

Matthew 21:33-46

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 6/17/2012

How should we respond to sinful man?

Prayer

Father, what a privilege it is to come to You and to be able to boldly come before Your throne, to know that because of Christ we can come before You, and that our prayers are heard. We praise You that because of Christ we can worship in spirit and in truth. We praise You that because of Christ we are righteous. Father, we thank You that although there are many difficulties and trials in this life, You are faithful and You are good to lead us through. And Father, we are thankful that You do this through the truth concerning Your Son. Father, I thank You that we have an opportunity to look into Your Word today. And I pray that our hearts would be right before You. I pray we would not have any sin in our lives, we would just confess it knowing that if we confess our sins, You are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And I pray we would fear You and reverence You, and we would take Your Word seriously. I pray You would work through it today. I pray if there is anyone here who does not know You and You do not “know them” because they have sin, that You would pierce their hearts, that they would turn to You to be saved. And Father, I thank You for this time. We pray You would bless it now as Your Word goes out. In Your Son’s precious Name, amen.

Sermon

If you were to ask most people whether they were good or evil, I am sure, fairly certain, that most people would say, “I am a pretty good person.” Except those who really revel in evil - some people get a kick out of saying, “I am really evil and I do bad things.” But if you were to talk to most people and ask them if they were evil, they would say, “No, I am a good person.” Now the reality is that in Scripture we have a totally different picture from the living God concerning mankind’s state before Him. Scripture says that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, that each one of us like sheep have gone astray. The Bible goes on to say the mindset of those in the flesh, those who continually live by their own power and strength, those who do not know God, the mindset of the flesh is hostile towards God. It is hostile – Romans chapter 7. And we see very clearly that those who suppress the truth of God in unrighteousness, we see in Romans 1:30, that they are haters of God. Now some of you here might say, “I have never hated God. I never hated Him before I got saved. I do not hate Him right now!” But the reality is that man in his sinful state, as we will see, does hate God. And if man had an opportunity, man would actually kill the living God.

You see, sinful man does not have an outward problem with God. But when God infringes on sinful man’s lordship, that is when man has a problem with God. When God’s Word confronts your behavior, your choices, and your life, that is when men and women have a problem with the living God. And this leads us to our passage today, where we are going to see a parable in Matthew that is directed to the leadership of Israel. But the applications are for all of us today. A parable that reveals the religious

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leadership would do anything and everything, including killing the Son of God, so as to remain the lord of their own lives. With that in mind, how does God respond to sinful man, to those who hate Him? And these religious leaders, they were those who were following Yahweh, the God of the Bible! They were those who were in the right place, saying the right things. On the outside they looked clean, but on the inside there were dead men's bones. And maybe some of you today are coming and you are hearing the Word of God, and you think everything is right; but we will see on the inside that everyone, as we see, has fallen short of the glory of God. All have sinned. So how does God respond to sinful man? Please turn in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 21.

And we are going through the book of Matthew. And we are slowly coming towards the end of this wonderful book. And I want to read the parable first and then we will look at it in its context. Matthew chapter 21, we are at verse 33. Jesus says,

³³ "Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT AND DUG A WINE PRESS IN IT, AND BUILT A TOWER, and rented it out to vine-growers, and went on a journey. ³⁴ "And when the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his produce. ³⁵ "And the vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third. ³⁶ "Again he sent another group of slaves larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them. ³⁷ "But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ³⁸ "But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and seize his inheritance.' ³⁹ "And they took him, and threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰ "Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?" ⁴¹ They said to Him, "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers, who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons." ⁴² Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures, 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone; THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES'? ⁴³ "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it. ⁴⁴ "And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust." ⁴⁵ And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them. ⁴⁶ And when they sought to seize Him, they feared the multitudes, because they held Him to be a prophet. [Matthew 21:33-46]

We are going to look at a parable today, and we need to remember where we have been in the book of Matthew and how we got to this point. Remember Jesus Christ has come to His own. God has taken on human flesh. The King of kings and Lord of lords. "You shall name His name Jesus (Yeshua) for He shall save His people from their sins." We have seen the reality that He has been affirmed as the Messiah, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the Christ. And we have seen very clearly that He came to those

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sitting in darkness, although they would name the name of the Lord, they were sitting in darkness and they saw a great light. And we saw very clearly that the multitudes did not believe and repent in the Lord Jesus Christ. They did not repent and believe. They did not believe the message of John, and they did not believe the message of Christ. But they are still tantalized by Him and wanted the stuff that came from Him. But with the leaders, we saw very clearly, they had hardened their hearts towards Jesus; and they were desiring to kill Him.

Now we have been going through the book of Matthew. And it has been about three years that we have been going through it. It has also been about three years that the Lord Jesus has been accomplishing His ministry, and now has come to the last week of His life here on earth before He would be crucified and He would go in the grave, and rise from the dead on the third day. Now in this last week of His life, I want to remind you of the events that bring us up to the point where we are today in our passage. The week began on Sunday with the Lord's entry into Jerusalem, what we call the Triumphal Entry, which was not too triumphal. It was actually not a conquering general coming into Jerusalem, but a humble King on a donkey who was weeping as He saw Jerusalem because they had missed the day of visitation. They had missed their visit by the living God, and He would have to bring judgment on them (Luke 19). And we saw that on that Sunday evening (in the book of Mark) He walked around the temple and then He went back to Bethany to lodge.

