

The Tenants in the Vineyard

(Matthew 21:33-end)

Characters:

Narrator (Nar)

Jesus

Farmer 1 (Fm1)

Farmer 2 (Fm2)

Farmer 3 (Fm3)

Nar: Jesus was teaching the people. In the crowd were many chief priests and teachers, people who were proud and arrogant and who thought they were better than other people. They thought that they had the right to a place in heaven and wouldn't listen to Jesus teaching about humility and love. So Jesus told them this parable:

Jesus: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He dug a wine press, put a wall around it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a long journey.

Nar: In those days everyone knew that tenant farmers had to pay rent. The rent was one tenth of their crop that must be given to the landowner as soon as it is harvested.

Jesus: When harvest time came the landowner sent some of his servants to collect the rent. But when the farmers saw the servants coming they said:

Fm1: Why should we give them a tenth of our crop?

Fm2: We've worked hard day and night, surely the crop is ours!

Fm3: We should keep it all! That landowner has done nothing to deserve it!

Jesus: So they seized the first servant and beat him.

Fm1: Clear off! And don't come back!

Jesus: They hit the second servant and killed him!

Fm2: Well he won't bother us again will he!?

Jesus: And they stoned the third servant.

Fm3: Take that! And that! And don't come back!

Jesus: So the landowner sent more servants, but the farmers did just the same to them as well.

Fm1: The crop is all ours!

Fm2: We worked for it!

Fm3: And you can't have any of it!!

Jesus: Finally the landowner sent his only son. "Surely they will respect him?" he thought. But the farmers said:

Fm1: Hey look! It's the landowner's son!

Fm2: He is the heir to his father's estate.

Fm3: If we kill him there will be no one to inherit the vineyard when the landowner dies!

Fm1: Come on! What are we waiting for!

Fm2: Let's get him!

Fm3: Draw your swords!

Jesus: So they took the son and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

Nar: Jesus paused and looked at the crowd. He felt sad, very sad.

Jesus: Why don't you listen to me?

Nar: he thought,

Jesus: If you would listen to me then this parable would not be about you.

Nar: Jesus took a deep breath.

Jesus: So, what will the landowner do with the tenants?

Nar: They all said: "He will give them what they deserve! He will drive them out and kill them and rent the vineyard to farmers who will pay him his rent.

Jesus: Have you not read what the scriptures say? The stone that was thrown away has become the most important stone in the building. The stone that keeps everything standing! God has done this today and it is marvellous to all who can see it! The Kingdom of God will be taken away from all who are proud and arrogant and think they deserve to be part of it and it will be given to those who are humble and gentle and bear real Kingdom fruit in their lives.

Nar: The chief priests and teachers realised that Jesus was talking about them. They were angry! They went away and looked for a time to have Jesus arrested so that they could punish him.

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