

The Great Danger of Rejecting Jesus

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[0:00] Please turn with me in your Bibles tonight to the Gospel of Luke in chapter 20. We've come to observe the Lord's Supper tonight. Amen. It's one of the great blessings that God gives to His church.

A visible, tangible reminder of the work of Jesus and what He has done for us. It is a means of grace that feeds us spiritually as we partake of Christ by faith.

So it's a joy to the people of God as we're encouraged to think of the great truth of sins forgiven. Of men made right with a holy God. But what is it for those of you who are not God's children tonight? Those who have not believed. Those who have not put their trust in this Jesus. Well, it's another opportunity for you to hear and to see the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Savior for sinners. And like it or not, you are a sinner in need of a Savior. Amen. You need the work of that Savior to save you from your sins.

[1:12] Tonight, another opportunity to hear about that work and to respond to it. But I fear that it's also another opportunity for you to reject that Savior. And continue in your sin.

And so tonight I want us to think about a story that Jesus told. A parable that reminds us of who Jesus is. So that we who by God's grace and gift have put our trust in Jesus.

So that we can rejoice in Him tonight. And who He is. And what He has done for us. But it's also a story that reminds us of the great danger of rejecting this Jesus.

It's the story of the tenants. And you know it well. We'll read it from Luke 20. We'll read verses 9 through 19. And it tells this story.

Remember, we're looking at who Jesus is. You'll find that at the end of the parable. And you'll see the great danger for those who reject this Jesus. Luke 20 verses 9 through 19.

[2:15] 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, May this never be. Jesus looked directly at them and asked, Then what is the meaning of that which is written?

[3:19] The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone. Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed. 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. Two things tonight. Jesus is the Son of God, the Savior of sinners. And the second thing we'll see is that if you reject him, you'll be lost forever.

First, Jesus is the Son of God, the Savior of sinners. You know the story. We've just read it about this man and his vineyard and how he rented it out. And how when he came to collect on the harvest, they beat and sent away three of his servants.

And then he sends his son, whom is also killed and left empty-handed. The Master is God.

And this parable was originally told to the Jews. And the servants that he sent were, we could think of the judges that came. The prophets of Israel that came.

[4:36] The many servants of God who faithfully called Israel and Judah to repentance. Read the Old Testament and you'll see again and again, servant after servant after servant, that the Lord sends. And that the people of Israel reject and reject and reject and send away empty-handed.

You remember Jeremiah, how he suffered. The man ended up in a cistern, a pit full of mud. And they were ignored. You remember that Jesus said when he's telling us in the Sermon on the Mount to rejoice in persecution.

He said, rejoice and be glad because great is your reward in heaven. For in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. The Jews rejected all of these opportunities to receive the message of truth from God.

And so finally, after all of these prophets, and even after John the Baptist came, proclaiming the way, comes the Son, Jesus Himself.

And you would think, surely they've been waiting for the coming Messiah. Surely they will receive the Son of God. But no, they reject Him as well.

[5:42] And not just reject Him, they would kill Him. By hanging Him on a tree. And so God would turn to others. No longer would just the Jews be the people of God.

But all nations could come and partake of the great and glorious truth of sins forgiven through the work of Christ. Jesus was sent to Jew and Gentile.

It was bad enough to reject the prophets, but to reject the Son of God Himself. And to kill Him. What makes this such a horrible crime? Well, it's who they rejected.

He's the Son of God. And Jesus goes to the Old Testament to identify Himself. He's the stone the builders rejected. Even the chief cornerstone.

The foundation of God's people. Without Jesus, there would be no people of God. And so to reject Him is to reject the only hope. We had a representative before Jesus.

[6:44] His name was Adam. And he failed us. He fell into sin. And so all of us are born in sin too. And so we needed a second representative. A second Adam who would come and deliver us.

And Jesus is that second one. He is that chief cornerstone. And maybe immediately, right off hand, the connection between Jesus being the chief cornerstone and the Lord's Supper isn't right on the surface of things.

But listen to Acts 4. Peter and John have healed a crippled man. And they're now answering for that to the Jewish leaders.

