

SECTION 3

Lesson

11

A Story That Stirred Up Anger



Study Word



plotted: (plät' əd) secretly planned

Here is another story Jesus told to help His disciples understand the kingdom of Heaven. Some priests, scribes, and Pharisees stood in the crowd that day. Those leaders became very angry when they heard the story. That was because they knew Jesus was talking about them. This is the parable the Master told that day.

* * *

A certain landowner prepared a vineyard. He planted the best grapevines. He built a stone fence around it. He dug a winepress so all would be ready at harvesttime. He also built a watchtower in the middle of the vineyard. There the family could stay while they picked the grapes. From the upper part of the tower they could keep an eye on the whole vineyard. The landowner rented the vineyard to some farmers and went to a far country.

The Bible does not tell us this, but we

can be sure that before the landowner left he told the farmers exactly how he wanted them to care for the vineyard. There were things they must be sure to do. There were other things they should never do if they wanted a good crop.

One important job, after the plants were growing well, was to cut off any weak or broken branches. The farmers also must trim back the vines so they would bear many large bunches of grapes.

The farmers had to keep close watch, because foxes, birds, and insects would spoil the crop if given a chance. When the grapes had ripened, the farmers would need to stay on the lookout for thieves. Someone had to stay in the watchtower all the time, or robbers would sneak over the wall and take the grapes. All these things, and more, the landowner surely told the farmers before he left.

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The seasons came and went. In the far-off country the man thought of home. By now his grape vines should be strong and healthy. If his renters had obeyed him, he should have a big crop of grapes this year. He said to one of his servants, "Go back to my vineyard and get some of the grapes. They should be ripe now."

What did the servant see when he got there? Was the vineyard full of happy workers, picking the grapes and carrying them to the winepress? Were the renters glad to see the servant and eager to show him the vineyard? Did they hunt for the biggest bunches of grapes to send back to the master?

No, nothing like that happened. The servant had no chance to find out about anything. When the renters learned why he had come, they grabbed him. They beat him and chased him away. He left empty-handed.

The owner of the vineyard sent other servants, but they did not get any grapes either. The renters treated them just as badly. One

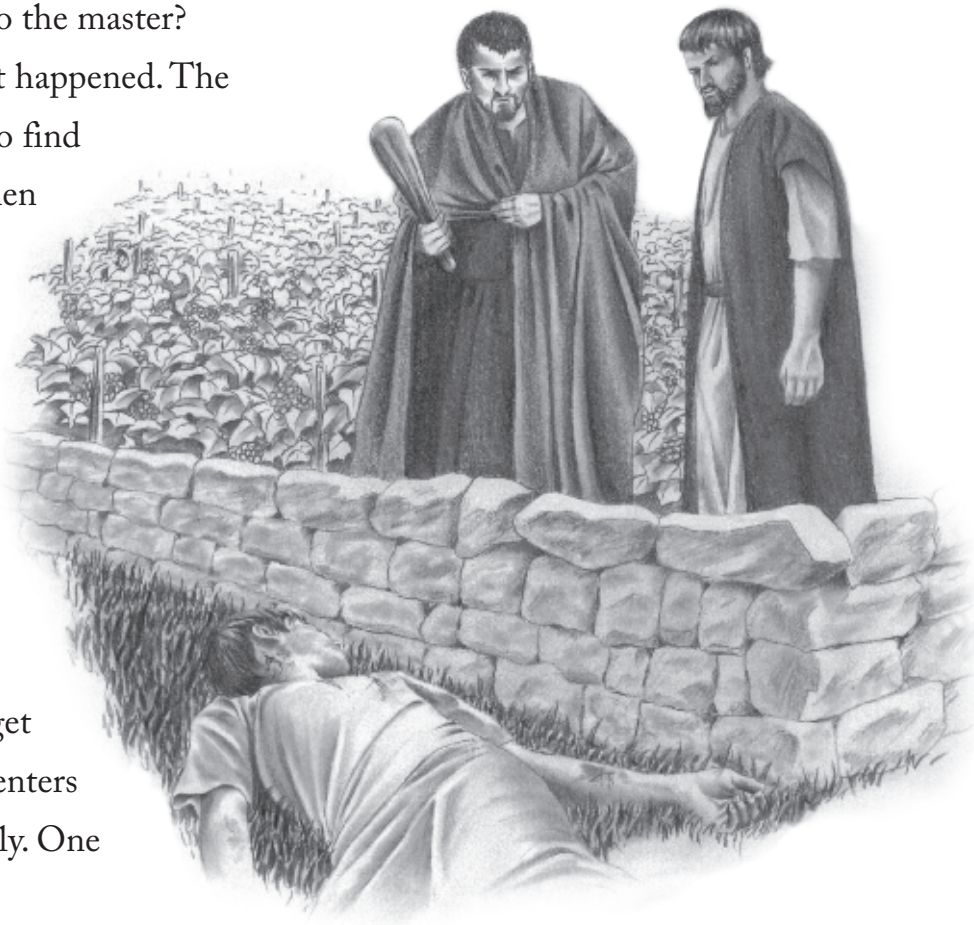
they hit over the head. One they stoned. Another they killed.

