



Rejected but Ruling Luke 20:9-18

Theme: God's patience is long, but not endless. Rejecting His Son brings judgment.

Purpose: To reveal the long history of Israel rejecting God's prophets and to predict their coming rejection of Himself as the Son of God.

Concern: To confront the spiritual blindness, pride, and resistance to God's authority, especially among those who should have recognized and welcomed Christ.

Intro: When Jesus entered Jerusalem, he continued to confound the people who opposed him. In vs 1-8, the chief priests and scribes questioned Jesus' authority. In response, he tells them a parable about resisting him, prophecies his death by their hands, and warns them of the judgement that will follow rejecting him.

And, since he's talking to Israel's religious leaders, he frames the discussion with an OT image of God's relationship to Israel, to be sure they understand what he is claiming and saying.

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...*

It begins with...

First: The Patient Owner. 9-12

And he began to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while. ¹⁰ When the time came, he sent a servant to the tenants, so that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ¹¹ And he sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. ¹² And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out.

- a) 9a - The vineyard represents Israel (cf. Isaiah 5:1–7).

Isaiah 5:1-7 - *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. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes? And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and briars and thorns shall grow up; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel...*

- b) 9b - The tenants are the religious leaders and people entrusted with God's truth.

The tenants act as if the vineyard belongs to them, not the owner. Their rebellion is rooted in a refusal to be stewards under authority.

Much of our sin stems from the same impulse, living as if our lives, our gifts, our time belong to us. The parable confronts us with a hard truth: we are tenants, not owners.

- c) 10-12 - God sent servants (prophets) again and again despite rejection.

There were a lot of servants:

- lawgivers like Moses,
- conquerors like Joshua,
- judges like Jephthah and Gideon,
- prophets like Samuel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah
- kings like David and Hezekiah,

- scribes like Ezra and
- reformers like Nehemiah.

God is incredibly patient with us, giving us many chances to repent.

APP: How do I respond when God speaks through conviction, Scripture, or others?

Second: The Beloved Son. 13-15a

Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.' ¹⁴ But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.' ¹⁵ And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him...

After millennium of rejecting his servants, God finally sent his Son. His father was the owner of the vineyard, and the Father had vested him with full authority to act on his behalf.

- a) 13 - The "beloved son" is undoubtedly Jesus.

Jesus is not just another prophet—He is the Son.

- b) God's final and clearest word to humanity is His Son.

Hebrews 1:1-2a - *Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things*

And so Jesus laid aside his glory and came to earth. Demons stood in awe of him. Creation trembled before him. The common people loved him. But Israel's religious leaders rejected and murdered him.

- c) 14-15a - The tenants' rejection is not ignorance—it is willful rebellion.

This is not just any parable. Jesus is telling his own death story before it happens. So, this parable is not abstract. It is deeply personal. Jesus is days away from the cross. He is standing in the temple, speaking to the very leaders who will soon conspire to kill Him. When He says, *"they killed the son,"* He is forecasting their plot and His own passion.

- d) 15b-16 – God judges everything, Israel, the Church, the world, creation, based on his Son.

V 17b – A cornerstone forms the bond between two buildings; Jesus between two Testaments. From it all the lines of a building run; length, breadth and height are all angled from that single stone. If a stone is cut out of square, a building will be out of square. This stone was always cut meticulously and laid in a special ceremony.

- God judges everything based on Jesus because He is the standard of truth, righteousness, and divine revelation.
- In Jesus, God has fully revealed Himself, His character, His will, and His offer of salvation.

But the builders, the Pharisees and the Sanhedrin rejected Jesus, putting their lives and Israel out of sorts with God. The building has to fall.

- So, Jesus is both the cornerstone that upholds life and the stumbling stone that exposes rebellion; all people and actions are measured by their alignment with Him.

If not before, the Jewish leaders now know what Jesus is claiming. He is the son and they are tenants.

- Our response to Christ, whether we receive or reject Him, ultimately determines how we are judged

John 3:18-19 – *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. ¹⁹ And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.*

Acts 17:30-31 - *The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹ because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."*

APP: Have I truly submitted to His authority, or am I still resisting His lordship?

Third: The Coming Judgment. 15b-16

What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others." God's patience has a limit and judgment will come for those who reject the Son.

- a) 15b – Jesus asks a question he answers.

We should never mistake God's patience for permission.

- b) 16a – God "destroyed" Israel in the Babylonian captivity and in 70 AD
- c) 16b - "*Give the vineyard to others*" refers to the inclusion of Gentiles and the birth of the Church.
- d) 17 – "*Surely not...*" = *me genoito* = God forbid = one of the strongest negative expressions.

The people cry, "*God forbid!*" when they hear about the vineyard being given to others. Why? Because the idea of outsiders receiving what was promised to them was offensive. Yet Jesus declares this reversal as God's rightful judgment and sovereign plan. This anticipates the gospel's movement to the Gentiles (see Acts 13:46) and underscores that God's grace always humbles human pride.

APP: Are we bearing the fruit God expects from those entrusted with the gospel?

Excurses: It's amazing how God's inclusion of Gentiles was never a plan, 'B,' but always God's plan, 'A.'

God's promise to Abraham in *Genesis 12:3 – "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you."* - From the start, God's covenant had a global scope.

