



A just weight  
and balance

are the  
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

- When a mailman delivers the monthly credit card bill, do we welcome him with open arms, with a smile on our face?

- We enjoyed eating at a restaurant without a penny in our pocket.
- We happily pumped gas into the car without apparently paying.
- By simply swiping a card

- We know we are not really getting something for nothing.
- We understand that even if a company gives us a “grace period”
  - credit card purchases must be paid.

- May we defiantly file the bill in a wastebasket? **No!**
  - Late fees will follow.
- High interest penalties get added; larger payments are demanded.

- May we foolishly **shred** a credit company's latest letter?
- If we do, a **bill collector** will come calling
  - Because a '**grace period**' has a **limit**.

- So does God's,
- As illustrated by Jesus picturing a vineyard owner seeking fruit from his sharecroppers.
- In the parable we know that God is the owner of the vineyard.

- When God ask for His due how will I react?
  - ‘Do I welcome God’s message?’
    - Or ‘Will I test God’s patience?’
  - ‘Will I foolishly defy God’s forgiveness?’

- Painting this picture  
**three days before**  
Jewish leaders  
will crucify him,
- Jesus describes God  
giving his chosen children Israel  
**every advantage.**
- But they, like the credit card bill,  
**ignore the due date.**

- These are not  
‘volunteer vines’  
springing up where seeds  
fall on the ground;  
growing as they are able.
- Carefully cultivated vines  
are intentionally planted  
to produce good grapes.

- **A surrounding wall**  
stops any animal from  
accidentally trampling them.

- **Isaiah 26:1**

**This song will be sung  
in the land of Judah:  
We have a strong city.  
Its walls and fortifications  
provide safety.**

- A servant  
**in a watchtower**  
guards against thieves.

- In interpreting a parable  
it is normally  
a first principle  
that every parable  
has only one point  
and that the details  
are not to be stressed.

- To try to find a meaning for every detail is to make the mistake of treating the parable as an allegory.

- But in this case it is different.
- In this parable the details do have a meaning.

- And the chief priests and the Pharisees well knew the meaning
- And that Jesus was addressing this parable straight at them.

- Every detail is founded on familiar facts.

- The Jewish nation as the vineyard of God was a familiar prophetic picture.

- "The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel" (Isaiah 5:7).

- The actions of the owner of the vineyard were quite normal.
- In the time of Jesus, Palestine was a troubled place with little luxury.

- There were absentee landlords,
- Who let out their estates and were interested only in collecting the rental at the right time.

- The country was seething with economic unrest;
  - Working people were discontented and rebellious;
- And the action of the laborers in seeking to eliminate the son was not by any means impossible.

- They persecuted and put his servants to death.
- They killed his son,
  - Thinking they could take over ownership of this vineyard.

- It was easy for those who heard this parable to make the connections.

- The vineyard is the nation of Israel, and its owner is God.

- The laborers are the religious leaders of Israel.

- The messengers are the prophets sent by God and so often rejected and killed.

- The son who came last is none other than Jesus himself.
- Here in a vivid story Jesus set out at one and the same time the history and the doom of Israel.

- This parable has much to tell us about God.
- Let's see what we can learn.

- **Are  
you  
listening?**

- (1) It tells of God's trust in men.
- The owner of the vineyard entrusted it to the laborers.
  - Every task is a task given us to do by God.

- **(2) It tells of God's patience.**

- The master sent messenger after messenger.

- He did not come with sudden vengeance

- when his messengers had been abused and ill-treated.

- He gave the laborers chance after chance to respond to his appeal.
- God bears with men  
in all their sinning  
and will not cast them off.

- **(3) It tells of God's judgment.**

- In the end  
the master of the vineyard  
took the vineyard  
from the laborers  
**and gave it to others.**

• God's  
sternest judgment  
is reserved for men  
who he have  
become  
useless to God.

This parable  
also  
tells us  
about men.

- (a) It tells of human privilege.
- The vineyard was equipped with everything man needed to accomplish the task.

- The hedge,
- The wine press,
  - The tower.

- When God gives a task

he provides the means to get it done.

- (b) It tells of human freedom.

- The master left the laborers to do the task.

