone we encounter do you understand the weight of sin and its subsequent consequence oh if you do plead with people to come to the

[ 43 : 05 ] Lord that they might have life now and for eternity this is the message of reconciliation God has granted it to us he makes his appeal through us and that appeal is simply this if you do not know where you stand in this if you think I may I may be in the camp of these religious elite I go through the motions I do the things outside I'm looking pretty good inside I'm full of dead people's bones I'm full of hypocrisy if you think you align with them in this way this is the appeal to you we implore you on behalf of Christ be reconciled to God let's pray together