

Sunday Sermon: April 7, 2019

Sermon Theme: Luke 20: 9-19

Sermon Theme: Uncovering the Lies of the Devil: You don't need Jesus

⁹ 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. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ He sent another servant, but that one also they beat and treated shamefully and sent away empty-handed. ¹² He sent still a third, and they wounded him and threw him out.

¹³ "Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my son, whom I love; perhaps they will respect him.'

¹⁴ "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.' ¹⁵ So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

"What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? ¹⁶ He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others."

When the people heard this, they said, "May this never be!"

¹⁷ 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 capstone'?"

¹⁸ Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed." ¹⁹ The teachers of the law and the chief priests looked for a way to arrest him immediately, because they knew he had spoken this parable against them. But they were afraid of the people.

"No, I can do it myself." Have you ever heard that come out of the mouth of a 2 or 3 year old? Maybe, they are struggling with tying their shoes and you want to help. Maybe they are having trouble putting on a piece of clothing. Maybe, you offer to help with a game they are playing. No, I can do it myself.

This can be a very cute statement when the child is showing determination and motivation to get something done. But, what is cute for a 2 year is not as cute when an adult does it. We offer help to someone, No, I can do it myself. Someone offers help to us, No, I can do it myself.

Unfortunately, many have this same feeling when it comes to getting to heaven. When they hear that heaven is by God's Way alone, "No, I can do it myself."

Many people want the forgiveness, peace and heaven that Jesus offers. But they think that they can have those great gifts without the burden of believing in the true God and having faith in Jesus as the one and only way to heaven. This is because the devil is using one of his twisted truths. This fake news lie works so well because it appeals to our ego. You don't need God, you can do it yourself.

We need to understand the context of this section to understand why Jesus told this parable. Earlier in this chapter of Luke, as Jesus is teaching in the temple courts the chief priests and teachers of the Law challenge him, "**By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority?**"

The implication is clear. They thought they had the divine authority from God to be chief priests, to preach what they are preaching, but where does Jesus' authority to preach and teach and even heal come from?

Jesus turns the question back on them and asks them where John the Baptist's authority came from to baptize?

The Jews teachers discuss this among themselves and although they know the answer, they could not come up with a good answer that would help them. So they used a childish answer, "We don't know."

They probably did not think that this childish answer would get them a lesson in God's authority, their own sinfulness and rejection, and God's Messiah. But that is what Jesus uses their answer to do. Jesus answer to, "We don't know," is the parable he tells in our sermon text.

The facts of the parable are simple. The master rents his vineyard to some farmers expecting that at harvest time they will pay him what is due. When the harvest time comes the master sends 3 representatives to request payment. The farmers do not pay. Instead they beat up the representatives and send them away empty handed.

The master then sends his own son. Surely sending his own son to remind them of the deal he made with them will convince them to respect the deal, and pay what it owed. But instead of just beating the son up, they kill him instead.

The question that Jesus is asking is a real-world question with spiritual implications. What do you expect will happen to these men when they have shown disrespect, beaten the servants, and killed the son of the land owner? You would expect that they would have to answer for their crimes and be punished severely, maybe even killed.

Jesus message was first directed at the chief priests, the teachers of the Law and the Jewish people who had already rejected him as the Messiah and turned their backs on the true God. If there was real world punishment for people who rejected this master, how much more will there be for a people who had rejected the God who had loved them and brought them Promised Land, been faithful to his promises to them and protected them for so long. How much more punishment for a people who had refused to listen and had persecuted the true prophets who had come with God's message? How much more punishment for a people who hated God so much that they were already planning on killing his Son who was sent to lead them to repentance and give them forgiveness.

Jesus message also applies to us. He warns us through this parable not to follow the devil's twisted truth that they didn't need God. The warning is that we do not do those same things. But we do don't we? There are times that we find ourselves turning our backs on God because we think we can do it better ourselves. There are many times that we believe that it is not really God who is blessing us during this life, it is the work of our own hands, our striving alone that produces the results. The money is ours, the life is ours, the house and car are ours and everything else is ours not because God provides for us every day, but because we have worked so hard for it.

While we may not reject God with hard hearts, like the Israelites did, there is a danger when we fall into this sin and begin to give ourselves credit for what it rightfully God's and when we place our own effort above God's blessing because that is the first step in trusting in ourselves and not God.

That danger is the same danger that the child faces when they tell their parent, No, I can do it myself. If the child pushes the parents away in everything, if they place their own thoughts and knowledge above the parents, what will happen with the child?

Sometimes this is what we do with God. We begin to divorce ourselves from God because we can do it all by ourselves.

Have you ever found yourself on a roller coaster ride when it comes to church or Bible Study? Maybe you come for awhile, but then a few weeks or months go by and you realize, I haven't been to church or Bible Study in quite awhile. Maybe, I should go sometime.

There are some very valid reasons why we would not be able to be in the Lord's house. Illness or injury, age or mobility, distance or transportation, might all be reasons that keep us from the Lord's house. But none of these reasons should change our hearts and stop us from loving the Lord, wanting to hear his Word and growing in faith.

Unfortunately, that's not the case isn't it? While busyness, stress, being tired or distance may not stop us from doing the things we want to do, they often stop us from being in the Lord's house. The sin is not about being in chair in God's house, it is really an attitude of the heart. It is really a sin against the 3rd commandment.

This attitude goes far beyond not coming to church, it can include coming to church for the wrong reasons. It can include only having God as part of our life for 1 maybe 2 hours a week, not opening the Bible at home, not having times for a personal devotion with the Lord. This sin is really about the attitude of the hearts that doesn't really want to have time for the Lord.

With his temptations, the devil is asking us to make a decision of priorities. What is more important for me at this time and in this place? Do I have some time for the Lord today or not? Did I structure my life around what I need and want, or what God says is important for me?

As the devil tempts, we might not even realize that those decisions are driving us further from faith. We might not realize that we are beginning to say, No, I can do it myself.

The devil wants us to believe, just as the Israelites believed, that as long as the paycheck is coming in, the vacations are being taken and life is rolling on that God must be happy with us.

The Bible warns us that if we think that we can do it on our own. If we think that we can stand firm in the faith, but are not in the Word, we should be careful because we might fall into the devil's temptation of trusting ourselves.

Jesus had some strong words for the chief priests and teachers of the Law, they did not think they needed God and his Messiah in their lives. **The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone'? ¹⁸ Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed."**

Does that mean that we will be broken and punished every time we fall for the devil's lie and do things for ourselves? No, our God is a loving and forgiving God.

Part of the blessing of being in the Lord's house, surrounded by his Word is the reminder that we need this God to forgive of our many sins and to lead us to that repentance and forgiveness.

When we realize that we have been doing things that separate us from him and the true faith., when we realize that we are the child who is saying to the heavenly Father and saying, No, I want to do it myself, when we repent our sins, God tells us the blood of Jesus covers over these sins and all the others that we commit.

We need God in our lives, not just momentarily but always. We need God to keep us in the faith, to watch over us and protect us, to guide us through this world. We need that hope and comfort that only he can give. Heaven is not something we can do by ourselves, trying will only lead us to hell.

That is why Jesus has already won heaven for us and has already given it to us. The apostle John writes about the blessing that God has given to us and the importance of our Savior and his Word in our life: **These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name.**

We can't do it without God. We can't do it without our Savior. It is only through him that we have the forgiveness and eternal life we truly need.