The same ones to whom Jesus told this parable. And they want to know in whose name they did this. And Peter and John, Peter speaking for them both, says, Then know this, you and all the people of Israel.

It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.

[7:44] He is the stone the builders rejected, which has become the capstone. Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

Jesus is the cornerstone. He is the one who was crucified and rejected of men. And therefore, he is the one in whom we find salvation. And we remember that death of Jesus tonight.

When we partake of the bread and the cup. It's a picture of the body and blood of Jesus. Jesus who was killed. Executed at the hands of those who rejected him as the cornerstone of God's people.

And Peter there, maybe you didn't hear it, he adds a you in there. When Jesus quotes the verse, it's the stone the builders rejected has become the capstone. And Peter says it, the stone you builders rejected.

He points his finger right at those Jewish leaders. The ones you rejected. The ones you crucified. He is the cornerstone. He is the one in whom salvation is found.

[8:47] The only one in whom salvation is found. And so Jesus being rejected by the Jews meant his death. Which is what we remember tonight. But his death?

What does that mean for us? Well, it's life for us, isn't it? You see that irony Peter loves to point out. It was in their rejection of Jesus as the cornerstone that he's established.

Christ as the cornerstone of God's people through his death and his resurrection. They crucified him, but it was all according to God's plan. All part of God's plan that Jesus would be that chief cornerstone.

The foundation for his people. The savior of sinners. And we don't like to think about it, but we are sinners, aren't we? Jesus is the savior of sinners.

There had to be a substitute. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. A holy God. Who can't just overlook our sin. We're all headed for eternal punishment and we deserve it.

[9:50] But because of what Jesus accomplished at the cross, there God punished him instead of punishing us. And so we can have eternal life instead of death.

For the wages of sin is death. That's what we deserve. But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. And so all who come to him in true repentance and faith will be saved.

They'll be God's people no longer under wrath and judgment, but instead recipients of mercy and grace. Ephesians 2. You remember what Paul says at the end of the chapter. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people.

And members of God's household built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him, the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.

You hear how we're joined together in Christ? One of the things that we call the Lord's Supper is communion. Because when we come here, we commune with our Savior who's died that we might be forgiven. But we also commune with one another.

[10:55] We're built together. Jesus is the cornerstone that draws us all together into one building. There's not a cornerstone for you over here and one for me over here. There's one for all that draws us together.

And so we fellowship together as we worship tonight. That's who this Jesus is, the chief cornerstone. It's what the Father called him to do and he did it. It's what we remember tonight, that Jesus, through his death on the cross, is the Savior of God's people.

Remember that salvation is found in no one else. There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved. Only through the rejected cornerstone can we find salvation.

And so as we come to partake of the Lord's Supper tonight, let's remember this glorious truth. We're remembering the rejected, the crucified Savior and the deliverance that is ours in him.

Jesus is the Savior of God. Jesus is the Son of God. The Savior of sinners. But secondly tonight, if you reject him, you will be lost forever.

[12:06] We delight in this Savior. We rejoice in him, but some do not. Some make the sole damning choice of rejecting him.

And we must understand that this is so much more than just a little error in judgment. Oh, mistake. Oh, I should have received him, but I rejected him.

No big deal. That's not like that at all. It's far worse. It is an eternal error. You can sense the weight of the matter just from the look Jesus gives his audience in verse 17.

Jesus looked directly at them. He looked intently at them. It's a look that sees the heart. It's the look that, same word that Jesus gave to Peter across the courtyard after he had denied him three times and the cock crows.

And Jesus looks and he catches Peter's eye. It's that look. That penetrating look. That can see to your heart. I can't see your heart tonight.

[13:04] But Jesus can. And the warning he gives to you is a sobering one. The Jews must have thought, surely God will not turn away from us. After all these messengers, he keeps sending more.

And here's another one. And surely he'll send another one after this one. Surely he won't turn away from us. We're the Jews. We're the people of God. But God did turn away.

He turned away from his people and turned to the Gentiles. Now Jews can still be saved. And the early church was made of Jews.

