

17.5.26 am: Why are we here?

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Date: 17 May 2026

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 0 0] A warm welcome to the service this morning. It's good to see everyone and it's good to have some visitors with us as well today. I know a lot of our own folks are away today so it's especially good to see some who are visiting with us.

And if you're able to stay behind please do so. There's tea and there's coffee and cake likely after the service. So be encouraged to stay please. The notices have been on the screen and they have been emailed out to the congregation.

I'll just highlight a couple of these. The evening service will be taken this evening by Scott, Minister and Training, at 6 o'clock. He's in Graver this morning and he'll be here tonight. I'm here this morning and in Graver this evening.

So pray for Scott. The YF will meet tonight at half past 7 to half past 8. Community lunch, just a follow up from that.

The turnout wasn't particularly high this month. Sometimes you get months like that but still there was £200 raised for Sancoma UK. And if anybody didn't get the chance to give and wants to give to that, maybe speak to David Cameron and that could be topped up.

[1 : 1 2] I appreciate your prayers for this week. I head off to the General Assembly tomorrow morning and I'll be away until Friday. So during that time, if there are any pastoral issues, please speak to Scott.

He's in full charge this week. Hope Explored course, which we've spoken about the last few weeks, that will begin this coming Thursday at half past 7 here in the church, likely in the room next door. It's relaxed, it's informal. Some of you have been on it before. And it's a three-week session. Three sessions over three weeks that think about the basics of Christianity.

So if there are any here who want to attend that, you'd be very welcome. It's also the kind of thing that is a really useful course for asking people who may not want to come to church, but have got questions and want to think these through and ask their own questions in the evening.

So please consider that and please pray for that over the next three weeks. Hospitality evening, the next one will be Friday 22nd of May.

[2 : 2 0] That's this coming Friday at Margarita's in Quiddinish. And if you are hoping to go along to that, you're very welcome. Please let her know just so that we've got an idea as to how many people will be there.

Services next Sunday, God willing, will be taken by myself in the morning and Scott in the evening. The last thing to say is just with sadness.

There's the intimation and notice of Helen Morrison's passing on Friday morning of last week. And let's be praying for the family at this difficult time.

And the funeral service, I understand, is planned for 12 noon on Tuesday in the Church of Scotland. So please note that and be praying for the family at this time.

These, I think, are all the notices. So let's begin this time of worship and we'll sing to God's praise. We'll sing from Psalm 51.

[3 : 2 9] We remember as we come together in worship that we come to the God who is holy. And we acknowledge in this psalm that we are those who are not holy.

We are sinners, but there is grace, there is compassion, there is mercy, there is forgiveness when we come confessing our sin and looking to the Lord Jesus, the one who's pointed forward to in this psalm.

So Psalm 51, and we'll sing verses 7 to verse 13 to the tune St. Kilda. Do thou with hyssop sprinkle me? I shall be cleansed so.

Ye wash thou me, then I shall be whiter than the snow. We'll stand to sing to God's praise. Do thou with hyssop sprinkle me?

I shall be cleansed so. Yea, wash thou me, then I shall be whiter than the snow.

[4 : 48] O gladness and of joyfulness, make me to hear the voice.

The soul is very, very special, has broken me rejoice.

O my name, when he's brought out, thy face I've drawn myself.

Create a free heart, Lord renew, arise, spread thee with him.

Cast me not from thy sight, nor take thy holy sweat away.

[6 : 11] Restore me thy salvation's joy, when thy peace will be saved.

Then will I teach thy ways unto those that chance and treasured me.

And those that sinners are shall live, be turned unto thee.

Let's unite our hearts together in prayer. Let's pray. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Let's pray. We acknowledge that we come on this, your day, into the presence of the holy God. The God who cannot look upon sin.

[7 : 59] And we thank you that we come not of our own initiative. This is a work of God. God the Holy Spirit is the one who draws us, and Jesus is the one who calls us.

Come to me, said Jesus, all who are weary and all who are burdened, all who feel the weight of your sin. And I will give you rest.

And we thank you for that rest. And we thank you for that rest that is promised for all who will confess our sin. We think of the words of the Apostle John, who said that if we confess our sin, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to purify us from all unrighteousness.

