

A SON WHOM HE LOVED

Mark 11:27-12:12 (Key verse 12:6)

*"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved.
He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'"*

As usual, I want to start today's message with a question.....What authority does God have in your life? Think about it for a moment.....A little bit.....A lot.....Complete Authority?.....Now let's test your answer.....let's say that through God's word you are convicted to take a certain decision in your life.....but it is something that you never thought about? Moreover, it something that according to you cannot work or be good for your life? If you are certain it is from God.....will you still do it Indeed, these are difficult questions.....that will pop up in today's message. The truth us, like the wicked tenant farmers in today's passage - we are all sinful and naturally reject God's authority in our lives.....We all have our own sinful and selfish dreams.....our own plans.....and want to somehow be god of our own lives....But this is simply not the way our relationship with God works. God is our Creator.....He is the Owner of our lives and everything in it.....and expect that we follow His will and His purpose in our lives

But do you know what the most amazing thing about God is? His patient love for you and me. God loves us so much.....and is so reluctant to punish us according to what our sins deserve that He waits patiently in love for us to turn back to Him. In the meantime God gives us one opportunity after the other to repent.....and submit to Him...Just like the owner of the vineyard waited for the wicked tenants to submit to Him....God even sent Jesus, His Son whom He loves, to die for our rebellion on the cross.....so that in Jesus.....God can forgive us and have a right relationship with us. That is just how much God loves you and me.....And just how much he hates to judge us as our sins deserve....I pray that through today's message.....God may move our hearts with His love.....so each one of us repent of our rebellion against Him to instead.....absolutely accept His authority in our lives. Amen!

Look at verse 27. Jesus and His disciples arrived again in Jerusalem and went to the temple. Can you still remember what Jesus did the previous day at the temple? Yes, He furiously drove out those who were buying and selling there..... He then overturned the tables of the money changersand overturned the benches of those selling doves..... He also would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. (15-16)

Why did Jesus do this? It was because, God wanted His temple to be a house of prayer for all nations.....in other words be a place where people could come and draw close to Him and know Him. But because of the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders, this was no longer possible. Because, instead of respecting God's purpose and will for the temple, they imposed their own will on it.....by turning it into a market place.....through which they could conveniently become rich and live comfortable lives. But Jesus came and put an end to this – by clearing the temple. Obviously, in doing so, Jesus exposed the religious leaders' sin. The question is, how did they respond?

Look again at verse 27.... while Jesus was walking in the temple courts..... the chief priests..... the teachers of the law..... and the elders (all) came to him. This is a good thing, right?! I mean, we should all come to Jesus and ask His forgiveness once He exposes our sin..... Look at verse 28 "By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you authority to do this?" Sadly, the religious leaders did not come

to Jesus to repent of their sin. Instead, they came to fight with Jesus....and challenge His authority in their lives..... Especially, they wanted to know who gave Jesus the power and right to give them orders.....and change things in the temple.....without their consent.

Now we would expect that these religious leaders were sincere in their question to Jesus. In other words, that if Jesus told them that it was by God's authority that He cleared the temple.....the religious leaders would repent of their sin. Moreover, they would not challenge Jesus but accept God's authority as final in their lives. However, this was not the case with these religious leaders. Look at verses 29-30. Jesus replied, "I will ask you one question..... Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. John's baptism—was it from heaven, or from men? Tell me!" This was a very simple question – which accurately tested the religious leaders' attitude towards God. If they accepted God's authority in their lives, then they would easily have answered – *"John's Baptism was definitely from God."* But if they did accept God's authority in their lives.....they would surely come up with some vague answer.....to hide their rebellion.....Which one was it? Look at verse 31. They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' But if we say, 'From men' . . ." (They feared the people, for everyone held that John really was a prophet.) So they answered Jesus, "We don't know." This was an outright lie, to cover up their sin of rebelling against God. Indeed, through this answer we can see.....that though these men were the religious leaders in Israel.....they absolutely did not accept God's authority in their lives. For just like everyone else In Israel.....they knew that John's baptism was from God....yet they still rejected John and refused to believe him..... **This clearly shows that they already rejected the authority of God in their lives.....I mean, as people of God, we all know that God is our Creator.....and we are His creations. Therefore, God has absolute authority over our lives, right?.....and if God says something or leads us in a certain direction.....then who are we to challenge God.....who are we to say no to God! But that was exactly what the religious leaders did to God, when they refused to believe John. They rejected the authority of God in their lives.....so that they could do as they please in the temple and be the god of their own lives.....** And because the religious leaders were not truthful before Jesus, Jesus could not be truthful to them and said - "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

