

**A Revealing Parable**  
**Mark 12:1-12**

We return to Mark's gospel this morning, and I have to tell you this is just one of my favorite portions of the life of Christ. When you study it as a whole, of all the different portions that come out and all the different acts and deeds and messages and teaching of Christ, this is so unique because what we have here in His final week of earthly ministry are these controversies. It's kind of like the showdown. There's just so much anticipation that builds for showdowns. We all feel it whether you're really into boxing, and it's finally the match of two people you want to see box, or just two teams that you want to see meet in a championship in a sporting event of any kind, the idea of a showdown, the two best, the highest ranked coming and going head to head. And what you have here is a series of controversies between Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has all authority, verses the elite, the cream of the crop, the intellectual, the religious elite, the leaders of Israel, going head to head.

And we saw that all come last week in the initial challenge that took place, and the reason for this challenge, really, was because of what happened to kick the week off. We remember the welcome that Jesus received when He was coming with all the fellow Jews down to Jerusalem to start off this week of Passover, and as He came into Jerusalem, He was received like a king in the way they treated Him, how they took palm branches, how they took their cloaks and put them on the ground. And He was "...mounted on a donkey..." as a fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9. As the people shouted out loud and proclaimed Him to be King and said Hosanna save us and Halleluiah in the highest, they greeted and welcomed Him as the King. Obviously, this got the attention of the religious leaders that were there running the show in Jerusalem, but to only add to that, the very next day after this royal greeting, Jesus goes into the temple, right on their turf in Jerusalem, and He pronounces judgement upon what is taking place there and their authority in the temple. He cleanses the temple and makes quite the scene, taking authority of the temple mount.

This is what got the attention, so much so of these religious leaders that they started to act. They finally kicked it up a notch, kicked it up a gear, and decided to challenge Jesus, and boy was that the wrong move, but

nonetheless, this is what they did. And this is what brings us to where we are in this study of Christ's life in Mark's gospel, these controversies as the religious leaders are challenging and trying to get Jesus to trip up, trying to undermine His authority and yet failing miserably. The way they began was in Mark 11:27 last week where we saw this challenge coming forth of who do you think you are Jesus? What gives you the right to do this? Who gave you the authority to do this, that is to come into Jerusalem in this royal manner, that is to come into the temple and act like you own the place? Obviously, we know He does own the place. It is all His, but nonetheless, this was news for the religious leaders who thought that they were in control - they were in charge - they had the authority. So, they challenged Jesus' authority, and He turned the tables on them. He completely made a fool of them in asking them about John the Baptist, and they were unable to answer, with their most authoritative answer being, "We do not know", making them look like fools.

So, Jesus clearly survives this initial head to head controversy that came up when they went on the attack, and Jesus, so to speak, was on the defense. Well, if Jesus was on the defense last time, what we see today is He's on the attack. He moves even further. It's really just coming right off of that conversation, right off of that controversy and scene that we move into, what is before us, Jesus putting the pressure on them, on these religious leaders that are there. So, let's pick that up in Mark 12 and read verses 1-12; "And he began to speak to them in parables. 'A man planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a pit for the winepress and built a tower, and leased it to tenants and went into another country. When the season came, he sent a servant to the tenants to get from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Again he sent to them another servant, and they struck him on the head and treated him shamefully. And he sent another, and him they killed. And so with many others: some they beat, and some they killed. He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But those tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' And they took him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others. Have you not read this Scripture: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? And

they were seeking to arrest him but feared the people, for they perceived that he had told the parable against them. So they left him and went away.”

Jesus, this morning, going on the attack, and it's interesting to note how He does this. Not only does He step into the mode of teaching as He often has done, He actually does it in a very particular way by telling this story, and as we've indicated in verse 1, it is a parable. He jumps in to telling parables. Mark here records just the one for us, but if you were to look at other gospels like Matthew, you see more than one parable that He tells at this moment, but Mark just gives us this one that Jesus then launches in order to be His attack in responding to their challenge of Him and His own authority. So, we see this story unfold, and we track it, and through this, we see how Jesus addresses these religious leaders. So, the first thing we see in verse 1 is the rental here, as this story is set, as this scene is kind of painted before them, it's a very typical and normal setting, you could say, as many of the stories that Jesus told and many of the parables He gave. This is another one of those that many people could relate to and understand and see taking place in kind of average everyday life in the first century Israel. Notice, that it says, “And he began to speak to them in parables.” And while we've noted that He has told stories and told parables before, we have to ask the next question though, is this parable functioning in the same way as the other parables He told us? Is this the same kind of teaching? Is this the same approach, the same purpose that He has in mind when He told parables before? And you might be thinking, okay, I'm not remembering that exactly. That's fine. It was all the way in Mark chapter 4, so I'll give you some grace on that one. Alright? Back in Mark 4, that's where we saw the original purpose for parables, why Jesus shifted His teaching method in the first place, why He chose to speak with these stories that have a point to them.