The mission of the Messiah in *Isaiah 49:6 – "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob... I will also make you a light for the Gentiles..."*

Israel's jealousy of Gentiles in *Romans 11:11 – "So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous."*

Israel's rejection of the Messiah opened the door for the gospel to go to the Gentiles. But this was not to cast Israel aside permanently. Instead, God's purpose was that Israel, seeing the Gentiles receiving what was originally promised to them, would become jealous in a redemptive sense, stirred to return to God and embrace the Messiah themselves.

God's mystery now revealed in Ephesians 3:6 – *"This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel..."*

Why the excurses? To remind you that God never has a plan, 'B.' Omniscience and omnipotence don't need one. And this is true of you also. What God is doing on the global scale, he is doing on the personal scale. So you and I can rest and rejoice in a verse like -

Philippians 1:6 - *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*

Fourth: The Cornerstone or the Crushing Stone? 17-18

"The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.' ... everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces..."

a) Jesus is the rejected stone who becomes the foundation.

Speaking of plan 'A,' – Psalm 118:22 - *The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

APP: This is what I want, to rejoice in the cross...to rejoice in my own crosses.

But, those who reject Christ will stumble and be crushed by the very One they refused.

b) Christ is either your foundation or your undoing.

The gospel is very comforting. But it also confronts us with a choice. You are either building your house on a rock or sand. He is either your foundation or your judgement. There is no neutral ground with Jesus.

APP: Am I building my life on Christ or tripping over Him?

Conclusion: This text and the one before it tells us that you can question Jesus' authority (vs 1-8), but you can't deny it.

Hebrews 2:3a - *...how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?* – No one will.

Friends, at its core, this story tells the gospel.

God is endlessly patient, but His patience is not permission.

In the parable of the wicked tenants, Jesus tells the story of a vineyard owner who sends servant after servant, only to see them beaten, rejected, and cast out.

Finally, he sends his beloved son. But the tenants kill him too.

This isn't just a story. It's God's own heartbreak over a world that keeps silencing His voice and rejecting His grace.

Yet even in rejection, God is not defeated. The Son who was cast out becomes the cornerstone of a new creation.

God's plan doesn't collapse when people rebel. It moves forward in power and mercy.

The question the parable leaves us with is this: Will we reject the Son, or will we build our lives on Him? How we respond to Jesus is how we respond to God Himself. And everything, our hope and our future, hinges on that choice.



CG Questions: Luke 20:9-18

Observation

What does the text say?

1. Who are the main characters in this parable?
2. What do they do?
3. What happens each time the owner sends someone to the tenants?
4. How do the tenants respond differently to the servants and to the son?
5. What reaction do the people have when Jesus says the vineyard will be given to others (v.16)?
6. What Scripture does Jesus quote in verse 17, and how does He apply it?

Interpretation

(What does the text mean?)

7. What is Jesus teaching about God's relationship with Israel through this parable?
8. Why do you think Jesus uses the imagery of a vineyard and tenants to describe this situation?
9. What does the parable reveal about the character of God, especially in how He deals with rejection and rebellion?
10. Why is the rejection of the son the most serious offense in the story?

Correlation

(How does this passage connect with the rest of Scripture?)

(This is an important step because it tells me if my Interpretation is valid)

11. Read Isaiah 5:1–7. How does this passage help us understand the meaning of the vineyard in Jesus' parable?

12. In Romans 11:11, Paul says that salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel jealous. How does that verse connect with Jesus' statement about the vineyard being given to others (v.16)?
13. How does Psalm 118:22 ("*The stone the builders rejected...*") deepen your understanding of Jesus as the cornerstone?

Application
(*How should I respond?*)

14. Are there ways in your life where you act like the tenants, ignoring God's voice or living as if what you have belongs to you?
15. What would it look like this week to actively "*honor the Son*" in your decisions, relationships, or use of time and resources?
16. How are you building your life on the cornerstone of Christ rather than stumbling over Him?
17. What does this parable challenge you to do in terms of repentance, obedience, or renewed faith?



Mon, Aug 18th. Lk 20:9. God is the owner of everything. We are the tenants and live borrowed lives. He entrusts us with time, talents, influence, and relationships to steward for His glory. This parable reminding us that everything we have belongs to Him. Identify one area of your life (job, home, family, etc.) where you can consciously live as a steward today, not an owner.

Tues, Aug 19th. Lk 20:10-12. God's repeated sending of servants (prophets) shows His longsuffering patience and deep desire for our repentance. He warns not to punish

us, but to call us back to life. Think about a recent moment of conviction. How can you respond humbly instead of resisting?

Wed, Aug 20th. Lk 20:13-15. This is the heart of the gospel: God didn't just send messengers—He sent His beloved Son. But the world rejected Him. This rejection is not only historic—it can be personal if we refuse His lordship in our lives. Reflect on any area of life where you're resisting Jesus' authority. Surrender it today in prayer.

Thur, Aug 21st. Lk 20:15b-16. God is merciful, but He is also just. Rejection of the Son leads to judgment. Jesus' warning is clear: God's patience is not eternal if we persist in rebellion. But even in judgment, His plan continues—He gives the vineyard to those who will bear fruit. Do an honest self-check: Am I producing fruit in the life God has entrusted to me?

Fri, Aug 22nd. Lk 20:17-18. Jesus is either the foundation of your life or the rock of judgment you stumble over. There is no neutral stance toward Him. The most important decision we ever make is how we respond to the Son. Write down one area of your life you want to more intentionally build on Christ's foundation—then take one step today toward that goal.