- God is no oppressive task-master;
- He is assigns a task and then trusts mankind to do it.

- (c) It tells of human answerability.

- To all mankind comes a day of reckoning.

- (d) It tells of the deliberateness of human sin.
- The laborers carry out a deliberate policy of rebellion and disobedience towards the master.

- Sin is deliberate opposite to God;
- It is the taking our own way when we well know the way of God.

- The Jewish leaders were threatened because:

- Jesus was ignoring their authority,
- Disregarding all their rules and regulations for living a pious life.
  - And questioning the very basis of their power and control.

- The chief priests,  
the scribes,  
the elders and  
the Pharisees  
were not known  
for taking criticism  
well.

- So, once again,  
**Jesus invites us**  
to go back  
to the vineyard,  
and consider  
another parable.

- This parable also has much to tell us about Jesus.

- (a) It tells of the claim of Jesus.
- It shows us quite clearly Jesus lifting himself out of the succession of the prophets.

- Those who came before him were the messengers of God;
- No one could deny them that honor; but they were servants; he was the Son.

- This parable contains **one of the clearest claims** Jesus ever made to be unique,
- **To be different from** even the greatest of those who went before.

- **Matthew 11:11**  
Greater than  
**John the baptizer.**
- **Matthew 12:41**  
Greater than  
**Jonah.**
- **Matthew 12:42**  
Greater than  
**Solomon.**

- (b) **It tells of the sacrifice of Jesus.**

- It makes it clear that Jesus knew **what lay ahead.**

- In the parable the hands of **wicked men** **killed the son.**

- Jesus was never in any doubt of what lay ahead.
- He did not die because he was compelled to die;
- He went willingly and with open eyes to death.

- Knowing these leaders had already decided to secretly arrest and to kill him,
- Jesus knows they will crucify him on Calvary's cross outside the city.

- Yet, He still invites his enemies to repent,
- Jesus ends his parable by asking:
  - **“When the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those laborers?”**

- The people lived under the iron fist of **Roman authority.**
- Rebellion and revolution were dealt with **swiftly** and **harshly.**
  - Everyone knew the **consequences** of rebellion;
- A ruthless, miserable **death.**

- Jesus' listeners who realize he is picturing them as the laborers,
- Actually condemn themselves, offering an obvious answer:

- Matthew 21:41

**They replied, "He will utterly destroy the wretches and lease the vineyard to other vine-dressers who will give him the fruits in their season."**

- Jesus concurs,  
citing  
Psalm 118:22

- Also his mother, Mary, is told”

- Luke 2:34

**Behold, this child  
is set for the  
fall and rising  
of many in Israel.**

- **John the baptizer testified:**

- **“Whoever believes  
in God’s Son Jesus Christ  
has eternal life,**

- **but whoever rejects  
Jesus Christ  
will not see life,  
for God’s wrath  
remains on him.**

**(John 3:36)**

- Jesus' parable is quite clear.
- Undeniably gracious,  
God sends  
messenger  
after  
messenger.

- Our Lord offers people opportunity after opportunity

- To repent;

- To rejoice in

- Jesus' forgiveness

- which can never  
be purchased

- but is freely given.

- Our Lord offers almost endless opportunities to get it right.

- Jesus' picture is clear?
- Like a credit card's grace period
- Jesus' grace period is quickly expiring.

- God's time of grace will come to an end.

- God will eventually eliminate souls who keep defying his undeserved love.

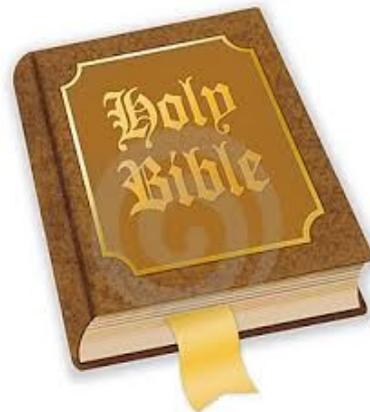
- God will ultimately take his kingdom away from souls who refuse to heed his message.
- The final words will be:  
“Depart, I never  
knew you!”  
(Matthew 7:23)

**The doors of the church  
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride  
Say**

**“Come”.**

**Revelation 22:17**



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