And then we know from accounts in Matthew and Mark, on Monday morning that Jesus on His way to Jerusalem, coming down from the Mount of Olives, saw that fig tree, that leafy fig tree that should have had fruit. And when He came to it, there was no fruit and He cursed it. And we saw that represented Israel. It may represent you – you look great on the outside, you look beautiful like you are really following the Lord. But on the inside there is no fruit! And we saw Him come into the temple. And we saw Him cleanse the religious hypocrisy and greed, casting out the money-changers and those who would sell animals and buy them. We saw Him preventing those who would flippantly walk through the temple, not allowing them to come through, those who would make a shortcut of His temple. And we saw that those Jews had made a robber's den out of the temple. And it should have been a house of prayer for the nations! And then we saw after the Lord cleansed it that He was healing the blind and the lame, those who would not be accepted in the temple, those who were considered outcasts because of their physical infirmities, the assumption that they had been sinning, or that that might be the reason. But we saw the Lord Jesus healing those who had humbly come to Him. And we saw the teenagers walking around, "Hosanna! Son of David!" - that the Pharisees and Sadducees and the leaders did not like it. "Save now, I pray! Hosanna! Son of David!" And then we saw the Lord God go back to Bethany to lodge. And then He came back the next morning to the temple, on Tuesday morning. And that is when Peter noticed the tree had been withered. And He gave them the explanation of what had happened to that tree. It was very clear that Israel did not have any faith, although they looked beautiful on the outside. They had not repented and trusted in Christ. They were going to be just like that fig tree in their judgment.

And then we saw Jesus enters the temple again on Tuesday morning, except at this point the religious leaders gain up enough guts and courage to come to Him and confront Him. You see, they are upset

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because He has usurped their authority. They were those in charge of the temple, they were those ultimately in charge of the nation of Israel. They were those in authority over Israel, and thus the people; and Jesus has usurped their authority in their eyes. And they come to Him and asked Him, “By what authority are You doing these things? By what authority are You teaching and preaching and healing and casting out these people from the temple? (These people were bad people by the way). By what authority are You doing it?” And we saw when we went through it, that they were trying to trap Him because they knew He was not a priest. They knew He had not studied under any specific rabbi, that they were trying to trap Him in front of the people. And He does not answer them. But He asks them a question. He says, “Is the baptism of John – what source? From God or from men?” And we see very clearly if these Pharisees would have answered it, because the people did believe it was from God, then they would have to acknowledge that Christ was from God and His authority came from God. But if they did not answer, if they answered “From men,” the people thought John was a prophet; and they would probably stone them or kill them, the Pharisees. So they in a cowardly fashion lied and said, “We do not know. We do not know.” Typical, hypocritical, coward religious leaders.

And we see very clearly, as He told a parable, the first parable which is only in Matthew – the parable of the two sons – that we gain insight into what is behind these religious leaders and what is behind the tax gatherers and harlots. We saw very clearly the Lord Jesus gave the parable of the two sons. There was one son who said, “I will go into the vineyard.” The dad had asked him to go into the vineyard, and he said, “I will do it!” There was another son to whom the dad said, “Go into the vineyard,” and then he said, “I am not going to do it!” And he regretted, or the word means “repent,” he repented and then he went. And then Jesus asked them, “Which son did the will of My Father who is in heaven? Which one?” The one that did not initially go, and repented and went. The one who obeyed.

And we see very clearly Jesus put the condemnation on these Pharisees. They were those who would say, “Yes, I will follow the Lord!” But they did not obey. Jesus would say in Matthew 23, “Do everything they say, but do not do what they do.” They were sharing the Word of God, but they were not obeying the Word of God. And we saw that the tax-gatherers and harlots would enter the kingdom before them, or they wouldn’t and the tax-gatherers and the harlots who repented at the preaching of John, who believed the message, would enter in the kingdom of heaven. You see, they recognized their sinfulness, and when they heard the message to repent, they believed and they turned to God. But these Pharisees did not recognize their sinfulness. And it is from this point He moves into another parable, which is a condemnation of these leaders and ultimately everyone who rejects Christ.

Now again, it is important to recognize this parable that we will see today is directed specifically at the leadership of Israel, with those multitudes in the temple listening. It is in the context of those Pharisees trying to challenge, those religious leaders trying to challenge the Lord’s authority to make Him look bad in front of the people. So how does God respond to sinful men? How does He respond to those who are in wickedness, those who hate Him, those here who are very religious, who name His name, saying, “I believe in the Lord,” but are wicked – how does He respond to them? Look at our passage. Matthew 21:33, notice He says, “Listen to another parable.”

