

07.04.10 / Mark 12:1-12

Passage Insight

When we come to this passage, Jesus has proclaimed that He is the King of Peace and judged the Temple for not bearing fruit in chapter 11, and here He is yet again judging the Jewish religious leaders for the way that they consistently reject God's messengers. In His comparison of Himself to the son of the landowner, who represents God the Father in the parable, He is claiming equal standing with God, which if true makes the religious leaders' subsequent rejection of Him much worse than their rejection of the prophets before Jesus. Jesus references Psalm 118:22-23 when He says the following:

"The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord's doing,
and it is marvelous in our eyes?"

This reminds us of God's sovereignty, knowing the future events and that His people (the builders and the tenants) would reject the cornerstone (Jesus, Himself) so that they could instead pursue their sinful hearts' desire. In chapter 11, Jesus foretold His replacement of the Temple (the temporary means of approaching God) with Himself as the permanent means of approaching God, and we see that "the Lord's doing," making His own rejected Son the "cornerstone," is in fact marvelous. The reason? Nothing is wasted in God's economy, and He takes even the sin of man and works it into something beautiful, even when it involves the sacrifice of His own Son.

The Israelites continually **rejected** God by **accepting** things other than Him, despite His singular request that they serve only Him as their King. We do the same by **accepting** the things of this world, thereby **rejecting** God Himself. While we are surrounded by opportunities to do just this, we can't blame this on our circumstances because what's at the heart of this is in fact our hearts' natural inclination toward evil, toward doing that which displeases God. God, however, has remarkable patience with us even in this and continues to pursue us relentlessly as He did with the Israelites.

The false gods of our culture include, among others, individualism, control, and pleasure on our terms, and we would do well to assess (and have others assess) our lives to see where these false gods are worshiped in our own lives, because this will tell us where we are **accepting** ourselves (and making ourselves of primary importance), thereby **rejecting** God (by showing Him to be less important to us than we ourselves are). When we follow Jesus, we trade individualism for community, our control for the loving arms of God (His control), and pleasure on our terms for true pleasure, which is wrapped up giving God glory. Some helpful verses related to what pleases the Lord are:

Ezekiel 18:32 (God takes no pleasure in death)

For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord God; so turn, and live.

Colossians 1:19-20 (God is pleased to make peace through sacrifice)

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Hebrews 11:6 (Faith in Jesus is remarkably pleasing to God and all of heaven)
And without faith it is impossible to please him . . .

Romans 5:1-3 (When our truest pleasure is wrapped up in seeing God receive glory, we are freed from trying to pursue pleasure on our terms and can then rejoice regardless of circumstances, even in the worst of times)

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand we rejoice, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings . . .

If it's true that we must reject ourselves in order to truly accept God, we as followers of Jesus must take inventory of our lives, with the help of those around us, to see where we are instead worshiping the false gods of individualism, control, and pleasure on our terms. We must graciously and lovingly point this out to one another and pray together that God would direct our worship away from ourselves and instead to Him.

Application Questions

False gods

- 1) Where do you personally struggle with individualism, control, or seeking pleasure on your terms?
- 2) How do these choices limit your faith in God?
- 3) What is the outcome of having your faith fall short of where it should be?
- 4) What would your life look like instead if you were to reject these false gods in lieu of the true God (be specific in your answer)?
- 5) Who in your Community Group knows you well enough to help you see this clearly where you struggle to see it on your own?

Pleasing to the Lord

- 1) God takes great pleasure in seeing people have faith in His Son. How does seeking pleasure on your own terms get in the way of sharing your faith in Christ with others?
- 2) Where have you found it difficult to rejoice in the midst of suffering?
- 3) Our truest pleasure is wrapped up in giving God glory. Where do you struggle with giving God all the glory in your life?
- 4) God is glorified when we die to those things that separate us from Him. What do you need to die to in your life in order to see God glorified?
- 5) Who can help you with this?

Sources

- Prayer
- Pillar
- BST
- Spurgeon
- NICNT
- Tyndale