All we are called to confess. All we are called to do is confess. All we are called to do is confess.

Not hide our sin. Not seek to justify our sin and make excuses.

But to come before you as the God who sees all things. And to confess that we are not worthy to come into your presence.

[9 : 08] But because of Jesus, we venture to come. And we thank you that this is the Lord's Day. It's the day where we remember that Jesus, your Son, our Saviour, died and rose from the dead.

We thank you that he died to pay the wages of our sin. All our transgressions, all our guilt was taken by him.

And in exchange, as we confess and as we believe, all his righteousness is given to us. And we thank you for the grace and for the mercy of God.

We hear the psalmist cry out for that. After the fall that occurred within his life. We hear how he cried out for forgiveness.

How he looked to God for compassion. And we thank you that he and we receive the assurance of pardon. Because of all that Jesus has done.

[10 : 17] We thank you for the cross. We thank you that on the third day, the first day of the week, Jesus rose from the dead. Demonstrating that every promise that he made about our salvation was secured.

And we thank you that the promise of Jesus is because he lives, we too shall live. If we believe in him. We thank you for the comfort that that promise brings to us.

Week by week, we are conscious of the touch of death. Week by week, our hearts are sore. And we feel a sense of loss.

Those whom we love who pass from time into eternity. But we thank you that we have the promise that if they are looking to Jesus, if they are trusting in Jesus, there is eternal safety.

And we pray that we, each one of us, would be looking to Jesus, that we would know that security, that safety, that life, that peace, that rest that only he can give.

[11 : 33] So, Father, we thank you for sending your son. Lord Jesus, we thank you for coming to this world as our saviour.

Holy Spirit, we thank you that you are the one who works in our hearts to show us that we are sinners. And to turn us unto thee as we sang in the psalm. And we pray, Holy Spirit, that you would be at work in this service today.

Those who are present, those who watch at a distance. Be active, Lord, we pray. Turning us away from our sin. And turning us in faith to the Lord Jesus.

And we pray all these things in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come forward, please? You don't have to.

For those who want to come, they're very welcome to come. How are you today, boys and girls?
[12:44] Quiet. You guys are very quiet the last wee while. Have you had a good week? Yeah, anything interesting happening in your lives? See if we can get these vocal cords started.

Can anybody tell me something to show you today? Can anybody tell me what are these? Where's the camera?

The camera's there now. What are these? Children first, please. But thank you. What are these? Okay, I'm going to start picking on you. Do you know what these are, Anna? No? What about you, Cameron? What are these? You know?

Or where would you put them? Where have you seen these things? Pardon? On cars. On cars. And what do you think they mean? If they're on a car.

[13:50] Yeah? That you're learning to drive. That's exactly right. So have you seen any people in this room who've had these things on their car as they've been driving the last wee while?

Do you know anybody in the church who's been learning to drive? Grace. Yep. So she was driving along the last wee while in behind the wheel.

Going quite slow most of the time. Sometimes. Yeah, let's just not go there. Driving along in the little car. And for, I don't know how many months, Grace has been driving along with these things on the car.

And then, on Thursday of last week, you know, she had to go to Stornway. And what do you think she had to go for? Driving lessons.

That's right. That was the first thing she had. So she had a driving lesson from one o'clock till two o'clock. And then, what else do you think she had to do on Thursday? Finley?

[15:00] After her lesson, what do you think she had to do? Not sure. Fraser? She had to go, not for a driving lesson, but for a driving test.

And she, she passed. So you know the first thing that she did, or we did together? We got the L plates, took it off the front of the car, took it off the back of the car, and threw them in the boot. She's not a learner driver anymore. So she can take these plates off, and now she can drive her car normally. So whenever you see her, be careful. She's a very good driver.

She might show you up. That's what I mean. So see, when you pass your driving test, it won't be long before you guys are starting to do that. The L plates, they come off the car.

Because you're not a learner anymore. That's the rules for driving. But you know something, boys and girls? That's not the rules for being a disciple of Jesus.

[16:08] I think I should ask Corrine to come and give the talk. That's not the rules for being a disciple of Jesus. Do you know what a disciple is?