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A parable is a story. *Parabole* – to throw alongside. *Parabole* - it is a story that illumines or illustrates a point. And we saw that parables without an explanation do not mean anything. That the Lord God used those stories to hide (from those who had hardened hearts) the truth. But here we will see He makes clear what the story is about. And it is unmistakable in this parable. Now I believe we are going to see in this parable that the landowner represents God, that the vineyard represents Israel, and that the tenants or renters represent the leadership of Israel, and the servants represent the prophets who were sent. And the son represents the Son of God. And I believe we will see that very clearly. Now as we look at this parable, I want you to notice two specific things as we go through it. One, I want you to notice the wickedness of Israel's leaders and then the patience of the living God with man's wickedness.

First of all, let's take a look at the wickedness of these leaders. Verse 33, ³³ 'Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT AND DUG A WINE PRESS IN IT, AND BUILT A TOWER, and rented it out to vine-growers, and went on a journey.'" As I shared, the landowner, that speaks of God. Now again, we want to make sure we do not take the parable farther than the intent. It is pretty simple as we will see. And notice what he does. He put a wall around, what he had planted. He dug a winepress and he built a tower. The landowner established and setup a vineyard which would be productive. We see he put a wall around it to protect it. He dug a winepress and he built a tower. A tower would be that for protection but also to store the produce. He did everything to make it a productive.

And notice what he does. "And he rented it out to vine-growers, and went on a journey." The owner rented it out to some tenants who were going to farm it for him. And these Jews would understand this. We are not farming people, at least most of us aren't. But they would understand that an owner would rent out and allow someone to manage that, and they would get a portion of that produce. But yet it was still the vine-grower's, it was still his land and his stuff, but they would get a portion of it. It is pretty simple so far. So the landowner leaves, and notice what happens. Verse 34, ³⁴ 'And when the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his produce.³⁵ And the vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third. ³⁶ Again he sent another group of slaves larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them.'" [Matthew 21:34-36] These are not very nice renters are they? We see very clearly, they beat one, killed one, stoned a third, and did the same thing to the second group that the owner sent.

Here we have the manifestation of the wickedness of the tenant farmers. They had no intent of giving the produce to the owner. And actually in contrast, they killed the owner's slaves that he had sent. Now I think it would be pretty clear to Israel at this time and those listening what the vineyard represented. Israel was always seen as a vineyard in Scripture. If you would turn with me to Isaiah chapter 5, verse 1. And I will share this with you. And we see some parallels in this story, as God is convicting Israel concerning their wickedness through the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah chapter 5. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentation. Isaiah 5:1,

¹ Let me sing now for my well-beloved a song of my beloved concerning His vineyard. My well-beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill. ² And He dug it all around, removed

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its stones, And planted it with the choicest vine. And He built a tower in the middle of it, And hewed out a wine vat in it; (Sounds really familiar doesn't it? If you knew the Old Testament and you knew those passage which they knew concerned Israel, when He gave this parable, when they heard that description, they would go, "This is speaking of Israel.") **Then He expected it to produce good grapes, But it produced only worthless ones.** ³ **"And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, Judge between Me and My vineyard.** ⁴ **What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why, when I expected it to produce good grapes did it produce worthless ones?** ⁵ **So now let Me tell you what I am going to do to My vineyard: I will remove its hedge and it will be consumed; I will break down its wall and it will become trampled ground.** ⁶ **And I will lay it waste; It will not be pruned or hoed, But briars and thorns will come up. I will also charge the clouds to rain no rain on it."** ⁷ **For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel,** (They were really, really clear in their understanding at this time concerning the metaphors that God used in His Word to describe Israel. He goes on,) **And the men of Judah His delightful plant. Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; For righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress.** ⁸ **Woe to those who add house to house and join field to field, Until there is no more room, So that you have to live alone in the midst of the land!" [Isaiah 5:1-8]**

You can look in Psalm 80:8-9 also if you want to. That talks about the vineyards. So very clearly this vineyard represents Israel, and the owner obviously is God the Father. God planted a vineyard. It is Israel. He established this nation, and He gave it everything they needed to prosper and to produce fruit. Now we are also going to see very clearly that Jesus reveals these tenant farmers are actually these religious leaders! The tenant farmers are the religious leaders. Back to Matthew 21. If you skip down to verse 45 at the end of our parable, we see that these leaders understood very clearly what Jesus was saying. Matthew 21:45, ⁴⁵ "And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them." It was very clear that these tenant farmers represented these leaders, and they understood it. They understood He was speaking about them. And in context, we see that these slaves that came really represent the prophets of Israel. You see, these represent the way Israel and the leaders treated the prophets who came to them. Remember what we saw earlier in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter 5? Turn to Matthew chapter 5:10-12 for a second. We've got a lot of references today, so put on one of those little rubber things on your fingers.

Matthew 5:10. You see there is the wrong impression from us and from people (maybe you) that Israel was really good to the prophets! If you think Israel treated their prophets well, you have the wrong impression of how they responded to God's prophets. They did not treat them well as we see. Matthew 5:10, ¹⁰ **"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.** (You are blessed, you are in a relationship with the living God, if you are persecuted for righteousness' sake. If the righteousness of God is manifest in your life and you are persecuted, you are blessed. He says,) ¹¹ **Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me.** (It is because of Christ) ¹² **Rejoice,**

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and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” [Matthew 5:10-13] They persecuted the prophets before you.