Why did He do that? Well, it wasn't just for illustrative purposes. There was more to it. Let me remind you of Mark 4:10-12; “And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them, ‘To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, so that ‘they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven.’” This is where we're reminded this is why Jesus taught in parables. In Mark chapter 4, it was right after the big controversy where they are denying Jesus' authority. In fact, they're calling Jesus' authority as something that he got from Satan; that's why he could do miraculous things.

They were committing this blasphemy of the very Spirit that was working in and through Jesus' ministry. Thus, Jesus responded to them with this kind of teaching with parables, and how are the parables functioning? If you recall, they were doing two things. They were definitely stories with a point, that were revealing the truth about the kingdom of God for those that were faithfully following Christ. But for those that were not, it was a hidden message. It was something that was concealed from their eyes, and they could not see. So, to summarize it, or to put it another way, parables reveal truth to the faithful while concealing the truth from the faithless. That's what the parables did, revealing truth to the faithful that actually were sincerely following Christ while concealing the truth from those that were faithless that had no interest in truly following Christ with faith.

So, is that what's happening here? Is Jesus shifting back into that mode? Is that His goal right now, to teach in this manner, to give a story that would do the same thing, that would reveal to those that are faithful and be concealing to those that are in fact faithless? And what we find out is that's not the case. If you just look at verse 12, we see the response of the people that are clearly faithless; "And they were seeking to arrest him..." These are not the people that are in favor of Jesus. These are the religious leaders; "And they were seeking to arrest him but feared the people, for they perceived that he had told the parable against them." They understood. They got it. This is a story, not to try and be concealing to some and revealing to others - this is a story that everyone could get, everyone could relate to, everyone could understand. And most particularly and obviously, we're just reminded of the scene where we came from last week, and what was taking place. Jesus was interacting with whom? The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of Israel, that's the leadership, the leadership of Israel and Jesus. They're the two main parties that are actually having this controversy and this conversation, thus Jesus is speaking to them. And at the end of our passage today, we see they got it. It registered. It clicked. They recognized what Jesus was doing with this story, thus this is not a parable in the typical sense of chapter 4, but this is a parable in the sense of making a greater impact, a story come to life to really show the truth and confront these men, these leaders so called.

Looking at the actual content of the story in verse 1, this is where we say as I kind of mentioned before a very typical scene, a man planting a vineyard, putting a fence around it, digging a pit for the winepress, building a tower

there in the midst of it. And then, because he probably owned lots of other lands and other types of properties that he was doing similar things with, he rents it out. He leases it. He leases it to someone else to maintain and do all the upkeep on it so that when the time comes for their produce and the season of harvest, then he would obviously get his share, and they would get theirs. This was a very typical setup. This is what happened. There were definitely landowners in this time. This was often what they did with their land, utilizing it for those purposes and renting it out. The owner did a lot of work though to kick it all off. Look at how he prepped it. He's the one that's actually planting it. He's the one that put a fence around it to give some boundaries and even maybe some security. He's the one that dug this pit for a winepress to not just have the fruit of the vineyard but to actually begin to go through the process of smashing the grapes and actually producing the wine. And then he's the one that built the tower for it for security purposes, being a lookout but also potentially being storage for the fruit as it was becoming ripe and ready and also a shelter in any type of bad weather. He did all this work. He prepared all of it. He put all this time and energy into it, but at this moment when he was ready and setup to go, all he had to do was get the tenants to watch over it and do their simple job. That's what he did. He "...leased it to tenants and went into another country."