He didn't turn away from them all. But as a people, as them, as his particular people, he did. And from these leaders who rejected, he turned away from them. If they rejected Jesus, God would reject them.

If they rejected his cornerstone, they would be forsaken. And so Jesus had foretold. The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

[14:03] And he was. And maybe you think like the Jews. Never will God turn away from us. You perhaps think that someday you'll come to Christ.

You reject him, reject him, reject him. But when it is convenient for you, when you are older, you will come to Christ. And surely there will be another messenger to tell you about Christ when you are

ready. And surely there will be another opportunity to hear the gospel. Just as the Jews must have thought. It's possible for you that one day the warnings will end. And God will remove the truth from you. Or remove you from the truth. As he did with the Jews. And what will you do then? What becomes of those who reject the Son of God again and again and again? And are finally left to themselves? Jesus doesn't leave us to wonder. The Master will come and kill those tenants. And give it to others. Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces. And it will crush him on whom it falls. [15:08] The picture we get is not a good one. For those who reject the Savior. Rejecting him will end in destruction. If you stumble on this Jesus.

Or if he comes upon you. You will be broken beyond repair. And many will and many do stumble at the message of Christ. They hear it again and again and again. And they reject it again and again and again.

And one day, like it was for these Jews, it will be too late. 1 Peter 2, 7 and 8. This was foretold. Now to you who believe this stone is precious.

That's why we're here tonight. To remember that this stone is precious. I hope Jesus is precious to you tonight. We don't think of most stones as being precious.

Some are very valuable. But Jesus, the cornerstone, is precious. Far more valuable than any precious stone you can imagine. Any precious stone that some of you ladies might be wearing on the fourth finger of your left hand.

[16:10] Jesus, far more valuable, is precious. And that's what we remember tonight. To you who believe, the stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, the stone the builders rejected has become the capstone.

And a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. They stumble because they disobey the message, which is also what they were destined for. It's 1 Peter 2, 7 and 8. And the message is repent and believe. For the kingdom of God is at hand. And yet, you disobey that message. And so you stumble when you reject Jesus. And if you do that, you will be destroyed. He's the only hope for sinners. And so if you decide to find another way to happiness or contentment or fulfillment, or even to eternal life, your own way or the way of the world or whatever way, if it's not Jesus who is the way, then you will be eternally destroyed.

If you continue in the rejection of Him, God will reject you. And so you sit here tonight. Another opportunity to hear the Gospel.

[17:19] An opportunity to see it in the Lord's Supper. Another opportunity to come to Christ. And the question is, what will you do with it? What will you do with that opportunity?

Will you come and believe? Trust in the Savior? It's what we long for. It's what we pray for. Or will you reject Him again? You could beat me up.

Send me away like the tenants did with the other servants. And that's not my concern tonight. Whether or not you receive me. It's that in rejecting the message that I happen to be the one bringing tonight, you're rejecting Jesus Himself.

And so it's our prayer tonight that as we partake of this ordinance, communing together with God and one another, that you will see these things pass by and think on the body and blood of Christ and how God punished His own son.

And there's something about that. God punishing His own son that you can't really fully appreciate until you have children of your own. Even then you can't fully appreciate it. But when you think, I've got three little boys that I love, and I would do anything to save their life.

[18:37] I can't imagine punishing my own son to save someone else. And that's what God did. And that's what I want you to think about is those elements pass by tonight.

And don't reject Jesus tonight. Because you will be destroyed. You'll receive that look from Jesus in the day of judgment. He said you had opportunities, and you rejected every turn.

May that not be the case for you. May you come to repentance and faith tonight so that you can soon participate with us in this beautiful ordinance. That you can partake as well.

A final word for believers tonight. For those that God is saved by His grace. This language of being broken to pieces and being crushed by rejecting Christ ought to make Isaiah 53 the more precious to us.

Isaiah 53 is a prophecy about our Savior. You see, we deserve to be broken. We deserve to be punished. We deserve what Jesus talks about here. We too, for a time, rejected Christ.

Till my raptured soul shall find rest beyond the river.