Jesus called the disciples, and he said that he wanted the disciples to be with him. That's what a disciple is. It's somebody who's with Jesus. Jesus. And Jesus, in Matthew 11, verse 28, he says, come to me.

And in Matthew 11, verse 29, do you know what he says, Finley? He says, learn from me. Disciples of Jesus are to come to him and to learn from him.

And boys and girls, how many times do you think we should come to Jesus? What do you think, everyone? Do you think we should come to Jesus one time or two times or lots of times?

Lots of times. That's exactly right. We're to come to Jesus, not just once, but every day. We're going to sing in just a minute in the hymn.

[17:21] Every, every hour. I need thee. We need to come to Jesus over and over again. And that's what he wants, because he loves us.

He wants us to keep coming to him. And he wants us to keep on learning from him. Here's a question. Think about this one.

What do you think Jesus wants to teach you? A lesson. Good point. What do you think? What kind of lessons do you think Jesus wants to teach you?

What kind of things do you think Jesus wants to teach you? Benjamin? Helping people. Helping people. How to help people. Good job. What was your answer? Games.

He wants to teach us games. He wants to teach us how to be happy and have fun. Yeah? Yeah? What other things do you think he wants us to teach us? Emily? Pardon?

[18:22] Well, that was the final answer. We could have had a whole lot of answers. Corrin could have been shouting out. He could. He wants to teach us to be joyful, to be kind, to be loving, to tell the truth.

But Emily went straight to the end and said, he wants to teach us to be like him. And that's exactly right. And if we are going to be like Jesus, we have to keep on coming to Jesus.

So, the L plates come off the car. But if you're a disciple of Jesus, the L plates never come off you or me. We have to keep on learning from Jesus.

So, let's pray, will we? Lord Jesus, we thank you that you love us. We thank you that you call us to come to you and to get forgiveness of our sin. We thank you that as we come to you, you promise that we become your children, your disciples.

But we know that day by day, we're to keep on coming to you. We pray that you would help us to do that. Sometimes in this world, there are so many other things that distract us, that we find that we're going to them before we come to you.

[19 : 35] And we're sorry when we do that. Help us day by day to realize how much we need you and to come to you. And Lord Jesus, we pray that you would teach us to be kind and to have joy in our lives.

Help us to be those who are being taught to be loving and to be gentle and to tell the truth. Help us, we pray, to be taught day by day to become more like you.

And we thank you that we have the promise that if we are trusting you, when we go from this world to heaven, we will be like you. And that's an amazing thing that we believe and we look forward to. So, hear our prayers. Help us, we pray. And bless us in the rest of this service and this day. And we ask all this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thank you, boys and girls, for listening. Well, we're going to sing now. Mission Praise 288. And it's a hymn about us knowing how much we need to come to Jesus.

[20 : 43] I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord. I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord.

I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord.

I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord.

O bless you, Lord. O bless me, my Savior. I come to thee.

I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord. I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord. Come from the earth, most gracious Lord.

[22 : 31] Come from the earth, most gracious Lord. My life is My name. My name is My name. My name is My name is My name.

Every hour meeting O bless me, my Savior I come to thee I yield thee every hour Teach me thy will And I am his consciousness In the deep of heaven I yield thee, O my healing Every hour I yield thee O bless me, my Savior I come to thee I yield thee every hour O story one
O Mary, thy redeemed I yield thee, O blessed Son I yield thee, O my healing Every hour I yield thee
O bless me, my Savior I come to thee O bless me Okay boys and girls, if you head now to Sunday School please Remember to pray for them as they go And if you could turn please in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 21

And we'll read from verse 33 to the end And we'll read from verse 33 to the end of the chapter The parable of the tenants This is God's word Hear another parable, says Jesus There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard And put a fence around it And dug a wine press in it And built a tower And leased it to tenants And went into another country When the season for fruit drew near He sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit And the tenants took his servants and beat one Killed another

And stoned another Again he sent other servants More than the first And they did the same to them Finally he sent a son to them, saying They will respect my son But when the tenants saw the son They said to themselves This is the heir Come Let us kill him And have his inheritance And they took him And threw him out of the vineyard And killed him When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes What will he do with those tenants?