Some people here might be aware of this kind of operation with different properties that you own, and you have had maybe experiences either on one end of being the person renting the tenants or on the other end of being the one that is actually the owner who is leasing it out, who is actually finding the tenants for it. And, no doubt, you've heard horror stories. Right? There are plenty of these horror stories about rental properties and what renters will do, but let me guarantee you, I don't think you can find renters worse than this. Alright? What you find this morning, of all the horror stories with renters, I think this one tops them all, no question. Verses 2-8, this is where we find the rebellion, the all-out rebellion of these tenants - the rebellion in verses 2-8. We read in verse 2, "When the season came, he sent a servant to the tenants to get from them some of the fruit of the vineyard." Again, very typical. Everyone is tracking with Jesus' point. Everyone understands this story. Everyone has seen how this takes place. And whether several years have gone by, and so the vineyard is actually producing fruit, or whether several years went by, and then the tenants went in and now it's time for fruit to be coming, either way, this was a reasonable time for there to be a harvest. And thus, the owner is very reasonable in expecting to gather some

of that harvest, to gather some of that fruit. So, he sends a servant as you would expect because he's a busy man and doesn't have a lot of time. "And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed." Obviously, the last thing you would expect and obviously want as an owner (alright?), sending him away, not just beating him and treating him in this way, in an evil and violent fashion, but also sending him away with nothing to bring back to the owner.

Obviously, we know the story that the owner is pretty persistent in this. So, we look at verse 4; "Again he sent to them another servant..." Okay, he's trying again, and what happens this time? "...and they struck him on the head and treated him shamefully." Kind of adding to the progression and kind of making the point here, not just the one servant that they didn't like, it wasn't like it was a particular servant that they weren't a huge fan of, this is how they continue to act as the owner tries to touch base with them and obviously claim what is rightfully his. So, he stays at it in verse 5; "And he sent another, and him they killed. And so with many others: some they beat, and some they killed." Even after these two failures in the beginning, the owner still sends more servants. Even after he sends a third that is killed, he continues to send more. The tenants in an even more outrageous fashion continue to act with a consistent evil and wickedness as they kill and beat the ones that continue to come, but obviously the owner doesn't stop. In verse 6, we see the culmination here; "He had still one other, a beloved son." By the way, that term, "...beloved son" only occurring two other times in Mark's gospel, and both those times in reference to Jesus at His baptism with John the Baptist and God Himself saying, "This is my beloved Son..." and at the transfiguration, when Jesus was on the Mount, and He showed all His glory, and God again, spoke there, calling Jesus his "...beloved Son..." So, you have the same exact word and terminology here. The owner having another "...a beloved son" ... Finally he sent him to them, saying, "They will respect my son." Surely, "They will respect [his] son." Of course, maybe they had a problem with the servants. Maybe they just thought the servants had no authority and they had no right trying to talk to them as tenants. Obviously, this is not the case.

It's insane that the owner would continue to persist in this way and actually send his "...beloved son." But it's even more insane and even more outrageous in how these tenants respond in verse 7; "... those tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will

be ours.” Their wickedness and evil just continues. They now plot, and they think among themselves, and they realize the situation they’re in. They’ve been able to successfully beat and harm and send away all the other servants so now the son comes who would definitely be the rightful heir to this property if the owner were to die or something were to happen. And the tenants in their greed and evil and wicked ways plot this plan to actually take care of him and destroy him and thus giving them the inheritance, giving them that property. This is their plotting. This is their evil that continues in the most outrageous fashion in verse 8; “And they took him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard.” They go through with their plan. They continue to respond and react the same way, almost at this point to no surprise, because we understand what the story is showing us. We get the point at this moment. This is how wicked these tenants are. No matter who comes, no matter what happens, no matter how persistent, they respond with the same wicked and evil rebellion every time.

Clearly, for you and I reading this story, for the people hearing Jesus tell the story, it’s ludicrous. It is absurd. It’s absolutely absurd. This is a ridiculous story. The behavior of these tenants is unrealistic and just unacceptable, no doubt. And the point is that the feeling that you and I have, upon reading such a story as this, is exactly what Jesus is trying to create. That very feeling of outrage at these tenants is what parallels the feeling that God has towards the leadership of His people. This is what God Himself has had to deal with in trying to lead and care for His people and working with the leaders of His people. In this parable, Jesus doesn’t give us a breakdown of what everything or every person represents, but there’s some clear and obvious connections here. As we’ve already jumped to verse 12 before, we saw that the leadership that Jesus is talking to in this context understood that He was telling this story about them. We can make some clear summaries from this. The owner in this story represents God the Father. Undoubtedly, the owner is God. These tenants are the Jewish religious leadership, those that have been there on the scene already, the chief priests, the scribes, the elders of Israel, the Sanhedrin, the ones that are leading there, the council leading the nation at this time. The servants being sent time and time again in the story, a reference to the prophets that God continued to send to His people that were then treated in this way with persecution. And the “...beloved son”, clearly representing as I’ve already said “...the beloved Son...” of God. This parable summarizes God’s disappointment with the leadership of His people.

