

THE FIRST 15

Tuesday, September 10, 2024

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Today is Tuesday, September 10 and we are learning what the Bible says about Cornerstone.

OPENING PRAYER

My Lord and my God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I pause to rest in Your love this morning and seek Your presence in the stillness of a new day. As I strive to stand on Christ the Cornerstone, give me the firm foundation I need for my faith and build me into a living temple for Your Holy Spirit to dwell. Fill me with the love, joy and peace only You can provide. Undergird my thoughts, emotions and footsteps throughout the course of my day. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

He went on to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard, rented it to some farmers and went away for a long time. At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants so they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. He sent another servant, but that one also they beat and treated shamefully and sent away empty-handed. He sent still a third, and they wounded him and threw him out. Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my son, whom I love; perhaps they will respect him.' But when the tenants saw him, they talked the matter over. 'This is the heir,' they said. 'Let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others." When the people heard this, they said, "God forbid!" Jesus looked directly at them and asked, "Then what is the meaning of that which is written: The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone? Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed." Luke 20:9-18

REFLECTION

Jesus told this parable as a response to the accusations of the religious elite who questioned His authority to teach in the temple courts and proclaim the good news (Luke 20:1-2). The analogy of a vineyard would have been common and easily understood by Jesus' ancient audience. The owner of a vineyard provided everything needed for the vineyard to be successful and produce abundant good fruit. He built rough stone walls to keep out hungry animals. He constructed watchtowers and housed guards for safety. He provided workers shelter during the harvest. He built a winepress to crush the grapes and make wine. It took four to five years after planting a vineyard for profits to be realized. During that time tenants would inhabit the land until the harvest.

In the parable, the landowner who planted the vineyard is God. The tenants are the temporary caretakers - the religious leaders, the chief priests and elders. The servants are the prophets God sent. In the parable, when the servants of the owner came to collect the fruit, the servants

were ignored, beaten, killed and stoned, just like God's prophets. Then the owner sent his son, his beloved son. The tenants plot to kill him and take his inheritance.

In the telling of the parable, Jesus clearly intended for himself to be seen as the "son" of the owner. Ancient hearers would expect the owner to destroy the tenants for their disobedience to his servants. Sending his only beloved son was generously merciful. The chief priests and scribes quickly realized that Jesus was talking about them. They are the tenants. They are furious about this accusation and they plot to kill him.

Jesus looked directly at them and asked, "Then what is the meaning of that which is written: The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone?" Quoting Psalm 118:22-24, his listeners would easily tie these two images together. The son and the stone. The son of the vineyard owner, Jesus, the Son of Man compared to the stone the builders rejected that will become the chief cornerstone. In Hebrew the words are very similar - "ben" means son and "eben" means stone. The Son of God is the Living Stone - the Cornerstone of salvation. The rock of faith.

Ask: When and how have I rejected Christ in the past or present? How might I more fully embrace Christ as my Cornerstone in the future?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Holy and blessed God, thank You for loving me so much that despite how I have continually rejected You over the course of my life, You never gave up Your pursuit of me. Thank You for sending Your one and only beloved Son, Jesus, to be rejected for the salvation of my soul. Forgive me for my selfishness, stubbornness and short-sighted ways. Grant me the beauty of Your grace and sanctify me through and through. Teach me what it means to build my life on Christ - the Cornerstone. Amen.