

Message #97

Luke 20:9-18

There is a very unique, important, powerful story found in II Kings 2:23-25. It is a story concerning the prophet Elisha. In the story, Elisha was on his way to Bethel and some young people started mocking Elisha and making fun of the fact that he was bald. Elisha was a prophet of God and a man of God who was being ridiculed by a bunch of loudmouthed, arrogant teenagers who didn't think "bald-headed lives matter." They were making fun of the fact that Elisha was bald. They were simply verbally shooting off their mouths and making fun of a man of God. Finally, Elisha got fed up with them and as a prophet, he cursed them in the name of the LORD and two female bears came out of the woods and tore up 42 young people.

By including this story in the Bible, God revealed a very important truth, namely, **if you mock one of my faithful servants and if you mistreat one of my faithful prophets, you will eventually receive a destructive curse judgment that comes directly from Me.**

There have always been those and there will always be those who will not respond favorably to God's servants who are presenting God's truth. God does still call certain men and He gives them certain special gifts to do His will and in presenting His word. When those men take their assignment seriously, there will always be those who oppose them.

For a brief while, it will appear as if the opponents are getting their way. They will be proud and arrogant and will mock the truth and turn away from the truth. They will snicker and sneer at God's word and they will appear to be in control of the world and appear to be in charge of everything.

But God is very clear on this point; there will come a day when those who have wronged God's faithful servants, who have carefully taught the truth, when they will severely pay. Their proud rejection and rebellion will cost them dearly and they will be severely judged.

What Jesus wanted to communicate in His final days on earth was:

THOSE WHO MISTREAT GOD'S SERVANTS ARE THE SAME TYPE OF PEOPLE WHO MISTREATED JESUS CHRIST, AND THEY WILL FACE THE SEVERE, DESTRUCTIVE JUDGMENT OF GOD.

God's servants may be laughed at for a while. God's word may not be obeyed for a while. God's men may be demeaned or treated shamefully for a while. Some of them may seemingly leave the ministry with nothing. Jesus says there will come a day when God, who specifically gifted them and sent them, will call those who mistreated them to judgment accountability.

According to **verse 9**, Jesus Christ began to tell a parable to the people. However, the primary targets of the parable were the religious leaders of Israel (20:1). These leaders really looked good. They sounded good. They appeared to be very godly. They challenged Jesus Christ. They challenged His authority; His credentials and His message. They hated Him.

This is the way religious frauds always react to truth. When God truly did send His called and gifted servants to them, they mistreated them, misused them and finally, when God sent His own Son, they killed Him. So God says you need to know I will settle this score.

There are five parabolic parts to this heavenly story designed to illustrate a very important eternal truth:

PARABOLIC PART #1 – God’s servants have been mistreated. 20:9-12

One of the purposes of a parable is to hide truth from some and to reveal truth to others (8:10). This particular parable is designed to hide the truth from the religious leaders and to reveal truth to the people of God (20:9). However, as we will see next week the religious leaders did understand this parable (20:19)

There are four principle players who need to be identified in this parable:

- 1) The man who plants the vineyard - God the Father. 20:9a
- 2) The vine-growers - the religious leaders responsible for taking care of God’s people. 20:9b
- 3) The slave - Special selected and gifted men and prophets of God who were sent to minister God’s truth to the people prior to the coming of Jesus Christ (20:10).
- 4) The Son - God’s Son (20:13).

Now the immediate contextual point of the parable is this: God the Father produced a great nation, Israel, which is His planted vineyard. He allowed various leaders to govern her. They were responsible for nurturing, caring for and leading the people of God. It was His produce and His vineyard. He sent them some gifted men who were uniquely empowered and gifted. When he sent these men, they were mistreated in five ways:

Mistreatment #1 - They were beaten. 20:10a, 11a

The word means thrashed, skinned, flayed. They were skinned alive.

Mistreatment #2 - They went away empty handed. 20:10b, 11c

They were sent away broke. They were not supported and were not funded or subsidized. They were not given the best from the people; they were sent away with nothing.

Mistreatment #3 - They were treated shamefully. 20:11b

The word implies every dishonorable thing that could be done was done.

Mistreatment #4 - They were wounded. **20:12a**

The word indicates they were traumatized in every way—physically, verbally. They were cut to shreds.

Mistreatment #5 - They were cast out. **20:12b**

People got rid of them and chased them away. They allowed the phony religious leaders to stay and lead them, and they threw out the true man of God sent by God to them.