The leadership, those that have been in charge and entrusted with this task of leading the nation of Israel, clearly doing a terrible job and being paralleled in this outrageous fashion of these evil tenants - this is the truth even before Jesus steps on the scene, even when we look into the Old Testament and we see kind of the chronicles here, the story of how the nation of Israel and the history of that unfolds at the very end here, we see 2 Chronicles 36:15-18; "The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by his messengers, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place. But they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words and scoffing at his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord rose against his people, until there was no remedy." This was the case even before Jesus comes onto the scene. At this moment in the parable, in the story where the owner keeps sending his servants and keeps sending them, and they keep getting beaten and killed and beaten and killed, we recognize that's an exact parallel to what we find here in the Old Testament, God, Yahweh, being faithful and persistent to His people, having compassion on them, continuing to send messengers, bringing His Word to them, and they're consistently disobedient, faithless, response and even persecuting God's messengers.

This unacceptable behavior of the tenants will clearly culminate in their killing of God's own Son. That's what the parable shows to us. Jesus making this known again, predicting again, letting everyone know, not just His disciples this time, but everyone, that even the Son will come, and the Son too will be killed. As He told His disciples, the Son of Man is going down to Jerusalem. He will be betrayed. He will be arrested, and He will be put to death. This is what Jesus knew would happen, and this is what Jesus reveals, even in this story that He tells, that the same thing will and must happen to God's own Son. That's how evil, that's how failed these leaders are. That's how sinful they are, and it's this behavior that is consistent in the story, that becomes consistent with the current day of Jesus and the nation of Israel. It causes God to do one thing in verse 9 and that is the removal - the removal - the removal in verse 9; "What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others." Finally, some justice. Finally, some correct understanding. After this, what we've really deemed as outrageous and ridiculous, unacceptable, absurd behavior of these tenants, there's just this obvious question. What will the owner do at this point? What will he do now? He's sent everyone. He's sent all the servants. He's sent his "...beloved son" whom they killed, and the

answer is so obvious and clear; “He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others.”

In fact, it's so obvious. In Matthew's parallel account, we actually see that it's not just Jesus that tells them this. They actually respond as He's telling them the story. These religious leaders are actually tuned in enough to understand what He's saying and to realize this story's ridiculous, that, well, the owner's going to take care of this. Matthew 21:41; “They said to him, ‘He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.’” Everyone gets it at this point. No one's thinking there's some possibility here that the tenants are misguided or that they can be corrected. Even the religious leaders that are hearing this story know this is outrageous. They must be dealt with. They must be put to death for what they've done. They must be destroyed. But notice the phrase that is also mentioned at the end; “He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others” ... “...give the vineyard to others.” There's this shift, this change that's taking place, and as we what this story is implying, and how this kind of starts to work with who Jesus is talking to in this current passage and the audience listening to it. They're hearing this story, and if they're putting it together, that God Himself as the owner here will destroy the tenants, the religious leaders that are listening to this, and replace them with someone else.

However, it's at this point that some people actually use this passage. They use this passage, and they use this text as a very firm bedrock for a certain teaching about the nation of Israel, a teaching that's often been called replacement theology, the idea that God is completely done with Israel at this point, the idea that God tried and tried and kept trying to reach Israel, and they wouldn't even listen. In fact, they put to death His Son, and so He just gives up on Israel and says I'm done with you for good. I'm done. I'm moving on to the church, and I'm done for good in the future with Israel. This is the concept of replacement theology, that God's time of working with the nation of Israel is come to an end, and that God is now working with you and I as Gentiles in the church. But He's not going to return to Israel. He's not going to return to physically and literally fulfill everything He said would physically and literally happen. He's changed. He's completely changed the plan. He's even shifted His Word on what He once said at one point. In fact, one guy in talking about this passage only, not the whole teaching of Scripture, just this passage actually says, “Here is a

Biblical replacement theology and it's Jesus Himself who annunciated it, national Israel except for its elect remaining remnant who would be judged in the special standing that it had enjoyed in the old times would be transferred to the already existing and growing international church of Jesus Christ." This is it. This is the replacement, the transfer from national Israel now to the church. God is done with Israel. God is done with national Israel. This is the idea of replacement theology. And this is the question we have to ask, is that what Jesus is teaching here in this text? Is He saying that God is now done destroying these tenants and now giving it to someone else, and so He is done with Israel?