At this point, one would expect Jesus to end the conversation and walk away from the religious leaders...right? Yet, to help them understand the extent of their wickedness and to give them an opportunity to repent....Jesus began to speak to them in parables. Look at chapter 12:1. "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. In this parable, there is a man on the one hand and some farmers on the other hand. The man was very wealthy. Not only did he own some land, but he also had the means to plant a vineyard, dug a winepress, put a wall around the vineyard and built a watch tower to protect it. So it is very clear, that this man was the rightful and permanent owner of the vineyard. And that he had the right to enjoy and benefit from every single harvest that it would produce.

Then there are the farmers. Unlike the man, they did not own the land. They also did not do anything to plant the vineyard..... dug the winepress.....and built the wall or the watch tower. Yet, because the man went away on a journey he needed people to temporarily take care of his vineyard, until he returns. So he decided to rent his vineyard to the farmers. The rental agreement was crystal clear – for as long as the man was away.....the farmers could stay on the man's vineyard and enjoy

the fruitsbut in return the farmers had to maintain the man's vineyard and now and then give some of the fruits to the owner when he asks for it.....

This sounds like a good deal right? I mean, the farmers gets a good deal in that they did not have to pay much rent yet had the privilege of enjoying the pleasures and security of the man's vineyard.....while the man who owned the vineyard could go on his journey while still enjoying some of the fruits. It's a good deal!! Look at verse 2. A few months later, at harvest time, the man who owns the vineyard eagerly sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. But then, the tenant farmers, did something terribly unexpected! Look at verse 3..... they seized the man's servant, beat him and sent him away empty-handed. What's happening here!!? This is not right!! The man was the owner of the vineyard and had every right to ask for all the fruits of the harvest...yet he only asked for some. Why then did the tenant farmers behaved as if they were the owners of the vineyard? This was outrageous!!! Surely, the man got a court order to evict these ungrateful and foolish tenant farmers....right?

Look at verse 4. Then the man sent another servant to the tenant farmers..... But again...the tenant farmers struck the servant on the head and treated him shamefully. What's going on here? They did this a second time.....it is completely unacceptable. Did these tenant farmers not have the least respect for the man who rented his beautiful and safe vineyard to them? What would you have done if you were in the shoes of the man who owned the vineyard?.....Yes, you would arrest them and kick them off your land, isn't it? But not the man who owned the vineyard. Look at verse 5. He sent still another servant.....But things went from bad to worse.....as this one they killed. Surely now the land owner would act against these wicked tenants....and get rid of them!!!..... But to our great surprise, he sent many other servants.....Why did the owner of the vineyard do this? It was because of his pure and hopeful heart towards the tenants. He did not want to crush them.....He really did not want to kick them out.....instead the owner of the vineyard simply wanted the tenant farmers to have a right relationship with him by acknowledging that they were not the owners of the vineyard.....but mere tenants.....and humbly submit to the man by giving him some of the fruits of his vineyard. But sadly, the wicked tenant farmers grew more rebellious by the day.....as some of the servants they beat and others they killed. The situation was tragic!

Look at verse 6. Can we read today's key verse together? 6"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.' The man had one left to send.....before he would act against these wicked tenants.... a son, whom he loved. If you were the land owner, would you send the son whom you love.....to these wicked and rebellious tenant farmers? Absolutely not. But that was exactly what the owner of the vineyard did....because he really...really.....really really did not want to kill these tenant farmers.....He loved and respected them too much.....Therefore, He was willing to send his son last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.' The man was hopeful and believed that when the tenants see his son, they would come to their senses and submit to the man's authority over the vineyard.

