**20th Sunday After Pentecost Sermon**

**Text:** Matthew 21:33-46

**Theme:** Broken?

 Our Gospel lesson for today has Jesus confronting the chief priests and Pharisees once again. This was not Jesus’ first confrontation with them. You would think he would have tried to avoid them. Most people tend to avoid conflict. Not Jesus. It appears as if he was purposefully offending, aggravating, and confronting them. He eats with the wrong people. He won’t answer their questions. He taunts them by healing on the Sabbath. He calls them hypocrites and blind leaders, whitewashed tombs and open graves. He leaves them speechless when He evades their traps and trick questions. Just last Sunday we heard how He compared them to a [disobedient son who will not work in the vineyard](https://interruptingthesilence.com/2014/09/28/god-is-not-the-boss-of-you-a-sermon-on-matthew-2123-32/).

 So, what’s that all about? Why can’t he just let go of them**.** He won’t let up because he loves them. Yes, even those who were against him. His very enemies. He wants to break them, but not in the way we would think. He wants them broken. Broken down by the law so they see their sin and repent!

 Jesus does not give up on anyone. Thank God, he does not give up on you or me. That is the good news in today’s parable. Yes, in this very terrible story we can see the good news. He confronts us with the truth about our lives. What is often difficult to hear and accept. We are sinners! He wanted the Chief priests and the Pharisees broken. In the same way He wants us broken. **Broken? Broken how?** Here, I will let Jesus explain it to you. What is meant by **broken.**

 But first I think it is important for us to go back in time a bit and get the background for what Jesus is about to say. There had been all kinds of commotion in the Temple the day before. Jesus had turned over the tables at the temple, as He drove out all who were buying and selling in the temple area. He was healing the blind and the lame there in the Temple courts and the children were shouting “Hosanna to the Son of David”. That was a title reserved for the Messiah. Matthew tells us that the leaders were **very angry** about this. After he left the temple that day He went to Bethany where He spent the night, likely with Lazarus and his two sisters, Martha and Mary.

 Matthew records for us that something interesting happened early in morning. Just before Jesus got to the Temple. He must have gotten up very early, perhaps not wanting to disturb His hosts and started back to Jerusalem. It appears he did not wait for breakfast. It was Holy Week. He knew his time was limited; he knew on Thursday the trial would start. He wanted time in the Temple to teach. Matthew tells us that Jesus was hungry. **Early in the morning, as Jesus was on his way back to the city, he was hungry. Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, “May you never bear fruit again!” Immediately the tree withered.When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. “How did the fig tree wither so quickly?” they asked.**

This picture would have been in the mind of his Disciples. And it should be for us also. If you do not produce fruit. You will wither and die!

Remember John the Baptist? **But when John saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his place of baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8**[**Produce**](https://www.biblehub.com/greek/4160.htm)[**fruit,**](https://www.biblehub.com/greek/2590.htm)[**then,**](https://www.biblehub.com/greek/3767.htm)[**in keeping with**](https://www.biblehub.com/greek/514.htm)[**repentance.**](https://www.biblehub.com/greek/3341.htm)**Matthew 3:7-8**

Now Jesus comes the words of our text. Those listening would be very familiar with the idea of renting land for a share of the crops it produced.  **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 tower. He leased it out to some tenant farmers and went away on a journey. 34When the time approached to harvest the fruit, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. 35The tenant farmers seized his servants. They beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. 36Then the landowner sent even more servants than the first time. The tenant farmers treated them the same way. 37Finally, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said. 38But 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!’ 39They took him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.**

 The landowner represented God and the vineyard Israel.  God planted the vineyard … the fence, the tower, the winepress, showed that God had blessed Israel with all it needs to thrive and grow. The tenants represent the spiritual leadershipof the nation, its past history and their rejection of God as revealed to us in our reading form Isaiah. How they even stoned and killed the prophets in the past It also vividly represented the church leadership of Jesus day.  The servants who came to collect the crop would be God’s servants … especially His prophets. And the son—Jesus himself!  The fruit they expected would be **repentance and fruits…..fruits of faith.**

The parable in today’s Gospel is a true tragedy, a dead son and condemned tenants. A vivid picture of rejection and what they would ultimately do to Jesus in a few days! After telling the story Jesus asks; **40So when the landowner comes, what will he do to those tenant farmers?” (Jesus asked) 41They told him, “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end. Then he will lease out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him his fruit when it is due.”**

 Punishment indeed for those evil doers. The Pharisees answered Jesus correctly. This is where we see that Jesus does not give up. Jesus was not satisfied with just hearing their answer, he wanted them to really think about this! He wanted them broken! So, comes with a quote from Psalm 118. **42Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? 43“That is why I tell you the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces its fruit.”**

 With these words Jesus made it clear that the fate of those in the parable need not be their fate. He was right there in front of them. The stone you are rejecting! I am here. It is not too late. The cornerstone. The main stone. The most important stone of the building. Jesus is the Savior he kept calling them! I need you to be broken so you can receive the gift I have for you!

 The words of our text end here. But Jesus did not. We need to look at one more verse. **Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.** The stone in verse 44 is also Jesus. It is saying that those who falls on this stone "will be broken to pieces,".

   You see, it is God's Will that everyone does fall upon Him and be broken into a million pieces. The Psalmist says this! **My sacrifice, O God, is**[***b***](https://biblehub.com/niv/psalms/51.htm#footnotes)**a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.**

 It is only after you are completely broken by God and His Word that He and He alone can put you back together the way He wants—righteous and holy, without blemish. This is not the Humpty Dumpty story here. This is not all the Kings Horses and all the King’s men. This is the Almighty God himself! Jesus the corner stone.

 But wait a minute. I can understand why Jesus is saying this to these murderous, chief priests and the Pharisees. They were out to get him. They actually had blood in their eyes. And we know what they did—crucify him they shouted over and over again! They did not listen and they were crushed in the end! But I am not like that. I have not rebelled against Jesus. I have not wanted him dead. Like the murderous tenants in the story who heard God's Word, but they rebelled.  But wait? How did that story go last sermon? About the 4 members of the church when they were asked to help? Remember? Everybody was angry with Somebody when Nobody had to do what Anybody could have! **I do rebel! I do!**

 When God's Word of Law floods our ears. It should break open our hearts. Repentance doesn't attempt to justify itself by making excuses.    The good fruits of repentant faith look to God alone and confess: "**I am a poor, miserable sinner.  I have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed.  For the sake of Jesus Christ, forgive me." And I need to respond!**

 How do you show it? Let me ask your name? Are you Everybody, Somebody, Nobody or Anybody from last Sunday. My name is **Broken!** Saved and forgiven. Here I am! Send me! What is your name? **Amen**