[26 : 23] 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 Jesus said to them Have you never read in the scriptures?

The stone that the builders rejected Has become the cornerstone This was the Lord's doing And it is marvelous in their eyes Therefore I tell you The kingdom of God Will be taken away from you And given to people producing its fruits And the one who falls on this stone Will be broken to pieces And when it falls on anyone It will crush him When the chief priests and the Pharisees Heard this parable Or his parables They perceived that he was speaking about them And although they were

seeking to arrest him They feared the crowds Because they held him to be a prophet May God bless that reading of his word We'll sing again now to God's praise And we'll sing from Psalm 95 verses 5 and 6 of the Psalm Psalm 95 verses 5 and 6 We'll sing It's maybe verses 6 and 7 in Gaelic There can be a variation in the words I'll read verses 5 and 6 To him the spacious sea belongs Sorry, it is verses 6 and 7 It's all my mistake Psalm 95 verses 6 and 7 O come and let us worship him Let us bow down with all And on our knees before the Lord our Maker Let us fall For he's our God The people we Of his own pasture are And of his hand the sheep today If ye his voice will hear We'll sing these two stanzas of Psalm 95 in Gaelic And we remain seated to sing in Gaelic My god My god My god My god My god My god My god My god My god My god My god My god My god Oh Oh Oh

Oh Oh Oh Well let's pray as we turn back to the passage that we read together

[31 : 24] Heavenly Father we thank you for the psalm for these words once more and we pray that we would be your sheep today that you would unblock our ears that we would hear your voice and that we would not harden our hearts but that we would believe and come to the Lord Jesus we pray that for ourselves here in this room we pray that for the children we thank you for them for the way that they listen for their readiness to believe much more so than those who are older and we pray that as their hearts are still soft we pray that you would open their hearts more and more that they would come to that they would believe in that they would walk with and trust in the Lord Jesus we continue to pray for them asking that we would not hinder them but that we would encourage them in every way to come to Jesus we pray for those that we've prayed for over many years we can maybe think of children who once were in the Sunday school and who went to YF and who now maybe are in their 30s and 40s and 50s and who have no word of God and we pray for them and we pray for them and we pray for them and we pray for them and we pray for some who may be far away from you just now and Holy Spirit we ask that you would awaken their souls that you would work in their hearts that you would bring back to their remembrance the powerful word of God and that they would believe and come to Jesus we've prayed for those whose hearts are sore who are grieving that they would know your comfort and we pray for those today whose bodies may be sore and who are struggling with illness and infirmity those who would desire to be here but who cannot be some Lord who have been struggling for a long time with sickness and we bring them to you we pray for little Lydia thankful for better news this week as they prepare to come back to Harris we pray for her healing and for your hand to be upon her we pray on for Shona as she prepares to go to surgery and we ask that you would prepare her body for that and that she would be made well and we pray on for Nurse Marion thankful for her being with us today asking that your hand would continue to be upon her and that you would increase her strength thank you for Kenny being back as well and for others who we can think of who are at home or maybe in hospital those in the community that are struggling at this time we bring them to you in the quietness of our own hearts asking Lord that you would meet with them that you would that you would bless them we thank you Lord Jesus that you understand all the things that we go through you're the one who wept with those who who stood at a graveside and wept you're the one who rejoiced with those who rejoiced and we are thankful for new life as well we thank you for the safe arrival of baby Mara Grace and we ask Lord that you would bless

Rona and Andrew Latham and we pray for Angus and Kirsty and Anthony and Christian and we pray that you would bless these families and we ask Lord for that wee one that she would grow up to know you and trust you we pray for others who await the arrival of a child we think of Pym and Lauren as they wait patiently and we pray for the protection of Lauren and for the wee one she carries and we pray that in your time we would see that child brought into this world's safety we pray for others as well we name some names other names we name in the quietness of our own hearts but we pray Lord for all who are in need asking Lord that you would meet them at the point of their need we pray for some who have no thought of or sense of any need of Jesus some who may be in the building and some who may be far from the building and we ask Lord for those who may think that they have everything in this world help them to see that it profits us not if we gain the whole world and lose our souls may we find security for our souls in Christ and all those that we love we pray that for them be at work now we pray cleanse us from sin empty us of all that is of self take away every distraction and help us