And if you go to the book of Hebrews, and this is something as I studied I thought, “This is certainly a possibility” as I studied the book of Hebrews – take a look at chapter 11. As we have this, what people call the Faith Hall of Fame. It is an interesting thought here, and I am not totally set on it, but I think it does go with our passage. Hebrews 11:32. It is easy to read through this and not see the connection that flows through it. Hebrews 11:32,

³² And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and (and then look) the prophets, (and then it says,) ³³ who by faith (it appears that, and I had not seen this as closely before, it appears to be that he is talking about the prophets in the next set of truths that he shares. These prophets, who by faith) *conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong,* (That is the Christian life by the way. From absolute weakness made strong) *became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. ³⁵ Women received back their dead by resurrection* (What did we see in the Old Testament?); *and others were tortured, not accepting their release, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection; ³⁶ and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated ³⁸ (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.* (Think about all these things as you hear it. So many situations concerning the prophets relate to this.) ³⁹ *And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised. [Hebrews 11:32-39]*

Elijah was chased by Jezebel, seeking his life. It is historically said that Isaiah was cut in two, or sawn in two. Zechariah, as the Lord says, was murdered between the temple and the altar. Jeremiah was put in a pit and John the Baptist was beheaded. They treated the prophets horribly. They persecuted them, they beat them, and they killed the prophets. Israel treated them awfully. This story is about Israel’s leadership and how they treated God’s spokespeople. Matthew 23 - let’s move up there and we see another portion that explains their wickedness. Matthew 23, and we will look at verse 30. The Lord Jesus is giving His seven woes against the leadership of Israel. It is His final condemnation before they would then ultimately take Him and crucify Him. Matthew 23:30. Now He is talking about these leaders who would say something but really did not mean it. Verse 30,

³⁰ “and say, ‘If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ (That’s what they said. “Hey, if we lived back then, we would not have killed those prophets.”) ³¹ Consequently you bear witness against yourselves, (Jesus says,) that you are sons of those who

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murdered the prophets. ³² Fill up then the measure of the guilt of your fathers. ³³ You serpents, you brood of vipers, how shall you escape the sentence of hell? (Pretty serious) ³⁴ Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, ³⁵ that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. ³⁶ Truly I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation. ³⁷ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. ³⁸ Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! ³⁹ For I say to you, from now on you shall not see Me until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'" [Matthew 23:30-39]

The reality is that these prophets were killed by Israel. And these leaders represented those in this parable who were killing the servants being sent by the landowner to his vineyard. Back to our parable in Matthew 21:33. ³³ 'Listen to another parable. (Jesus says. This is the same one, not another one. But for us the same one.) There was a landowner who PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT AND DUG A WINE PRESS IN IT, AND BUILT A TOWER, and rented it out to vine-growers, and went on a journey. ³⁴ And when the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his produce. ³⁵ And the vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third. ³⁶ Again he sent another group of slaves larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them. ³⁷ But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, "They will respect my son."'"

Now in the book of Mark and Luke, which we have parallel passages, the term is "My beloved son." He sent his beloved son. And notice what happens in verse 37.

³⁷ 'But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ³⁸ But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and seize his inheritance.' ³⁹ And they took him, and threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.'" It is apparent that in this parable, they probably felt that the landowner was dead because if there was no one to claim the property, if there was no one there, you could claim it for yourself and legally own it. So they thought, "Let's kill him and seize the inheritance." Now again, why would they kill him? Why would they kill the son of the landowner? Notice they said, "This is the heir. Come let us kill him and seize his inheritance." They recognized he was the heir. They recognized he had authority over them. They recognized it was *his* vineyard, and thus they desired to seize it for themselves. And these wicked tenants represent these religious leaders. Why would they want to kill Christ, as we'll see?

Turn to John 11:46, and we'll see insight into this. John 11:46. Now there is the report of Jesus doing the miraculous things, and John 11:46 starts out,

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⁴⁶ But some of them went away to the Pharisees, and told them the things which Jesus had done. ⁴⁷ Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. ⁴⁸ "If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." (We are going to lose our authority! We are going to lose our place! We are in charge, and we are going to lose the nation!" And if you read on, after Caiaphas prophetically (an evil man) prophetically talks about the death of Christ, we see in verse 53 it says) **⁵³ So from that day on they planned together to kill Him. [John 11:46-48, 53]**

In the parable they were unwilling to submit because they wanted it for themselves. And ultimately they killed the servants and they ultimately killed the son of the landowner. You see the son was a threat to their control. They wanted it for themselves. And it's the same thing with these religious leaders. "If we let Him go, the people will believe in Him; and we will lose our place!" What was their place? They were in authority over Israel. And you see folks, this gives us insight into why men and women reject the Lord Jesus Christ, it's maybe why some of you have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. You do not want to give up the lordship of your life! You do not want anyone to tell you what to do. Now remember, these were religious leaders! They were doing the religious outward stuff. It gives us insight into the hatred in the heart for the living God, and the love of self in those who do not know Christ (and that is everyone before Christ). You see, I tell you today that men and women reject Christ because they do not want Him as Lord! They want to be lord over themselves.