It's a scary teaching. In fact, some people not just hold to it, many people do believe it, but some people hold to it in a more extreme fashion. They actually take this even further and still would say not just that God is done with Israel, but they are still condemned, and they are still to be judged, and they are still to be treated like they're under the wrath of God. In fact, listen to what some other theologians will go so far as to say. "What shall we Christians do with this rejected and condemned people the Jews let us apply the ordinary wisdom of other nations like France Spain and Bohemia who made them give an account of what they had stolen through usury and divided it evenly but expelled them from their country for as heard before God's wrath is so great over them that through soft mercy they only become more wicked through hard treatment however only a little better therefore away with them." He goes on to say, "I shall give you my sincere advice first to set fire to their synagogues or schools and to bury and cover with dirt whatever will not burn so that no man will ever again see a stone or cinder of them this is to be done in honor of our Lord and of Christendom so that God might see that we are Christians and do not condone or knowingly tolerate such public lying cursing and blaspheming of His Son and of His Christians." Wow, you think, is that the theologian Adolf Hitler or something, who said that? Actually, you might be surprised to learn that was Martin Luther. Martin Luther, the one that is put on a pedestal so often because of this Protestant Reformation we talk about, five hundred years ago. Right? Martin Luther actually protesting the Roman Catholic church and the many things that it was teaching, and actually reviving and getting the church back to a commitment to the Word of God, yet even he himself fell victim to this and to an extreme version of this. God is done with Israel. God is done with the Jews, and we ought to treat them like they're

condemned, and we ought to treat them like we're continuing to fulfill the wrath of God against them.

Obviously, I'm not saying everyone holds to this extreme view, but the point is what you believe really matters. Theologically, what you understand and know God to be doing in all of history through the Scriptures is really important because it could lead you off this cliff as even someone like Martin Luther went. Back to our question, is that what Jesus is teaching here in this text? Is Jesus teaching a legitimate replacement theology, that He is done with the Jewish people? And if you can guess where I'm going with this, this replacement theology and any form of theological antisemitism is absolutely ridiculous. We can reject replacement theology based upon just the specifics of what we find in our text, but also the whole teaching of Scripture. Those two things are sufficient to make it very clear that replacement theology is not accurate. Just think again about who is being addressed in this text. Who is Jesus talking to? The leadership (right?), the leadership, the chief priests, the scribes, the elders of Israel, the tenants (right?), not the whole nation, the leadership, that is who's being addressed here, and that's who responds in verse 12. They recognize that Jesus was telling this parable, this story, about them. They're the ones that are being exposed. They're the ones that Jesus is addressing. They're the ones that Jesus is saying will no longer lead the people of God. They're the ones being replaced, the leadership, not the whole nation of Israel, but the leadership - just in the context of our story you can find that out.

But second, think about all that the Bible states. Go back to the prophets, and read what God has promised. Think of the many promises and prophecies that exist, that still talk about a physical and literal King coming and ruling in His kingdom from Jerusalem upon the earth over all the nations. And how, if it's true that God is done with Israel, then it also would have to be true that God has gone back and gone against His Word, what God has at one point said, He now decided I don't believe that any more. I'm going to do something different. The glaring question becomes can God be trusted? Because then we find things in His Word where He has said something, but it never actually came to pass. It's not actually true. Then you think of promises that God has made to you, the promises that God has made to us in the church. How do you know He's not going to give up on you? How do you know He's not going to replace you? This is so important. We have to understand what the full teaching of Scripture really is. And you could just

go, not just from the Old Testament, you could go to other places in the New Testament. You could go to what Paul teaches in Romans 11, and you could see these other places where clearly God has a future in store for Israel. That is still the case. God will be faithful, and He will uphold His Word. Otherwise, you and I ought to be scared of a faithless God.