Holy Spirit teach us we pray in Jesus name Amen I want to begin today with the question a commonly asked question and it's the question of our purpose what's the point of life what is the

point of our lives it's an important question and the answer to the question of what is the point of my life will be seen in the way that we live we might make an attempt to answer that question with the words that we speak but what we really believe about the point of our lives will be seen in the way that we live for some life is about making as much money as they can in the time that they have that's the point of life for others it's about having the most pleasure that we can have traveling widely having rich experiences eating fine food drinking fine wines etc etc it's all about how much pleasure can

I experience others still life is about becoming powerful successful having influence hopefully being remembered as someone who made a difference someone who made an impact on planet earth and we could go on and on and the philosophers and the songwriters and poets and scientists have gone on and on exploring the question of why we are here what's the point of life but Jesus answers that question of what the point of our lives are and why we are here here by telling a short story called the parable of the tenants three points in the time that we have why are we here that's the overarching question and the first point is we are here because God put us here point number one the second point is we are here to serve

God and to enjoy him we are here to serve God and to enjoy him and the last point is we are here until God comes or I could put it this way we are here until God comes to us or calls us to stand before him there's coming a day when we will stand before God Jesus may come back this afternoon all of a sudden we're standing before him or he may call us from this world to stand before him and we're here until that day we don't know the day but we're here until that day so first of all why are we here we are here because God put us here and we're just going to step through the verses of the parable

[40 : 47] Jesus in verse 33 says hear another parable there was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence round it and dug a wine press in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants and went into another country so that's the scene set it's not a complicated picture it was a very familiar picture this is the kind of thing that happened often in these days there's a master and he decides to set up a business he decides to plant a vineyard so he has the land he owns the land and he starts to get the infrastructure in place puts up a fence gets taffy out to mark out the boundary lines digs a wine press builds a tower and then employs some workers tenants who will serve him in his vineyard and who will be cared for as they serve him and who will be rewarded for the work that they do so that's the picture that's how it begins and the question we must always ask as we step through a parable is who's who in this parable a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning it's a simple way to think of it there's a spiritual meaning in the this world story that

Jesus is telling so who's who in this parable well the master of the house in the parable is God and the vineyard that is planted in the immediate context was the nation of Israel one commentator Warren Wearsby says this parable is based on Isaiah chapter 5 verses 1 to 7 you can read that later on and in it Jesus reminded the Jews of God's goodness to them as a nation God delivered them from Egypt and planted them in a rich land of milk and honey he gave them material and spiritual blessings to who's who God is the master God's people Israel in this immediate context they are the vineyard and if we think ourselves into the scene the immediate context we can see in our minds eye these

Jewish people who are listening to this story that Jesus is telling and Jesus in the telling of this story is reminding them that God is the one who made them God is the one who planted them in this world in his world and God is the one who has given them so many material and spiritual blessings and what was true for them all these years ago it remains true for us today the application spreads out way beyond Israel to all of us so let's ask the first question again why are we here why are we here in this world well we are here in this world because God decided that he would put us here we are here in this world because

God has decided to create us every one of us every person in this room God made a decision before time began he would form you in your mother's womb he would bring you into this world he would arrange even for you to be sitting here this morning we are here in this world because God has planted us in his world and that in itself that should thrill us our lives are not an accident resulting from a random string of DNA as the atheists would have us believe how depressing would that be no the

Bible makes clear and this parable brings it into focus that we are those who were created we were formed we have been chosen and chosen to live by God and for God we were made for God we were made for him we were made to be in relationship with him the often quoted line from Augustine is thou hast made us for thyself oh Lord and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee when there is there anyone here this morning whose heart is restless and you're immersing yourself in work your career is going well but still restless and you're looking at your bank account and the figures look okay things appear to be financially secure and steady but you're still restless and you've fallen in love you're in a steady relationship you're with someone that you care for and a companion in life and yet you're still restless you have health and strength and you're doing okay in the football team the fishing business is going well the holidays refresher still still restless remember the words thou hast made us for thyself

