

Connect Together

What makes storytelling so powerful? What are some of its benefits and limitations?

Lesson Verses - Matthew 21:33-46 (CSB)

33 “Listen to another parable: There was a landowner, who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a watchtower. He leased it to tenant farmers and went away. 34 When the time came to harvest fruit, he sent his servants to the farmers to collect his fruit. 35 The farmers took his servants, beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. 36 Again, he sent other servants, more than the first group, and they did the same to them. 37 Finally, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said. 38 “But when the tenant farmers saw the son, they said to each other, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance.’ 39 So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. 40 Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those farmers? ” 41 “He will completely destroy those terrible men,” they told him, “and lease his vineyard to other farmers who will give him his fruit at the harvest.” 42 Jesus said to them,“Have you never read in the Scriptures: The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is what the Lord has done and it is wonderful in our eyes? 43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruit. 44 Whoever falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will shatter him.” 45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they knew he was speaking about them. 46 Although they were looking for a way to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because the people regarded him as a prophet.

Study & Apply

1. Jesus makes another attempt to show the chief priests and the teachers of the law their misunderstanding of who He is with this parable.

    a. In verse 33, a fence was built around the vineyard by God, which may indicate that the people of Israel were set apart as a holy nation for God. How did the Jews confuse their understanding of holiness with God's intention for holiness? (Matthew 23:28; 1 Peter 1:13-16)

APPLY: In 1 Peter 1, Peter finishes his teaching on holiness with a directive for believers to love one another—now having been born again. How does gathering with believers and having relationships in church foster opportunities for one to love and worship?

2. In verse 33, Jesus reminds the chief priests and the teachers of the law about the promised covenant, atonement through sacrifices, and the blessings from remaining in that covenant. This is likely signified as the winepress and the watchtower.

    a. What did the chief priests and the teachers of the law begin to forget and then also overemphasize as they followed their traditions and law? (Matthew 12:7; Mark 12:33) How did their "strict adherence" cause unfruitfulness? (Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:3-10)

APPLY: As believers, we have a New Covenant in Jesus. Forgiveness has come through Jesus Christ for those who remain in Him, and those who do remain in Jesus, result in being fruitful. (John 15:5-8) How can we be better at loving through forgiveness? (John 15:12)

Discuss & Share

Who do you identify yourself as in the story Jesus told? Perhaps the people of verse 43… There are many ways in which we can produce fruit in the Christian life. What kind of fruit do you tend to produce? What kind of fruit would you like to produce more of? Share with your group.

Grow & Minister

Minister to one another through sharing praise and specific prayer requests.