Turn to John chapter 3. We see it is because people want to stay in their sin. They want to run their lives, they want to do their own thing! It is the state of mankind apart from Christ. John 3:18,

¹⁸ "He who believes in Him is not judged; (that is speaking of Jesus) he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light (Now these men here love religious darkness! Maybe some of you love your bad, evil churches; and you do not like it when God's Word confronts it. You love darkness. Maybe some of you love your dark ways. This is man's state, this is all of our state. He says, "men loved darkness rather than light"); **for their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed."** [John 3:18-20]

These religious leaders would say, "We believe in the Lord of the Bible!" But they hated the Lord of the Bible because He had authority over them, and He has authority over us. You see, many people will be excited about Jesus until they recognize He has authority and they must submit to Him! And then they make a different Jesus in their heart and mind very easily from so many different places and churches that preach a different Jesus, and they follow him instead. You see, many people try to talk people into the kingdom through all this apologetic mumbo-jumbo. Folks, people do not want to come to Christ

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because they want to stay in their sin. They love sin. And this same group of people, the multitudes, would come eventually and say, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

And let's be honest. For those of you who have not submitted to the Lordship of Christ, you do it because you want to control your life. *You* want to control where you go to church. *You* want to control what you do. *You* want to control rather than Christ through His Word controlling you. That is man's problem. That is our problem. Let's be honest. This passage reveals that man in his sinful state if given a chance would do the same thing. The same thing.

Remember what I shared in the beginning of the message? Man in his sinful state is hostile towards God. No matter what you say, if you do not know Christ, you are hostile towards Him because He tells you what He wants you do to, and you are no longer lord. We see that man hates God, even though man may be very religious. Some of you may have raised a hand or prayed a prayer but never truly submitted your life to the Lord Jesus Christ. And folks, if you have not submitted to the Lord Jesus Christ, you are not saved. Let me share some passages. I am not talking about a formula of words. I am talking about a heart that is not humble. Unless you humble yourself like those children, Jesus said you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Unless you recognize you are totally sinful, that *you* are sinful and *He* is the Lord, and you repent of your sin and trust in Christ. Turn with me to Romans chapter 10, we see this very clearly. Very clearly.

It is really nice to say, "I believe in Jesus," and just do your own thing. That is not true faith and repentance as we will see. True faith and repentance acknowledges Christ as Lord. Romans chapter 10, verse 8. The Apostle Paul says, ⁸ ***But what does it say?*** (He is speaking of the text in Deuteronomy chapter 28) ***"The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart "-- that is, the word of faith which we are preaching,*** ⁹ ***that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved;*** (It is not a work, folks! It is the reality of when you truly turn to Christ, when He has convicted you of sin, that you are not the Lord! That you have not submitted your life; you are a sinful man or woman. And you come to Him and say, "Lord, save me!" He says, "And believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead [that is the reality of Him dying for our sins and being raised from the dead. He says,] you shall be saved.") ¹⁰ ***for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.*** ¹¹ ***For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed."*** [Romans 10:8-11]

True faith in Jesus Christ includes a recognition of who He really is and who we are really not, that He is the Lord and we are not. We see this, turn with me also to Colossians chapter 2. I am not giving my opinion; I am giving the Word of God to you. And I hope you are listening. Colossians chapter 2. If you came for a song and a dance and a rock show today, it is not going to happen. We want to proclaim God's Word because that is all we have to share. Colossians chapter 2, Paul says in verse 5, ⁵ ***For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ.*** (It is faith in Jesus Christ! And notice what he says in verse 6) ⁶ ***As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.*** [Colossians 2:5-6] How did we receive the Lord? We received Him by faith, we repented from sin and trusted in Jesus Christ.

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We see the same thing in Peter's sermon in Acts chapter 10, to the first Gentile converts. I will read it for you. Acts 10:34, ³⁴ **And opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, ³⁵ but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right, is welcome to Him. ³⁶ The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)."** [Acts 10:34-36] If you do not acknowledge the lordship of Christ in a practical reality when you have your salvation experience, you did not get saved. I am not saying you have to say it a certain way or anything. But when you just recognized, "He is the Lord; I am not. He is the Lord." What a gracious God we have here to reveal the problem of these Pharisees. They wanted to be lord. They wanted to run the vineyard. They did not want to hear from God. They killed His prophets. And they killed, as we will see, His very Son.

Now I want you to notice that God is patient with us. We are wicked sinners. This describes all of us before Christ, by the way. It describes you here who do not know Christ. God is patient with sinners! He is patient with us and each one of us who have come to faith can acknowledge and testify to His patience in our lives when we were wretched haters of God, whether we would acknowledge it or not.

