

Stubbornness Toward God's Salvation (Matthew 21:33-44)

Introduction:

- I. Have you ever tried to clean something that was dried and stuck onto another surface to the point that scrubbing did nothing to help?
- II. Last week at work camp, I got that "opportunity." There were some drops of paint on the front porch of the house we were working on, and I was trying to scrape them up. I knew that it was better for the porch to not have those drops of paint. However, the porch seemed to think otherwise, because with every ounce of my effort I was not able to get all of them to come up. Some would, some would not.
- III. People are that way, too, are they not? We know they would be better off if they would "do this," or "do that," but they resist as if they do not want to be better. Sometimes this is because of the way we tried to get them to change. Many times, however, it is because they are stubborn and just do not want to change.
 - a. When we try to get them to teach the gospel, they will not.
 - b. When we try to get them to turn away from their sins, they will not.
 - c. When we try to get them to be baptized, they will not.
- IV. It reminds me of the "Parable of the Tenants" in Matthew 21:33.

Discussion:

- I. The Parable
 - a. The Vineyard
 - i. We sing the song, "I Want to Be a Worker," referring to working in the "vineyard," or the church. In this parable, that is what this vineyard is. It is the same as the word is used in several Old Testament passages, including:
 1. Psalm 80:8-11 – "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. The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches. It sent out its branches to the sea and its shoots to the River."
 2. Isaiah 5:7 – "For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting..."
 - ii. Thus this vineyard is the kingdom of heaven, and in the case of the immediate context, it refers to the coming kingdom of God that was left in the care of the Jews, to wait until the Messiah would come.
 - b. The Tenants
 - i. These are the caretakers of the vineyard, which in the case of this context were the Jews, who were to watch for the Messiah.
 - c. The Servants
 - i. These represent the prophets who were sent to God's people before Christ came. We read in several places where God's prophets were killed by the unrepentant Jews:
 1. Matthew 5:12 – "For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."
 2. Matthew 23:29-37 – "You build up 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 shedding the blood of the prophets.’

3. Acts 7:52 – “Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One...”

- ii. Thus we see the history of the Jews when it came to the prophets who came to tell them to shape up.

d. The Son

- i. We do not have to stretch our imaginations to see who Jesus is referring to here. Just as the Jews had killed the prophets in the history of the Jews, they would also kill him.

1. Acts 7:52 – “...whom you have now betrayed and murdered.”

e. The Consequences

- i. In this parable, as recorded by Matthew, Jesus asks them what they think the master would do when he got back, and they answered. In Mark and Luke, Jesus asks the question and answers it himself. Each one is a similar answer: “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 seasons.”

II. The Application for Us

a. The Vineyard is still the kingdom of God.

b. The Tenants

- i. We are now the tenants of the vineyard of the Lord, so think about this: If you are paid to work a piece of land, shouldn't you be working it?
- ii. How many times in the New Testament do we see illustrations depicting the Christians as the “workers for hire,” or “bondservants?”
 1. The Parable of the Talents (Reproduce What They Were Given)
 2. The Parable of the Sower and the Soil (Produce Fruit)
 3. The Fields are White for the Harvest (Pray the Lord of Harvest to Send Out Reapers)
- iii. It goes without saying that we need to be teaching the gospel. I do not have to give you evidence in order to “convince” you to teach the gospel.

c. The Servants

- i. These last two parts especially have an important application for us.
- ii. In our case, our families, our friends, our preachers, elders, and deacons are the servants that the Master has sent to us to gather fruit from us.
 1. These are the ones who wonder why we are not working
 2. They push us to work harder and to begin our harvesting as we become Christians.
 3. They compare our actions with scripture and inform us when we are doing things the master would not approve of.
- iii. When we shove them away and ignore their pleas and their help, we are in effect doing what those Jews did when the prophets came to them.

d. The Son

- i. Jesus Christ has not come back and has not been crucified again physically, but Hebrews 6:4-6 tell us that those who turn away from the truth and make the decision to no longer follow Christ, are crucifying him again. We are then no better than the Jews who killed the prophets and then Jesus himself.

e. The Consequences

- i. In the story of the talents in Matthew 25, Jesus says that the master of the house came to “settle accounts with his servants.” That will be like the judgment for us. He will take out the books and see how we match up to what we should have done. Think about the parable of the talents for a moment.
 1. The master gave them money and expected them to increase it. Those who did were called “good and faithful.” The one who did not was called “wicked and lazy.”
 2. The master has given us the precious gospel, and he expects us to teach it and allow Christians to “be fruitful and multiply.” Those of us who take care of his vineyard and are sure to bring fruit to him will be called “good and faithful,” and those who do not will be called “wicked and lazy.”
 3. Notice that the man with one talent did not lose his talent. He just did not bring more than what he was given.
- ii. Likewise, in the parable that follows it (the sheep and the goats), it never once mentions whether or not the goats believed or were baptized. That is not the focus. The focus is on whether or not they gave good things to others after they had been given the grace of God.
 1. This is all about bringing back more than you were given. If you become a Christian, you have the faith of one person, and the grace that saves one person. If you teach others, and they have faith, and become Christians, you would have taken your one “talent” and “brought back more.” If you do not increase it, you will be called “wicked and lazy.” If you do not give to those who are in need, you will be called, “cursed,” and you will be told to “depart” from Christ, for “he never knew you.”
 2. God is not like Santa Claus. He does not just look at who is being good and who is being bad. He is looking to see what each of our opportunities were and what we did with them, and that is just the judgment for those who have become Christians. Those who have not become Christians are already condemned (John 3:18).

Conclusion:

1. Revelation 20:11-15.
 1. Verse 12: "Books were opened."
 1. What books?
 2. I'm holding 66 books now.
 3. When Judgment comes, these books, especially the 27 of the new covenant, will be opened and we will be judged.
 4. He will open them up to Mark 16:16 and say, "Whoever believes and is baptized shall be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."
 5. He will open them up to John 3:18 and say, "Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."
 6. He will open them up to Acts 3:17-19 and say "I know that you acted in ignorance...repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out."
 7. He will open them up to John 13:8 and say, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me."

8. He will also open up to Romans 6:1, 4 and say "How shall we who have died to sin continue to live any longer in it?...We were buried with him in baptism that as he was raised by the glory of the father, we too may have newness of life."
 9. He will open to Hebrews 10:37-38 and say, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay, but my righteous one shall live by faith and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him."
 10. He will open to Matthew 25:40 and say "As you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me."
 11. He will look at James 1:29-30, which says, "If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world."
 12. The Christian life is not an easy one. He will look to see how we have persevered. He then will open up the books to Revelation 3:5 and say, "The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life."
 13. Revelation 20:15 says that "If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."
2. After he reads through all of these books and looks at your life here on earth, how will he answer?
1. "Well done, good and faithful servant."
 2. "Depart from me; I never knew you."
 3. How will he answer you? You can decide to do those things that will bring you into a right standing before God tonight. If you need to repent of previous ignorance which caused you to sin before God, or if you need to be washed in baptism into Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins, or if you have done something to publicly disgrace the church or Christ's name. If it is something that has public consequences, a public repentance will allow you to let us know that you are making a change and that you will strive to do your best to do the right thing and right your wrongs. We would love to pray for you and encourage you to make those changes. We also would love to see you baptized into Christ, if you have thus far neglected to do so. If you want to ask for our prayers, make a public repentance, or be baptized into Christ tonight, these first pews are reserved for you. Please come to Christ now, as we stand and sing.