

Announcements:

- 1) Women's Coffee Talk @ 3pm
- 2) Men's Field Day @ 3pm
- 3) Church Campout next weekend
- 4) Father's Day lunch
 - a) June 20
 - b) Sign up to bring food
- 5) Kingdom Man starts up again
 - a) 2nd and 4th weeks of the month, starting in June
 - b) can do Thursdays at 6:30pm or Saturdays at 8am
 - c) You can even do it at home with someone...have a bbq, watch the video

Our Turn Mark 12:1-12

It's our turn. If I can get one applicable truth across this morning, it would be this: it's our turn. It's our turn to be faithful to God. It's our turn to carry on the torch of being truth-tellers in a world full of lies. It's our turn to be a people that would bring honor, goodness, stability, respect, doing right, leading, being the example for all to see. It's our turn to worship God and to do it whole-heartedly, so that we can bring honor, goodness, stability, respect, doing right, leading, and being the example for all to see. It's our turn to reflect the glory of God to the world around us.

Peter gives a plea in his letter to the Christians that it is their turn to lift up the name of Jesus for all to see. He says this in 1 Peter 2:9-11, "But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, **God's very own possession**. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for He called you out of the darkness into His wonderful light. "Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God's people. Once you received no mercy; now you have received God's mercy." Dear friends, I warn you as "temporary residents and foreigners" to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls. Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when He judges the world."

When God created the world, when He placed man in the garden of Eden, it was good. Adam and Eve walked with God, talked with God, there was no fear or strife or anxiety. It was as healthy as a relationship you could get. Work was efficient, productive, and successful in the garden. There was no struggle or suffering, no pain. Then, man sinned. Man chose to decide their own destiny apart from God's plan and that destroyed everything.

God chose the Hebrew nation to be His chosen people, to be His representatives to the world, to share God's message with the world, to worship only God, to live in a way that would bring honor to God and be faithful doing it. Many times over we see God's chosen people throughout the Old Testament fail to do these things and they would suffer consequences for these actions. So God would respond. God would send messengers to point them back to Him, giving them messages reminding them of who they are, who they belonged to, and what their role was. Over and over God would do this. They would go through cycles of listening and ignoring and then listening.

The heart of the people of God would go astray. They would make other things more important than God in their life. There was always a group that would seek after God, but as a nation they would suffer destruction. However, they have never stopped being God's chosen people. Through them, He would bring hope. Through them, He would restore the world. Through them, Abraham's seed spoken of in Genesis 12 who is the Messiah would come to bring salvation to those that would call upon His name. Even though they would go astray, the Israelite people has not stopped being God's chosen people.

God's plan has always been to bring salvation to 'all nations.' That would mean that those who were not Jews could be saved. God loves the non-Jew, which is what the Bible refers to as a Gentile.

In AD 70, when the temple in Jerusalem, the primary place of worship for the Jew was destroyed, they lost everything. This destruction was due to their disobedience, or what Jeremiah, one of the prophets, calls being stiff-necked because they would not listen to God. God warned them, and they did not listen. Jesus came and warned them, and they would not listen.

When we do not listen and do things on our own, we choose to go out from under God's protection, grace, and provision. There is always a cause and effect. The effect of choosing our own destiny is things get broken, hope diminishes, people get hurt, and tyranny begins to reign instead of love.

The Jewish people no longer had the power they once had. They were scattered amongst the earth, with no land to call their own. They were powerless. However, God will once again restore them as a nation in the end. Jerusalem will be the center of worship and they will be saved.