Look at the parable again. I want you to see the patience of God. Back to Matthew chapter 21:33. He says, ³³ 'Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT AND DUG A WINE PRESS IN IT, AND BUILT A TOWER, and rented it out to vine-growers, and went on a journey. ³⁴ And when the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his produce. ³⁵ And the vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third. ³⁶ Again he sent another group of slaves larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them. ³⁷ But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, "They will respect my son.'" [Matthew 21:33-37]

God is patient. Year after year after year God dealt with disobedient Israel. And He sent His prophets to turn their hearts to repent. And He sent His Son to turn their hearts to repent and believe in Him. Year after year after year. He could have wiped them out completely. The same thing with you and I before Christ. He was gracious. He could have wiped us out for our sin, and He has been patient. He is a patient God.

You see, let me share some passages that reveal this truth. Romans chapter 2, let's turn there. Romans chapter 2. Again I share, we have a lot of passages today to look at. Romans 2:3. You see we deserved God's wrath, and God is patient. He is patient. He is patient with the very people who killed His Son, the very nation and leaders. Romans 2:3, ³ **And do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things** (he is speaking to the religious Jew that does not know Christ) **and do the same yourself,** (if you do it) **that you will escape the judgment of God?** (And then look at this) ⁴ **Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?** [Romans 2:3-4] You see God was patient with Israel. God is patient with us.

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And then if you look in 2 Peter chapter 3. Second Peter chapter 3. There were the mockers that were saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? Why hasn't He come yet? Ever since the fathers, everything stays the same. What's all this stuff about His coming?" And the answer is basically, "God is true to His Word and He will come, but He is patient." Second Peter 3:7,

⁷ But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. (That is pretty serious) ⁸ But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as (it is metaphoric) a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come...[2 Peter 3:7-10a]

God is patient. This story shows His patience. He sent prophets; they killed them. He sent more prophets; they killed them. He sent His Son. They killed Him. God is patient with sinful man. But folks, His patience will run out. His patience will run out we will see. Now on a side note, we need to learn from this principle. We need to learn from the reality that God is patient because we are very impatient with others, aren't we? We are very impatient with those who have not repented. I am not saying that we put up with sin. I am not saying that we compromise our faith. But Scripture reveals we are to be patient. Second Timothy 2:24,

²⁴ And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, ²⁵ with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, ²⁶ and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will. [2 Timothy 2:24-26]

We need to be patient. So then we see God's patience revealed but there is a day when God's patience will run out. When He will act in judgment, and we need to understand that God will eternally crush those who reject His Son. He will crush you if you reject His Son. Again, look at the parable. Verse 37, Matthew 21, "³⁷ But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, "They will respect my son." ³⁸ But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and seize his inheritance." ³⁹ And they took him, and threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. (Verse 40. Now we have the Lord Jesus asking a question to those He is telling the parable to) ⁴⁰ Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?" (What will he do to those vine-growers who killed his servants and killed his son? What will he do? They said to Him, this is the religious leaders speaking) "⁴¹ They said to Him, 'He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers, who will pay him the proceeds at the {proper} seasons.'" [Matthew 21:37-41]

Jesus is speaking to the religious leaders and they say he will bring those wretches to a wretched end. They are saying, "He will knock 'em off, and he will give it to someone else." And no doubt their answer

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came in the context of their wicked moral smugness in front of the people. But they did not realize that He was speaking of them, and they would realize that. In Luke it says that he will destroy them. Destroy those wretched renters and give it to someone else who will pay the proceeds. And notice this, notice Jesus' response now in verse 42. ⁴²Jesus said to them, 'Did you never read in the Scriptures, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER {stone;} THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES"?' ⁴³Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it. ⁴⁴And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.' ⁴⁵And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them." [Matthew 21:42-45] He says, "Haven't you ever heard the Word of God? Haven't you ever read?" And He quotes, it is an insult, and it is not so much an insult but a condemnation of these Pharisees and Sadducees and Chief Priests and leaders because they had heard of the Word of God. This was a very familiar Psalm He had quoted from – Psalm 118 – a Psalm that was quoted during this very week. This Passover week. A psalm in which we saw earlier all the children sang, "Hosanna! Save now!" from Psalm 118. He says, "Have you never read the Scriptures? The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief cornerstone. This came about from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes." This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice in it and be glad!

Here Jesus very clearly identifies Himself as the stone in a building metaphor. The stone that the builders rejected became the chief cornerstone. And a cornerstone in construction is the stone that is laid first for the foundation that every stone in the entire building is based on, ultimately as a reference point to be built from. Jesus Christ is making it clear to these builders, they should have been building up, they should have been taking care of God's vineyard. But yet they were wretched, evil, covetous, wicked men. The stone that the builders rejected – they rejected Christ, the very cornerstone. We see this in Acts chapter 4. Turn to Acts chapter 4 with me, verse 8. This is after Peter had healed a sick man and this is his response in Acts 4. He says, (or there we see Luke sharing Peter's words),

⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people, (That's these guys!) ⁹ if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, ¹⁰ let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead-- by this name this man stands here before you in good health. ¹¹ He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the very corner stone. ¹² And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."
[Acts 4:8-12]

