

Mark 12.1-12 (& Isa 5.1-7) – Rejecting the Lord has consequences
Main Point – Rejecting the Lord will mean death and judgement, so don't.

Clint Le Page

Sometimes our choices have real consequences.(**SLIDE**)-----

I was speaking to someone 3 years ago who really wanted to buy their first home, and get out of renting and paying off someone else's mortgage.

He'd been holding off, hoping for a crash in property prices.

And when interest rates started increasing in May 2022 he held off.

Interest rates in Australia increased 12 times.(**SLIDE**)

And it became harder to borrow money from banks.

He is still renting and really regrets not having bought sooner, especially when having to move as landlords keep selling the homes from under.

He doesn't know if he'll ever be able to stop being a tenant, and worried he'd still be paying rent when he retired.-----

I'm not saying you should all get a mortgage.

I am saying, some choices have real consequences.-----

But what we'll see today is that particular choices are much more serious.

Like how we respond to Jesus.

That's a deadly serious decision, so I hope you'll keep listening.

We're in this series in Mark's Gospel, looking at Issues in the Christian life, and today we're asking, what happens if(**SLIDE**) you reject Jesus and his authority?-----

Last Sunday in Mark 11, we saw the Jewish religious leaders questioning and not accepting Jesus' authority.

Now he tells a parable, a short story that has a lesson to it; particularly for the Jewish leaders.

My first of 3 points tonight is,(SLIDE) The Rejection of the Lord.

In **v1**, Jesus began to speak to them, the members of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council, mentioned back in ch11 v27.

And he says, 'a man planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a pit for a winepress, and built a watchtower'.

So he's planted grape vines.(**SLIDE**).

And the fence and watchtower are for protection.

The winepress pit collected the grape juice, and may have looked like **this one** from the 4th century discovered in the Israeli desert.

The point is, the man, the landowner is providing for & protecting his vineyard.----

For the Jews this description would have immediately brought to mind, **Isaiah ch5,(SLIDE)** our first reading.

Jesus is deliberately referring back to Isaiah, to highlight the guilt of the fruitless leaders, who've abused their position.----

In Isa 5 it is the LORD God, Yahweh, who planted the vineyard, which represents his people Israel and Judah, whom he loves.

But in Jesus' parable the focus is not on the vineyard but the tenant farmers it's leased to.----

In 1st century Isarel there were many absentee owners, especially in Galilee.

Many foreigners owned and leased land, and so Jesus' hearers would have been familiar with this situation.

At harvest time the owner sent a servant to collect his rent – his portion of the produce – presumably some wine.

But, and here is where we see the rejection of the Lord, the farmers beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

They only paid their rent in punches.

The owner tries again and again.

The second servant is hit on the head, maybe stoned, and treated shamefully.

The 3rd one is killed.

The owner in amazing patience and persistence, sends more.

Some are beaten up, others are killed.-----

Remember in Isaiah 5 the owner is the Lord God, as He is here.

In fact the word 'owner' in **v9** is literally the word for master, or 'lord'.

It is the servants of the Lord who are being rejected and treated this way.

And to reject the servants of God is to reject God himself.

In several places in the OT prophets are called 'servants' (**Jer 7.235f. SLIDE**)

And prophets like Elijah (1 Kin 19), Jeremiah (Jer 18,32) and Zechariah (Matt 23.35); even John the Baptist (Mk 6.17ff), all suffered or died for proclaiming God's truth.-----

But I want us to see that it's not just 1st century Jewish leaders who've done this.

Throughout the centuries missionaries & preachers have been rejected, hurt, killed.

People have rejected the Lord too. Even we have.

And not only as non-Christians, but even as followers of Jesus.

Every time we choose to sin, we are effectively saying, "No God; get lost!"

"God I will not live your way. I reject you and your commands. I'll do what I want!"

Every time we ignore God, or are greedy, lazy, selfish; or filled with lust, or anger, or grumbling, we are saying to God, "I reject you and your way".-----

If I ask you what your biggest sin is, what comes to mind?-----

Whatever that is, it's important that we see our sin as a personal rejection of the Lord.-----

We need a greater sense of how bad our sin is.-----

So we will want to turn from it.-----

On top of killing the servants, the tenant farmers don't give the owner the fruit due to him.

And we too often **fail to give God the glory** due to him as well.

We enjoy God's good provision of money, food, friends and family.

We enjoy the praise of a job well-done, of a good result in that exam, that presentation, that task at work; that serving in church.

But when someone thanks us or we feel good about ourselves, are we consistent in giving God the thanks and praise?-----

Too often I think we fail to give God the glory he deserves.

So, let's not come to this parable with a holier-than thou, thank God I'm not like the Jews, attitude.---

V6 tells us that the owner had one more he could send, a **beloved son**.

He's the last and final word from the owner.

This language 'beloved son' should make us think of Abraham and Isaac, Jacob and Joseph; and God the Father and his Son.