Some believe the promise given to the Israelite people was taken from them and given to Christian Church. This is called replacement theology and this just isn't so. God does not change. He does not go back on His word. He does not need to rework His plan to accomplish His goals. He is sovereign. Paul says we, the church of Jesus Christ, are 'grafted in' to the olive tree in Romans 11. The olive tree being representative to all of God's workings. The Jews are still part of that tree. God's hand is still upon the Jewish people. God still fights for the Jewish people. How else could they have survived the last 2000 years. God is fulfilling His promise. *There is something reassuring about that. As followers of Christ, we have been brought into the blessing of God and He has given us promises of a hope and a future. God's promises are not dependent upon man. So, we can have hope, because we have a perfectly faithful God.*

When Jesus died on the cross, the old covenant was fulfilled. Jesus completed and perfectly fulfilled the Old Testament law. So, those that receive His forgiveness, both the Jew and the Gentile, and call Him Lord are part of His church; they are part of the family of God; they receive the inheritance of God's blessings. However, the Church is not to be confused with the Jewish people. God is still going to use the Jewish people.

Since Jesus death and resurrection we have been living in the age of grace. It is the age of the Church. It is now time for the people of God who follow Christ to bring a restoring message to the world. It is now our turn. We are ambassadors of Christ. We are the messengers of God to the world. It is our turn to bring restoration and healing to a broken and dying world. It is now our turn to worship God only. It is our turn to live in what Peter calls God's "marvelous light." *May we live in such a way that people turn towards God.*

The Jewish people are not our enemy. Our heart should be to bless the people of God as Genesis 12:3 infers. We must continue to realize their place in history...no matter what the people of the world say. We should be praying for them to receive the Messiah. We should be praying for their safety. We should be praying for their success as a nation. Why? Because it is part of God's plan. It is through the nation of Israel that God will bring His glory down to fill this earth...and we need His glory to fill this earth.

When Jesus raptures the church, shortly after God will fulfill His promise to the Jews. Until Jesus raptures the believers, we have the privilege of representing God as His people. It is our turn.

I share all of this for two reasons: 1) This is where my study took me and I want to share it with you. It is an offshoot of one of the themes within our passage this morning. 2) I want to share where I believe scripture is clear about the nation of Israel and make the stance that we are for them, which I believe in light of what we are hearing in the media and our governing officials as well as our culture, needs to be said. As soon as we turn our backs on Israel, we are in trouble as a nation.

There is another theme in our passage that is more important, because it is foundational to understanding what I just said. That theme is that Jesus is the Messiah. He is the only one that brings eternal life. He is the only one that the inheritance of God comes through. And the only way to receive that inheritance is through the love of Christ, being the friend of Christ, and not the enemy of Christ. It is also our turn to hear and receive the message of Christ.

Let's look at our passage. Mark 12:1-12 [Read]

-This is a parable of Judgment, specifically given to the religious leaders, but also to those who reject Jesus

-The key to understanding this parable is going back to the only other major parable in Mark 4, the parable of the Sower/Seeds and also looking at the context of our passage

In Mark 4

-those who would hear the message and receive it would have salvation and fruit in their lives

-Those who would reject the message because their hearts

were hard to the message

The context

-Jesus came to Jerusalem and was proclaimed as the 'blessed one who comes in the name of the Lord'

-Jesus goes to the temple and clears the temple of the money changers

-they were making worship hard, instead of easy

-It wasn't about God, but their system and tradition

-The religious leaders wanted the glory

-This is the second full day of Jesus being in Jerusalem

-He is teaching and walking around the temple grounds

-The leaders see Him and challenge Him (last week)

-They ask by what authority is Jesus cleansing the temple. Who gave Him this authority.

-Jesus being wise says He'll answer the question, if they will answer His question

-“Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man?”

-They were caught, the only answer was from heaven. But if they answered that, then they must receive and believe the message of John that Jesus was the Messiah. But to say that would reveal they were wrong and that their hearts were wicked seeking the glory for themselves

-So Jesus begins to speak in a parable.

-Jesus uses imagery that the religious leaders would fully understand

-We have 6 players in this parable

1. Landowner - God

2. The Vineyard - Israel

3. The tenants, farmers - the Jewish religious leadership

4. The landowners servants - the prophets who remained obedient and preached God's Word to the people of Israel

5. The son - Jesus

6. The other tenants - the Gentiles

-This would be familiar to them because a similar judgment was spoken in Isaiah 5

Verses 1-5: Call and Disobedience

-The Call

-God plants a vineyard, Israel to be faithful to God and a blessing to the world.