The rejected stone, the crucified Christ, risen from the dead, is the only way to have salvation. We see this same thing as was read in 1 Peter 2. Let's turn there, 1 Peter 2. Again, I told you a lot of references today but we need to see them. Speaking about believers who have tasted the kindness of the Lord, those who hunger for His Word because they have been born again by the living and abiding Word of God. He says to them, verse 4 of 1 Peter 2,

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⁴ And coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected by men, (They rejected Christ. He says,) but choice and precious in the sight of God, ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For this is contained in Scripture: "Behold I lay in Zion (That is Israel) a choice stone, a precious corner stone, And he who believes in Him shall not be disappointed." ⁷ This precious value, then, is for you who believe. But for those who disbelieve, "The stone which the builders rejected, This became the very corner stone," ⁸ and, "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed. [1 Peter 2:4-8]

If you reject Christ, like these leaders reject Christ, Christ will be your destruction. You will stumble over Him. He will crush you in judgment. If you reject Him, the offer of salvation, that God the Son took on human flesh, He bore your sins and my sins in His body on the cross, He died and He rose from the dead. He is Lord of all. If you reject Him like these builders, you will be crushed, too. Notice the statement in the next portion, verse 42-43 back in Matthew 21. ⁴³ "Therefore (based on what the Lord just said, "You rejected the stone, the choice cornerstone.") I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it. ⁴⁴And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.'" We have the consequences for the religious leaders of Israel initially; and then we have the consequences for everyone who rejects Christ, including them. "Because you rejected the cornerstone, religious leaders, here is what will happen to you – it will be taken away from you! The very thing that you are holding on to will be taken away from you. For what shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul? It will be taken away and given to a nation producing fruit."

Here we see the Lord clearly predicting the mystery in the New Testament, that God would open the door for salvation to the nations, to the Gentiles. It would be ripped away from Israel and given to someone else who would produce fruit. Remember it is fruit that is the issue, no matter what you say about Jesus, is His life manifest in you? We see very clearly in the book of Romans, that God brought forth something brand new, something different than Israel – the church, the called out ones. The rejection of the Messiah by Israel opened the door in God's perfect plan and marvelous plan for the truth to come to those who would produce fruit. Take a look in Romans 11, and we see this there. Romans 11. Hopefully you know these verses. If you do not, it is a condemnation. Just get in the Word. Learn the Word of God. Hopefully you know these passages, you are aware of them. If you do not know them, or you are maybe new in the faith (praise the Lord, learn them); if you have claimed to be a believer for a while then you should know these passages. Romans 11:11, Paul is speaking of Israel.

¹¹ I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? (What did they do? Crucifying Christ – was that enough to put them out forever?) *May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous. ¹² Now if their transgression be riches for the world and their failure be riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be! ¹³ But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles.*

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(That is the non-Jew) *Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,* ¹⁴ *if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them.* ¹⁵ *For if their* (Jews) *rejection* (that they rejected the chief cornerstone) *be the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?* ¹⁶ *And if the first piece of dough be holy, the lump is also; and if the root be holy, the branches are too.* ¹⁷ *But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive,* (that is Gentiles) *were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root* (that is Christ) *of the olive tree,* ¹⁸ *do not be arrogant toward the branches;* (And we see very clearly, go down to verse 19) *but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you.* ¹⁹ *You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in."* ²⁰ *Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief,* (that is the Jews) *but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear;* ²¹ *for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you.* ²² *Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. [Romans 11:11-22]*

The point I am trying to make is God is telling them, "You are going to lose it, and I am going to give it to those who would produce fruit." And we see that in context that would be the church. And the church does produce fruit. It produces fruit of the righteousness of Christ. If you believe in Jesus Christ, you are placed into the body of Christ, and if you truly know Him you will bear fruit. A good tree does not produce bad fruit, and a bad tree good fruit. Philippians 1:11, ¹¹ *having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ...* The church produces fruit unlike the fig tree which was judged and cursed. Now, one last thing before you get taken captive by intellectuals who would say that Israel is done and they are not going to be back in God's plan – Romans 11 says very clearly and you can read this on your own time, Romans 11:25-32, that God's promises are for sure, that He will eventually save Israel. After the tribulation, He will save Israel as a nation at that time. They will turn and have their sins forgiven. The very rejection of His Son brought about salvation to us.

So then for these leaders, hold onto your life apart from Christ and lose it. Although God is patient, His patience runs out. And notice what comes to all of us. Verse 44 back in our passage, ⁴⁴ *'And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.'* [Matthew 21:44] It is all about Christ. You do not want Him to be your Lord? You are going to be smashed in judgment. You are going to be crushed. This same Lord who would die and did die for you. "He who falls on the stone will be broken to pieces (very vivid language), but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust." Remember we saw back in Matthew 11:6, "Blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me"? Very clearly there are those who will be trapped and stumble and broken to pieces. You can say, "I believe in Jesus" and go to the right church and all this stuff. If you have not turned to Christ in total submission, believing in Him, you are in trouble. You are in trouble.