[47 : 46] O Lord and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee we are here not to make money not to make a name for ourselves not to accumulate possessions not to be the best athlete that ever lived not to get a first class honours degree all these things may be good that's not our purpose we are here because God put us here we need to remember that that's where we start second point we are here to serve God and to enjoy him verse 34 says when the season for fruit drew near Jesus continues to tell this story we've got the picture the vineyard the master the infrastructure is all in place the growing has been progressing verse 34 when the season for fruit drew near he the master sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit and again this was this was just standard practice they knew this the vineyards belonged to the the master the tenants were just looking after it they didn't pay for the vineyard they didn't own the vineyard it wasn't their investment the master had just been kind enough to to give them employment and to take care for them in his vineyard so when the season for fruit came it was the job of the tenant to gather up the fruit and to give some of that fruit to the master so the master sends his servants to collect the fruit and I was reading about the the context back then and the rules for this kind of business venture and usually apparently the master would take about 25% so we're not got a picture here of all the fruit getting lullied out and taken away from the tenants who've worked so hard no 25% of the fruit would go back to the master so these tenants they were well cared for they were they were looked after they were well treated but when this master says it's time to give me my 25% if that's what it was it becomes clear that there is a problem with the tenants verse 35 and the tenants took his servants the master's servants and beat one killed another and stoned another so what's going on here in this story well what's going on is that the tenants have forgotten who they are they've forgotten their place they've forgotten their purpose they don't want to be tenants they want to be the master so they decide they're going to rebel and they point blank refuse to give the master what he is due and this would usually be the point at which the master would hit the nuclear button remember the culture back then was very violent so masters would not tolerate this kind of behavior what they would certainly do is they would kill tenants like this they had the power they had the authority they had the means to be able to do that and that's what would happen so that's what

the listeners would have expected to hear but this master even though he has just found that some of his servants have been beaten one's been killed another's been stoned this master responds with patience verse 36 again he the master sent other servants more than at first and they did the same to them so this is the second attempt master sends in his messengers to get the fruit they've killed stoned battered the first entourage the second wave come and they do just the same and we think to ourselves well surely now this master will send in the tanks surely now the troops are going to start marching into this vineyard and yet no this master he does something unexpected verse 37 finally he sent his son to them saying they will respect my son but when the tenants saw the son they said to themselves this is the heir come let us kill him and we will have the inheritance so they took him verse 39 and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him so we'll hit pause there as we think about the next part of this gruesome story what does all this mean we've got to keep on asking the question who's who what's going on in this parable what does it mean who are the servants remember the master he sends servants his messengers to go and get the fruit so who are the servants that the master sent to his vineyard well the servants are the prophets of God and in the old testament we can go through the old testament we have lots of books lots of names of prophets we have the stories of the prophets Isaiah Jeremiah Ezekiel Zechariah and so on right up to John the Baptist who was the last of the old testament prophets these were prophets who were sent by God they were servants of God they

spoke on behalf of God. Hale the commentator says these verses describe the history of Israel. God sent his servants the old testament prophets to Israel one by one to look for the fruits of repentance and righteousness so that's that's what the picture means. God he sends the servants the messengers and they're his prophets and they're going to his people his nation and they're looking for fruit the fruit of faith and repentance. What then did the people of Israel what did the tenants do with the prophets well you can read the stories in the old testament they ignored them. God sent his messengers God spoke out his word they ignored him they slept through the messages they thought about something else folded their arms closed off everything we're not listening that's what they said they ignored some they attacked others they even killed some of God's messengers God's prophets so who's who in this parable well the servants are the prophets of God who then is the son of the master in this parable well we know the answer to that question Jesus is the son Jesus is the son of the master. God the son and what would the Jewish religious leaders do to Jesus in just a few days time well they would take him by force they would throw him outside the city wall of Jerusalem and they would kill him so this parable has now gone from is now gone from history to prophecy and as Jesus told this story he was holding up a mirror to the listeners and he was showing them themselves because they who were listening to

