

## PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD OWNER

MATTHEW 21:33-46; MARK 12:1-12; LUKE 20:9-19

Did you know that Jesus was a great story teller? He told stories to grown ups as well as to children. And every story had a very special meaning.

One day Jesus told the people this story or parable to teach them God's truth. We find it in the books of Matthew, Mark and Luke in the New Testament part of the Bible. Jesus said there was a farmer who planted grape vines and built a wall to protect them from robbers. He rented it to men who promised him part of the grapes when they were ripe. Then the owner of the vineyard went away to a different country.

When the grapes were ripe, the owner of the vineyard sent his servant to collect his share. But the men who rented the farm beat up that servant and chased him away. Then the owner sent another servant to collect his share. But the renters threw stones at him and hurt him in the head. The owner sent still other servants to collect the rent. Some were beaten up and others killed. At last the owner sent his only son, for he thought "They would not dare harm my son. They will respect him." But the men who were renting said to each other, "This landowner's son is going to inherit and own this farm someday. Come on, let's kill him and then it will all be ours." So they caught him and killed him. Jesus asked, "When the owner of the grape farm, the vineyard, returned, what will he do to those wicked men?" The people answered, "He will have them killed and rent the farm to someone who will give him his share.

In this story the owner of the vineyard means God. And the wicked men who rented the vineyard meant the Jewish leaders who hated Jesus. The Bible tells us that the religious leaders, the chief priests, the Pharisees, and the scribes who were listening to Jesus' story knew that Jesus was speaking this parable against them. They had turned against God. They had persecuted and killed his prophets in the Old Testament and John the Baptist who was a forerunner of Jesus whom God had sent to warn and help them. Then at last God had sent his only Son, Jesus. And in just a few days from the time Jesus told this story they were going to kill Him.

Just as the wicked vine growers had killed the son of the owner of the vineyard, the religious leaders wanted Jesus killed because they were proud and jealous and did not like to have Jesus correct their mistakes and sin. Jesus told them they had sinned against God and needed to be forgiven. You know every person who ever has lived and who ever will live has sinned against God and needs to be forgiven.

Many people today will not ask Jesus into their lives to forgive them. But the Bible says we have all sinned and cannot be as good as God says we must be. That is why we need Jesus as our Saviour to forgive us, to save us from the punishment we deserve for our sins and to make us God's children, clean from sin. Invite Jesus to come into your life as Saviour and Lord. Then take time to read today's story in your Bible in Matthew chapter 21 verses 33 to 46; or in Mark chapter 12 verses 1 to 12, or in Luke chapter 20 verses 9 to 19.