Lastly, Romans 9. Let's take a look at verse 27,

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27 And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved; 28 for the Lord will execute His word upon the earth, thoroughly and quickly." 29 And just as Isaiah foretold, "Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left to us a posterity, We would have become as Sodom, and would have resembled Gomorrah." 30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; 31 but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. 32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, 33 just as it is written, "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, And he who believes in Him will not be disappointed." [Romans 9:27-33]

It is all about Jesus Christ. It is all about your response to Jesus Christ. These leaders rejected Him, and they had the opportunity to put Him out of the way so that they could continue the lordship of their own lives and they did it. They crucified Him. The stone which the builders rejected. Christ is the one you must put your faith in. He is the Lord. You must call upon the name of the Lord to be saved. If you do not put your faith in Christ He will be your eternal downfall. You will be crushed by Him forever. Psalm 2, ***41 Worship the LORD with reverence, And rejoice with trembling.*** (That's why we do not have a wacky time in here. We worship with reverence.) ***12 Do homage to the Son, lest He become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!*** [Psalm 2:11-12] Hebrews 10, one last passage. Let's turn to Hebrews 10 as we close. The writer of Hebrews is saying what we believers should be doing. The evidence of a real relationship with Christ. Hebrews 10:24,

24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, (You cannot do that if you are not around. It is impossible to obey God in that) ***25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.*** (That's God's Word! If you do not like it and you do not do it, you are in rebellion to the living God! You are the Lord of your life! And I would encourage you to repent. He says,) ***26 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth,*** (If you continue to push away God's Word and His ways after I know the truth. He says,) ***there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.*** (If you broke the law in the Old Testament, you died on the testimony of two or three witnesses) ***29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?*** (You reject Christ! How much more severer punishment do you think you will get?) ***30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people."***

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(again...) ³¹ ***It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God. [Hebrews 10:24-31]***

Christ is Lord, we are not. The core of our rebellion is that we want to be lord. The core of man's rebellion is doing his own will, walking his own way. Not submitting to Christ as Lord. You will either be saved by Christ or crushed by Christ. And I pray you are saved by Christ. God is a gracious God to alert us to what is going on on the inside, not what people can see but what He sees. If you call upon the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ as Lord, you will be saved.

Notice as we finish, the Pharisees understood. Verse 45, ⁴⁵“And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them. (Do you understand, those of you who are apart from Christ that He is speaking of you?) ⁴⁶And when they sought to seize Him, they feared the multitudes, because they held Him to be a prophet.” [Matthew 21:45-46] How does God respond to sinful men and women like us? He is patient. He is very patient, not willing that any should perish. He could wipe us out for the first sin we ever committed, and He does not. You wonder why there is evil in the world, why people get away with things? He is patient. They won't get away with it in the long wrong. But He is patient, not willing for any to perish. He is patient with you. Some of you have put Him aside year after year after year. You have heard the truth. You have rejected Him as your Lord. You want to be lord. Just go before Him and say, “Lord, I am sorry. I have sinned against You. I believe that You died for my sins and rose from the dead.”

Some of you are like the leaders. You have got a religious life that looks pretty good, it looks very biblical. Yet you do not want God to tell you what to do. I warn you today, you are on the precipice of judgment. Some of you here today have prayed a prayer and said “Jesus” and this and that, but you have never acknowledged Him as Lord. And the evidence is your life. He is not your Lord in your day to day activities. You are the lord. I exhort you to repent of running your own life, sinning greatly against God. Your lack of submission to Christ. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

And there are some of us who have trusted in the Lord. We should be thanking Him and praising Him. He was patient, that He did not judge us when we were in the midst of our sin. That He bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we are forgiven. Our sins are as far as the east is the west, and we are redeemed and forgiven. We ought to praise Him and give Him glory and thanks and honor. Some of us have trusted Him as Lord. But we take back the lordship of our lives in little ways. And maybe God is convicting you of some area that you have not yielded to Christ as Lord. Sometimes His Word clearly contradicts what you are doing. Confess your sin, He will forgive you. He is a gracious, gracious God. He is merciful. If you have been saved by the rock, you will not be crushed by the rock. We have a merciful, gracious, wonderful God. Let's pray.

Prayer

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Dear Lord, You are the Lord of all. And in our rebellion we resist that. And we see in Your Word that apart from You we are haters and we are hostile to You. I pray for those here who have made up a Jesus in their own hearts, an idol that is not the true God. A Jesus they can live with because they can get away with their sin. I pray they would see the true Lord and repent of sin and trust in Christ Jesus as Lord. Father, I pray for anyone here who has not truly submitted their heart and lives, who has not humbled themselves like a child, just believing, that You would convict their hearts. That today would be the day of salvation. It is not Your desire to crush them, but that they repent. That is Your desire. But yet if they do not, You will execute judgment and I pray they will fear You and respond in repentance and faith. Lord, I pray for those who are saved here. Those of us who know you. May we not forget. May we confess when we do not acknowledge Your lordship through Your Word by Your Spirit on a daily basis. May we just say, "Lord, whatever You want. Not my will, but Thy will be done in everything, Lord." My we confess when we have not done that. May we trust You, may we praise You, may we sing of You. May we give You glory. In Your precious name, Amen.

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