[57 : 24] Jesus they were a people who would not listen to the prophets who pointed them to Jesus and they were a people who would not listen to Jesus they determinedly would not listen to Jesus and the ringleaders were the most religious people the chief priests and the Pharisees yes they were religious but they were using their religion to serve themselves and to make themselves look good and to make themselves feel good they were not serving God they were not good faithful tenants in the vineyard that's what this story was designed to show these people and we can see them in our mind's eye these most religious

Jewish leaders squaring up to Jesus resisting Jesus rejecting Jesus dismissing the prophets and we may be tempted to shake our heads and disgust and say how could they do it but God's word is like a mirror James tells us and God's word as we read it as we're doing just now it's facing us that mirror Jesus turns around now and we're looking at ourselves because like them we've heard what the prophets said we have the benefit that they didn't have we have the complete works of the prophets in the Old Testament right up to John the Baptist we can pick it up any day of the week we've heard the prophets we've heard what

God has said to the prophets and like them we have heard the voice of Jesus God the Son who came to this world to be the Savior and who calls us to come to him and to believe in him a whole lot of what applied to them applies to us and the question that you and I have to ask ourselves is how have we responded to the prophets of God and how have and how are we responding right now to the Son of God have we believed in him have we trusted Jesus as our Savior are we serving him as our Lord and our Master!

why are we here? we are here because God put us here and we are here to serve God and as we serve God as we seek to live for him and not for self we experience joy you know what Leblan said today what does Jesus want what does he want to teach us she said he wants to teach us games he wants to teach us how to have fun he wants to teach us how to know joy in our lives that's what she was saying and the truth is if we live lives where we make it our purpose to serve self we will be the most miserable people we will feel misery and we will cause misery to be transmitted to everyone around us because we're serving self but if we know that we are here because God put us here and if we know we are here to serve him we experience joy as he cares for us and we experience joy as we seek to serve him by being like him or to put it in the catechism language when we make it our chief end to glorify God we enjoy him now and we will enjoy him forever why are we here we're here because God put us here we're here to serve God and finally we're here until God comes verse 40 when therefore the owner of the vineyard comes says

[62 : 58] Jesus what will he do to those tenants and again let's just try and picture the scene Jesus he is addressing a crowd but the focal point in his address is the chief priests and the Pharisees they're the ones who when he asks the question they're the ones who always have the answer and they're fully invested in this story and they're thinking about the master and the vineyard and they cannot believe the audacity of these tenants that Jesus speaks of so Jesus asks them when the owner comes to his vineyard he's coming to his vineyard we know he has to come in light of all that's happened when the owner comes how do you think he will treat these bad tenants when he

faces them that's the question

Jesus puts to the chief priests and the Pharisees and they have their answer ready they don't hold back with the answer verse 41 they said to Jesus 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 and that was justice and they recognized that's what these wicked tenants deserve this is justice having done all that they've done the batterings the stonings the murders they're deserving of the sentence and so they pronounced the sentence then there's the twist Jesus looks these most religious most revered men in the eye and he says to them don't you see you're the wretches you're the bad tenants and he says and don't you see that

I am the son of the master and then Jesus opens up the scriptures to show them who he is and to show them who they are Jesus said to them verse 42 have you never read in the scriptures the stone that the builders rejected as they rejected him the stone that the builders rejected has become the corner stone this was the Lord's doing and it's marvelous in their eyes Jesus is quoting psalm 118 a psalm that points to Jesus the corner stone of our salvation the one whom they were rejecting Jesus says haven't you read that text don't you see this and as Jesus opens that psalm and holds the mirror of God's word up against them so that they can see who they are and they can see who he is in that moment Jesus is giving these religious leaders the opportunity to repent to confess their sin and to admit that they are wretches who had been serving themselves like the wicked tenants in that moment

Jesus is giving them the opportunity to ask for grace even though they're plotting his murder even though they hate him and they have done everything they possibly could to oppose him systematically rejecting everything he was saying disbelieving all his miracles in spite of all that Jesus in this moment he is saying to them don't you see who you are don't you see your need don't you see I am the son he's giving them the opportunity to cry out and ask for grace it's the same kind of scenario as David the psalmist was in remember David the psalmist he sees Bathsheba he wants Bathsheba he takes