"But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. Wow, what a terrible story!!If only it was a story we can simply forget about it, right?.....The truth is, however, this is not just a story.....but a vivid illustration of how sinful and wicked we are and how shamefully we behave towards God. We can interpret this parable in two ways. Firstly, in a narrow sense whereby in this parable, (1)

God is the owner of the vineyard I.....(2)Jesus is the Son..... (3) the vineyard is the people of Israel..... (4) the wicked tenant farmers are the religious leaders and(5) the servants are God's prophets. In the context of this parable, it now makes sense why the religious leaders turned the temple into a house of robbers.....it also make sense why they refused to believe John the Baptist.....!! It was because....just like the tenant farmers rebelled against the land owner.....so the religious leaders stubbornly and vigorously rebelled against Godto the point where they would kill Jesus to claim the temple system for themselves... According to this parable, what would happen to the religious leaders.....Look at verse "What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others". Yes, finally,.....after patiently waiting and waiting.....God's righteous judgment would fall upon the religious leaders.....after they killed Jesus on the cross. Here we can see, that Jesus is the final chance that God gives people.....to repent and submit to Him. After Jesus, only judgment awaits!

It is easy for us to condemn or criticize the religious leaders. Shouting.... 'yes.....*God must judge these wicked men!! They deserve it!!*' Yet, the truth is, if we interpret this parable in a broader sense..... we are all like the religious leaders....and treat God exactly the same as the tenant farmers treated the landowner. The question is, why do we do this?.....Why, if God is as kind..... and patientand loving..... and generous..... as the owner of the vineyard.....do we behave as if we are the owners of our own lives.....and reject God's authority to do with our lives and the things in it as we please.....It is because.....we are all.....without exception..... just as wicked as the tenant farmers in the parable.....The sad reality is that sin has not only separated us from God.....but it also destroyed His image within us.....to the extent that we became as rebelliously wicked as the tenants in the parable.....This is our reality..... without God's intervention this is what we are at the core of our being.....And like the tenant farmers.....we all deserve to face God's righteous punishment.....However, the good newsand the best part of this parable.....is that God is patiently waiting for us to turn from our sin.....and acknowledge that He is the owner of our lives.....God stands ready to forgive us.....just like the owner of the vineyard in the parable was ready to forgive those wicked tenants....In fact, God's love for you and me is wonderful.....that He gave up His one and only Son.....whom He loves.....and sacrificed Him on the cross.....in our place.....so that in Him we can be forgiven and reconciled with God. This goes to show just how reluctant God is to condemn us.....and judge us.....and cut us off from Him forever. He truly...truly.....want us to have a right relationship with Him. Amen!!

Then what should you do now? Firstly, you must sincerely respect God's Son – Jesus Christ – by accepting that you are like the wicked tenants worthy of God's judgment.....for living selfishly as if you are the owner of your lifeThen, you have to sincerely accept, that Jesus paid the price for your sin by dying in your place on the cross....and that in Him....and by His precious blood.....God will forgive your sin and embrace you as one of His precious sons and daughters. Jesus is the one and only chance we have to reconcile with God and have a right relationship with Him. Amen!

And with the following question I will close – Once we are forgiven in Christ, how can we make sure we daily acknowledge God's authority in our lives? Based on today's passage, we can do so by not acting like the religious leaders when God's will was so clearly revealed to them. John the Baptist's message came straight from God. But this message....this new direction from God did not suit them.....in fact it went against their own selfish dreams and ambitions.....so instead of submitting to God.....they

rejected John's message and simply carried on with their lives.....They did the same with Jesus. Though it was clear that Jesus was sent by God, they did not listen to Jesus.....but actually questioned his authority with rebellious intent.....But if we truly are in Christ.....and if we sincerely want to acknowledge God's authority in our lives.....then we must never ever behave like these religious leaders. Instead, we must remember to patient love of God.....we must remember His goodness and grace.....more than that.....we must remember that He is our Creator who also saved us from sin.....and then humbly deny our sinful desires to instead follow His good and perfect will for our lives. This is not optional....but essential for you and me to have a deep and personal relationship with God in Jesus. Amen!