The owner did not know what to do. At last he said, "I will send my only son. Surely they will respect him."

When the farmers saw the son coming, they said to each other, "Here comes the son. He will get the vineyard when the master dies. Let us kill him and take the vineyard." So they grabbed the son and killed him, and threw his body over the wall, out of the vineyard.

* * *

Jesus stopped speaking. What a sad and terrible story! Was that the end of it? No,



Jesus let the people in the crowd finish the story. He asked, “When the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those renters?”

* * *

They answered, “He will put those wicked farmers to death. He will rent his vineyard to others who will take care of it and raise good grapes for him.”

That is the story that made the priests, scribes, and Pharisees so angry. They saw themselves as the most holy and important men in the kingdom of God. But Jesus’ story showed that they were the wicked farmers who disobeyed the master, and finally had

killed his son.

Just as the owner had sent his son to the vineyard, so God had sent His Son to the earth. However, the priests, scribes, and Pharisees would not admit that Jesus was the Son of God.

Jesus’ parable made them so angry they wanted to arrest Him on the spot. But they were afraid to, because the people believed Jesus was a prophet from God. They didn’t dare do anything to Him at that time.

Nevertheless, those angry leaders **plotted** among themselves to do the very thing the parable said they would do. They planned to kill the Son.

FROM THE STORY

Number these in order from the parable.

1. _____ The landowner sent his son, and the farmers killed him.
- _____ The landowner planted a vineyard, rented it out, and went away.
- _____ The landowner sent servants to the vineyard for grapes.
- _____ The farmers mistreated the servants.

Complete the sentence.

2. The _____, _____, and _____ were angry when they heard Jesus tell this parable, but they were afraid to arrest Him because the people thought He was a _____ from God.

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THAT'S OUR GOD

Match.

- 3. _____ God
- 4. _____ Jesus
- 5. _____ scribes, priests, Pharisees

- a. son who was killed
- b. wicked farmers
- c. landowner
- d. servants

FOR ME TODAY

Write the answer.

- 6. The landowner expected the farmers to respect his son. The landowner is a picture of God. Who is His Son that you need to respect? _____

HOW THEY LIVED

Planting and caring for a vineyard took a lot of work.

Write *P* for *planting and preparing* the vineyard. Write *C* for the work of *caring for the vineyard*.

- 7. _____ Build a stone fence for protection.
- 8. _____ Watch for thieves stealing the ripe grapes.
- 9. _____ Cut off weak or broken branches.
- 10. _____ Dig a winepress for harvest time.
- 11. _____ Plant the best grapevines.
- 12. _____ Trim vines to encourage many grapes.
- 13. _____ Watch for animals spoiling the crop.
- 14. _____ Build a watchtower for a lookout.

WE REMEMBER

Write the correct answers.

15. "Rewards of the Kingdom" teaches us that _____.
a. we can earn rewards in His kingdom
b. we can't earn rewards; God gives them
16. The landowner paid a whole day's wages (a penny) to _____, _____, and _____.
a. those who had worked all day
b. those who had worked half a day
c. those who had worked an hour
17. The workers not satisfied with their pay were _____.
a. those who had worked all day
b. those who had worked half a day
c. those who had worked an hour
18. The vineyard owner needed _____.
a. men to work without pay
b. more workers to plant grapes
c. extra workers to help with grape harvest