Remember **ch1v11**, at Jesus' baptism (**SLIDE**)-- "You are my beloved son"

The son in the story represents the Son of God Jesus.-----

Not that there's a secret meaning in every detail of a parable.-----

It's not that God the Father actually thought the Jewish leaders would respect his son.

But in a parable it can be just one or a few points that apply to life.-----

So the father and owner says, 'they will respect my son', and sends him.

This might make us cry out, "No", Who would do that?

I thought, 'isn't that stupid'.

Who in their right mind would send their child to wicked people who'd hurt or killed all your servants?----

And yet friends, that is the point.

This parable shows the extravagant grace of almighty God.

This parable shows the mega compassion and plenteous patience of God.

His love and kindness to sinners who've rejected him.-----

In **Tim Keller's** great book, **The Prodigal God**,(**SLIDE**) about the parable of The Prodigal Son, Luke 15, he helps us see it's not just the sinful younger son who's prodigal.

That is recklessly extravagant and spends everything.

God the Father is like that too.

We worship a prodigal God who has been extravagant with his grace.
 And given us everything in giving us his Son.
 For God the Father sends his one and only Son into the world, to save undeserving
 rebellious people, like you and me, doesn't he?
 What glorious grace!-----

The tenant farmers see the son coming, they know the heir.
 And say, '**let's kill him**' and take his inheritance'.
 Now, 'ownerless properties' could be taken over by others, but there was only a slight
 chance of this.
 But the tenants are not content with the produce and go for the property as well.
 And again, it's just like people today.
 People still want to pretend and act as if God doesn't exist, and want to take the crown for
 themselves.**(SLIDE)**-----
 Men, women and kids reject God and wanna rule the world, or their own little worlds.
 It's like people think, if humanity rejects God, and kills God, we can become God.
 At least our own little gods.
 In the parable, the tenants seize the son,(v8) kill him and throw him out.
 This is outrageous defiance.-----
 In ch11 v18 the leaders wanted to kill Jesus, and what he says here actually announces
 what they will do in 3 days time with chilling accuracy.
 They've rejected the Lord.

But next we see briefly, the Response of the Lord.(SLIDE)

V9, What then will the owner, the lord of the vineyard do?
 He will come and kill the farmers and give the vineyard to others.----
 In Isa 5 the focus was on the vineyard - God's fruitless people Israel & Judah being judged
 with destruction.
 In Jesus' parable, he focuses not on the people but the leaders.
 And the point is, the rejection of the Son, will bring a decisive and catastrophic judgement on
 them.-----
 To highlight what has happened and what they've done Jesus quotes **Psalm 118 v22-**
23(SLIDE), the Greek translation of this.
 The original Greek for 'cornerstone' is, head of the corner.
 That could be the bottom corner of the building.**(SLIDE)**
 The foundation and first stone laid, the cornerstone.
 Or it could be the capstone.
 Like the top of an arch.
 You take out the capstone and arch comes falling down on you.-----
 Just like Jesus says will happen to the Jewish leaders, in Matthew's account of this Parable,
Matt 21.(SLIDE)
 They will be crushed, shattered, broken to pieces.-----
 Then we have the apostle Peter in **Acts 4** also quote Ps 118 (v22), and explicitly say**(SLIDE)**:
Jesus is the stone rejected by you builders, which has become the cornerstone.
¹²There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people
 by which we must be saved."
 Jesus is the cornerstone, the essential and central foundation of our salvation.-----
 And people who reject him will be crushed in judgement as a result.----
 He either brings salvation or damnation for people.-----
 You can't get more serious than that.

In Mark 12 **v12** we're told the religious leaders knew Jesus has spoken the parable against
 them, which he did.
 Jesus had implied that he is the son who will be killed.

Then when Jesus is on trial the high priest asked him, 'Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?' (**Mk 14.61. SLIDE**)

And on that day Jesus answers them openly and with total honesty, 'I Am'.

They knew he claimed to be the Son of God.

They heard Jesus say that he is the cornerstone whom they have rejected.

They heard Jesus say in the parable that God will come and kill them and give his vineyard, his kingdom to others (12.9)

Now they want to arrest him.-----

For like last week, they fear the crowd and don't do what they really want.-----

But they reject Jesus as the King and Cornerstone, and for now, just walk away.

They rejected God, and his Son Jesus.-----

But what about us?

My final point is, Responding to the Lord today.(SLIDE)

For people today, it's actually no different.

Reject Jesus and his authority, and you'll be judged n' killed.-----

For some choices have real consequences.

And I don't just mean renting or buying, with its financial consequences, as I mentioned at the start. Some choices are actually matters of life and death.-----

In 2001 **Janice Brooks(SLIDE)** moved from London to New York to take up a new job at a brokerage firm, in the south tower of the World Trade Centre.

She worked on the 84th floor.

Just a few weeks later, on September 11, after a plane hit the adjacent tower, she decided to leave the building.

She tells of when she last saw three work colleagues who decided to stay.(**SLIDE**)

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jVAwYqeUs1E&t=121s>)

As you know, both towers were hit by planes, and both towers collapsed, killing over 2 ½ thousand people.