Now the people in charge of treating God's servants this way appeared to be very religious. These leaders appeared to be very concerned and very Biblical. God wanted all to know that these leaders were heading to crushing judgment.

If one really serves God and really tells the truth of God, one will probably not be too popular. For the most part, it is a lonely calling. It is not easy. There will be times when one will be subject to criticism and verbally flayed. There will be times when you will be sent away with nothing and perhaps even chased out and chased away.

PARABOLIC PART #2 – God's Son is mistreated and killed. **20:13-15**

This is an amazing demonstration of God's grace. You would think that since God's handpicked men had been so abused and mistreated that He would rid the world of the corrupt leaders who did it. The last thing you would ever expect would be that God would send His own Son into this kind of corrupt world, knowing what will happen. But that is grace.

When God decided it was time to send His own Son, they should have revered Him and respected Him and honored Him and worshipped Him and supported Him and cared for Him. That word "respect" (v. 13) is one that indicates they should have had the highest regard for the Son of God.

But that is not how it went. **When He sent His own Son, He was not accepted; He was not respected; He was not supported. He was killed.**

Verse 15 is a direct prediction by Jesus Christ of what was going to happen to Him in just a few days. He was about to die.

In **verse 14**, we get great insight as to why the false religious leaders mistreated God's faithful servants and God's own Son—they want the inheritance, they want the power over the people and they know they do not have it. They want the support, they want the prominence, they want the prosperity. Their motive is not to do the will of God; their motive is dominant power because that makes them rich.

This is a critical point to see. There are at least three contextual reasons given by Jesus Christ as to why a true servant of God who communicates the truth will offend leadership not right with God:

Reason #1 - False religious leaders hate God's truth that shows them they are wrong. **19:45-47**

These are legalistic, hard-hearted men who are angered by truth and hate the one presenting it.

Reason #2 - False religious leaders want religious limelight power. **20:45-47**

These leaders want religious limelight and respect. They don't care about the word of God.

Reason #3 - False religious leaders do not want to lose power over the people.

They live in fear that they will lose control and power over the people.

PARABOLIC PART #3 – God's judgment will destroy those responsible. **20:16a-b**

Jesus Christ makes it very clear what God will do to these kinds of people:

Action #1 - God will destroy them. **20:16a**

The word Jesus uses for "destroy" is very strong and it speaks of complete eternal destruction. The word means utter destruction.

It is a reference to hell. Those who reject God's word through His men will end up in the ultimate level of eternal damnation; the worst part of hell.

Action #2 - God will give their power to others. **20:16b**

The prediction of God is that because His servants were rejected, He will turn the program once designed for Israel over to the Gentiles. The result of mistreating God's servants and Son is that God changes the dynamics of His whole program and treatment of Israel.

God can and will cut off a blessed program with a nation, a state, a church and an individual. Make fun of God and His word and there will be a price to pay.

PARABOLIC PART #4 – God's people don't want God's judgment. **20:16c**

When the people heard this, they responded "May it never be." Never did they want to reject God's servants or God's son. The problem for most was it was "too little, too late."

PARABOLIC PART #5 – God’s Son warns the people of a decision they must make. **20:17-18**

Jesus Christ powerfully says what I have just said will happen. This truth is predicted in Psalm 118:22. It is a nice way of saying this is going to happen; it is predicted to happen and there is nothing anyone can do to stop it.

There are two responses to this message of Jesus Christ:

Response #1 - You need to humble yourself and fall on the stone. **20:18a**

The first option a person has to this truth is the option of casting himself or herself upon Jesus Christ. Forget the pride and respond to the men of God presenting the word of God.

Response #2 - You allow the stone to crush you. **20:18b**

The other option is to stay in rebellion and face Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Peter never forgot this message (I Peter 2:7-8). Here is what he wrote: “This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, ‘the stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner stone,’ and, ‘a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense’; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.”

Peter stayed true to His calling and true to this message. Peter was not well-received. He was mistreated and killed. History says he was crucified upside down.

Those who mistreat God’s servants and who reject God’s word will face the severe judgment of God.

PARTING PARABOLIC LESSONS:

- 1) When God’s servants are mistreated, God will settle the score.**
- 2) When God’s word is rejected, God will settle the score.**
- 3) When God’s Son is rejected, God will settle the score.**
- 4) Jesus Christ will either save you or crush you.**