-The Disobedience

-But they chose instead to be like the rest of the world and worship the things of the world and be ruled like the world

-God sends prophets to warn them that God has given them the charge to be fruitful in this world. Many prophets came and in return they beat them, struck them in the head, treated them shamefully, and even killed them

Verse 6: Their chance

-The landowner (God) sends his beloved son

-If you remember, at Jesus's baptism God says, "This is my beloved son"

-The servants that would come to collect were different in that they didn't have the same power, the same legal rights that the a son would have.

-The son would have legal rights to the land

-The son would have the final say, the servants were just messengers

-Jesus over and over throughout His 3 years of ministry challenged the religious leaders to give their hearts over to God, and they would not

-instead they would seek to kill Him

Verse 7-8: Their rebellion (better said: Rejection)

-They wanted to kill the heir, because if the heir of the vineyard was dead, they were next in line legally to receive the inheritance of the father

-This is where a prideful heart goes...it does what it can to get what it thinks is owed to it

Verse 9: The judgment and vindication

-What does the owner do? Destroys the wicked tenants

-Catch, God is the owner

-To often we have this prideful attitude that we are 'owners' of our destiny, belongings, things of this world

-God is creator; He is owner; has final say

-We can try to thwart God's plan and make ourselves greater, but He always wins.

-They sought to kill Jesus, and even succeeded in killing

-BUT, He came back from the dead and made a way for the Gentile

people to have a relationship with Him. Through His death He invited us into a relationship with Him...to be called friend instead of enemy.

- Every thought and every action will be judged...that is why we need Jesus so badly

- In AD 70 the temple was destroyed. The old system of worship was gone, no more sacrifices, unsure of who is of the priestly line

- Jesus would usher in the church

 - The disciples would go throughout the world to share the story of God and redemption of mankind.

 - Those that would receive this message would be part of the church and Jesus would be the head of that church. We would be part of God's blood family...not because of our blood, but because of Jesus blood.

 - We would be adopted through His blood, and we would become heirs to all of God's blessings with the call to bring the redemptive story of Jesus Christ to the world.

- 'The others' are part of the vindication

 - Matthew 21:43 "I tell you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation that will produce the proper fruit"

 - Gentile believers are the others.

 - The vineyard has been leased to us to bring forth the fruit of Christ within the world

 - We get to experience the goodness of God

 - We get to give honor and bless God with the fruit of our labor

 - It's our turn to give God what is rightfully His

Verse 10-11: Clarity and Choice

- Jesus clarifies His authority as the son of the vineyard owner.

- Jesus quotes Psalm 118:22-23 which is a song that the people would often sing as they would travel to the temple

 - These verses are from the same passage and song that the people sang about Jesus as He rode into Jerusalem while they were laying palm branches out before Him just two days earlier

- It was becoming clear to them

 - Jesus was the son

 - A stone was a picture used for the Messiah in the O.T.

 - He was the authority of all things

 - He was what held all things together

 - He was what the fulfillment of the O.T. worship system

-He would be the foundation upon which the church would be built upon

-They were the builders that Jesus was talking about

Verse 12: The wrong response; Rejection

-Their anger burned

-For this, they would kill Jesus, and be judged

There are lots of applications within this parable:

- 1) Where are you with Jesus? Are you rejecting Him or have you received Him? Is He the authority in your life?
- 2) Those of us who have been in the church for a long time, may we stay tender to the things of God. May we not become so comfortable with grace that we lose the awe of what it took to get grace. I came across this quote, "When life within a godless, secular culture is easy, uncontroversial, and serene, we should at least question how much the world sees God in us."
- 3) Is there fruit coming from your life?
- 4) If you know Jesus, have you taken your turn?