This text is not addressing the replacement of the nation of Israel once and for all. It's talking about the leadership and the replacement of the leadership of God's people. So, who is the vineyard then given to when it says, "He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others"? Who are the "others"? Simply put, it's the new leaders that Jesus has been training. It's the disciples that have been with Him, those that He's been investing in over the last three years, those that become the apostles of the church, those that become the foundation of the church, those that are actually authors of the scriptures that we study in the New Testament. The "others" that become leaders are these apostles. I mean, this is even what the New Testament will give us more explicit teaching on in Ephesians 2:19-20; "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone..." This is God's plan. This is the whole picture of redemptive history that God has indeed shifted to work and to establish His church, but He has not forgotten, and He has not given up on the nation of Israel. That would be false to say, and this text does not teach something of that nature.

Jesus goes on not just to give this story and let it end there, He then even does some teaching in verses 10-11 by referring to the Old Testament here - the rejection that comes in verses 10-11 - the rejection; "Have you not read this Scripture: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?'" Jesus now adds to His teaching by not just painting this picture that is vivid and obvious to see what He's saying about the leadership of the people, He then goes on to say this has been the plan of God. This has been the plan of God. This is no surprise to God. "Have you not read this Scripture..." This is something that God had actually established. He actually knew this was going to take place. God is not surprised by this. God is not surprised at the persistent rejection of His prophets, and God is not surprised at the rejection of His only "...beloved son." He's not, because look at the Scriptures, Psalm 118:22; "The stone that the builders rejected..." (just as these leaders will in

fact reject Jesus in a few days) "...has become the cornerstone." This story of God's disapproval and punishment of the Jewish leaders is no surprise to God. He is not handling things on the fly. He's not adjusting as things happen. He has even ordained this. He has spoken of this from the Old Testament as we see.

Jesus is explaining this by showing this from Psalm 118:22-23. It's a new metaphor here, one of a building project, the builders, or Israel's leadership here rejecting a stone that was in fact the most important stone of all. As in any building project, the cornerstone needed to be established, and it needed to be correct, and it needed to be perfect in order for the whole building to be built properly. And in rejecting Jesus, they had rejected that very significant piece, the cornerstone, as Paul already said about Jesus in Ephesians; "Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone..." This is not something said after the fact; this is said in Psalms. This is said before Jesus came to this earth. In Psalm 118:23; "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes." The Lord has worked all of this, and the people are amazed at His sovereignty, at His control, at His knowledge, at His ability to know and to fulfill all this. Think of it this way, in spite of this epic fail, one of the worst failures of all time, God actually planned for this rejection, and He used it. This is one of the most evil and wicked acts that mankind could've actually conjured, could've come up with, to have the Son of God in front of them and to deny Him and to actually arrest Him and beat Him and kill Him. To miss the Son of God and to torture and kill the Son of God -hard to think of greater evil than that. And yet what has God done? He used that. He knew it was coming. He set it up, and He used that to create the greatest good, salvation for mankind, a forgiveness for the sins of mankind, the ultimate sacrifice of His Son to take away the sins of the world, to take away your sin and my sin. This is no mistake in God's plan. This is a purposeful shift as Christ is the cornerstone for the church that you and I are a part of and is no doubt marvelous in the eyes of mankind. This is the wisdom of God, not a surprised God, but the wisdom of God in having all this all planned and knowing all this, and Jesus Himself telling the story, knowing that He will be killed and yet saying, "Have you not read this Scripture..." Isn't this exactly what you ought to expect based upon the Old Testament especially as He's speaking to the leaders the leaders of Israel?

After this profound teaching we have the reaction in verse 12 that comes - the reaction in verse 12; "And they were seeking to arrest him but feared the

people, for they perceived that he had told the parable against them. So they left him and went away.” Just like they had nothing they could say when they challenged Jesus’ authority, and He came back asking them about John the Baptist, and they said, “We do not know.” So, now Jesus goes on the attack and teaches and really talks about their authority, how it will be stripped from them. They will in fact have no authority because of what they’ve done and how they’ve responded to God. And what are they left to do, just keep plotting against Him? They can’t even arrest Him because they’re scared of the people. They have nothing they can do. They have no authority, only that authority that God actually gives to them. This is the plan of God. If He is able to take what is the greatest evil of mankind and use it for the greatest good, how much more so can He take any evil you and I encounter? How much more so has He already planned for any evil that you and I encounter to be used for good? We need not question God. We need not even wonder if He’s there or if He knows what’s going on. We have full confidence in faith that He uses everything, even the evil of these wicked leaders that killed His Son, using that, opening the door for you and me to have a relationship with God because of His Son, His suffering, His rejection. This is the wisdom of God. Let that comfort us in every difficulty and evil suffering that we may encounter both now and in the years to come.