Bathsheba he sins he breaks breaks almost every sin in the commandments to get what he wants and then he settles in sin for a year they think he was far away from God and so God sends his servant Nathan the prophet and Nathan tells David a story a parable that was designed to reveal to David the fact that he was the man he was the sinner and suddenly David sees it and he's broken and he repents and we have his prayer of repentance in Psalm 51 and that's the kind of moment that Jesus was trying to bring these Pharisees and teachers of a lot to and you know if we just pause to apply this to ourselves as we conclude this is where we're at you know as we listen to this parable if we recognize that we ourselves have been living for self and not serving

[68 : 58] God if we realize in this moment that we have been living as if we were the masters of our own lives then we are being given the opportunity right now before God to repent and to admit that we are wretches who are in need of the amazing grace of God and if we ask for grace doesn't matter what we've done how far away we have been or currently are if we ask for the amazing grace of God we have the promise we will receive it but these chief priests and phallacies they would not repent they were not like

David they hardened their hearts they tightened their fists and they continued to reject Jesus the son of God they continued to rebel against God the father who sent his son and so Jesus tells them in verse 43 you will face judgment therefore I tell you says Jesus the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits and the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces and when it falls on anyone it will crush him we are here until God comes and when

Jesus comes back as he will or when God calls us to come and stand before him there are only two possible outcomes outcome one if we have given to God the fruit of faith and the lives that he has given us if we have believed in Jesus God the son if we have given our lives over in service to him he will be to us the corner stone the solid rock of salvation on which we stand we will be safe that's option one but option two is for those who rejected Jesus and if we have rejected

Jesus if there is no fruit of faith if we have lived lives serving ourselves not him he will be the stone who falls on us in judgment that's what this means and so this encounter doesn't exactly have a happy ender it's very stark it's shocking even but you know it had no effect on these listeners it didn't phase them one bit verse 45 when the chief priests and the pharages heard his parables they perceived that he was speaking about them and although they were seeking to arrest him they

feared the crowds because they held him to be a prophet again they're thinking about themselves we don't want to get on the wrong side of the crowd so we'll leave Jesus for a moment and then we'll get him so this chapter ends with these pharisees and chief priests rejecting Jesus and facing judgment that's what it ends for them but it doesn't need to end there for us today I'm finished be encouraged today we are here because God has put us here that's why we're here in this world in this place when God comes when we stand before Jesus!

[74 : 29] it will be too late to produce the fruit of faith because we will see him as he is in reality but today if we hear his voice we have the opportunity not to harden our hearts as they did but to trust Jesus as our saviour and to live lives where we follow him we serve him with joy and with purpose serving Jesus not self serving Jesus as Lord and King let's pray Lord

God we thank you that in your patience you have allowed us to be here in this world and here under the teaching of this parable we pray that you would help us to see where we are in this if we have been those who Jesus describes as wicked tenants who have been serving ourselves and not you we pray that you would forgive us and help us to repent to stop living lives which are self serving and to start living lives of joy and purpose where Christ is the one that we want to serve help us to see that all that is presented to us in this world where we are told that if we have more money and more security and more possessions and more holidays we'll be happy help us to see these things don't bring joy another promotion at work doesn't bring joy help us to see and live out the truth of the catechism that our chief end is to glorify

God and to enjoy him forever help us we pray Lord Jesus to trust you as our saviour as the solid rock on which we stand we ask this in Jesus name amen we sing to conclude mission praise 473 my hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness no merit of my own I claim but holy trust in Jesus name on Christ the solid rock I stand all other ground is sinking sun my hope is built on nothing less than

Jesus love and righteous rest nowhere is all my own I came but only trust in Jesus name Christ the solid rock I stand all other ground is sinking sand when we be in this earth we raised I rest on his unchanging grace in every wild and storm begin I am!

the fades the fades that the old stars that the fades he will uphold me on that day from Christ the small if wrong I stand all other ground is sinking so When the last child's voice shall stand, O may I live in him repound, clothed in his righteousness alone.

[80 : 12] For blessed is that he bore his throne, O Christ the solid, accomplished land, O other land his singing stand.

Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forevermore. Amen.