Janice' decision to leave, meant that she lived. And 61 of her colleagues died.---

Sometimes our decisions have huge consequences.-----

And responding to Jesus has huge consequences.

It's a matter of life and death.-----

Jesus is either the foundation of your life & salvation; or he'll judge you.

It's that serious.-----

Unless Christ comes again soon, we will all die and face judgement.

As **Hebrews 9 says(SLIDE)** we die once and then **face judgement**.

And Jesus died once to bear our sins, take away our sins, by the sacrifice of himself. As we'll remember in the Supper.

Back in Mark **12v11**, we're told that Jesus the rejected stone becoming the cornerstone, 'came about from the Lord'.

This is quite mind-boggling, cos' it's saying that the rejection of and death of Jesus, is from the Lord, part of God's plan, and is wonderful.

The rejection of the Lord Jesus, God's Son, had a bigger purpose, didn't it?

In God's plan and providence, Jesus' death would bring salvation for his people, all who put their dependent trust in him.

The rejection of God's Son was ultimately part of God's plan, and for God's glory – that's why it's wonderful.

It's wonderful and marvelous for we have been, saved through it.-----

However all others will experience judgement for their sin.

They will bear the consequences for their rejection of God and his Son.

In Jesus' words they will experience 'hell, the unquenchable fire' (**Mark 9.43-SLIDE**)

That's a fire that never goes out.(**Matt 25.41**)

Never-ending death (Mark 9.47; Matt 23.33; Rev 20.14-15).-----

I don't want to experience eternal fire, and I don't want others to either.
 But rejecting God and his Messiah Jesus has consequences.
 Huge consequences.
 It's a matter of life and death.
 So it's vital that you don't reject Jesus and his authority
 Reject him and lose everything
 Gain him and gain everything.-----
 Stop saying 'No!' to God. Trust Jesus and ask him to save you.
 The writer of Psalm 118 says that,(**SLIDE**) - "LORD, Save us!"
 If you haven't yet, you need to cry out, "**Lord Jesus, save me!**"-----

And if you know he has saved you, well the last verse of Ps 118 can be yours,(**SLIDE**)
 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
 his faithful love endures forever.
 Thank God for his prodigal grace, faithful love and bountiful mercy.-----
 Thank God for this wonderful salvation the Lord has won for us.----

Two other brief applications that flow from this, if Jesus has saved you.
 One - Remember I said that **every sin is a rejection of Jesus's Kingship** & God's rule.
 Think again about your biggest sin I asked you to bring to mind earlier.-----
 That greed, that envy, that lust, or laziness, selfishness or pride.
 Think about how offensive that is to the God who rules the world.----
 But also, if you're a Christian, then think that Jesus sacrificed his life to save you, to save you from hell.
 He died to save us from the consequences we deserve.
 He's the King who laid down his life to give you life.-----
 Remember that his death & resurrection not only frees us from the punishment for sin, but the power of sin too.
 With Jesus as Lord, and by the Spirit in us, we can say No to sin.(**SLIDE**)-----
 So remember the Jesus is the rock, the cornerstone.
 Rest your life, your hope, your trust on him.
 Remember how wonderful it is to experience the salvation he gives.
 Then tell yourself, "I can say 'No' to sin, and 'Yes' to living his way."-----
 Don't reject Jesus when it comes to your daily choices, live for him.-----

The **second application is about telling others.**

If we know that Rejecting Jesus and the salvation he offers brings death, we need to tell people.
 People need to know. They need to know there is a God who made them, who calls them to trust the Lord Jesus, and live under his good rule.
 People need to know that the broad road most people travel, rejecting God and Christ, leads to eternal death and destruction(**SLIDE**)-----
 Maybe you know someone who's heard of the forgiveness and relationship with God that comes through Jesus, and has not accepted it?
 Maybe they now need to hear of judgement.
 Is there someone this week that you could talk with about my talk tonight, or about how choices having consequences?
 I know it's a difficult conversation.
 I find it hard to talk about judgement with people too.
 But we speak because we care. Remember that.
 It was early in the morning in Arizona, Jan 1st 2021, when **Carolyn noticed smoke coming from her neighbour's house**, where Nicole, her husband and 4 kids were sleeping.
 Still in her dressing gown,(**SLIDE**) Carolyn went next door n' saw flames coming out of the garage.
 She ran to the front door, pounding on it.

Nobody answered and she started ringing the bell over and over & yelling out.

Thankfully Nicole and the family woke up & made it out safely.

Within minutes the roof collapsed.-----

Nicole's family were saved, because Carolyn warned them of the danger and fire.----

And that's what God does in his word for us today – warn us of danger.

Remember in the parable, the compassion and mercy and patience of God, in sending prophet after prophet, and then his only Son.

Our God is a God of Love, so that's why we're to Be like him.-----

We know what's coming, and in love we warn others too.

We warn because we love people. As the Lord does for us.----

Maybe you could say that to someone you care about:

'Don't reject the Lord, for it's a matter of life and death'.

Let's pray.