



## **“LAST OF ALL, HE SENT HIS SON”**

**Kevin Presley**

Greetings and welcome. Thanks for joining me today to look into the word of God together for a few moments. The bible is made up of many accounts from history spanning various dispensations of time and dealing with various covenants that God had with different people. However, from Genesis to Revelation really comprises one story which finds its climax in the coming, the restorative work, and the reign of Jesus Christ. The Christian dispensation is not just a period of time along the way to eternity, it is the revelation of God’s plan from eternity to reverse the curse of sin.

Jesus illustrated this in one of His powerful parables recorded in Matthew 21, beginning in verse 33. The Lord said: ***“Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’ So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. “Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?”***

By telling this story, Jesus was picturing the fate of the religious leaders of the first century who rejected Him. Their ultimate rejection would lead to their ultimate destruction as a physical nation in the Fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 which is also a reflection of the eternal destiny of ALL who reject Christ. But this promised judgment does not come without ample warning and without much emphatic pleading from God. Those who reject Christ do so despite many opportunities to receive Him and be saved. I want us to look closer at the many ways God has graciously and patiently implored sinful man to repent. We’ll

lift the title of the lesson from our text: "Last of All He Sent His Son." And I'll return with the lesson in a moment.

Jesus was the most spellbinding teacher to ever live. In our text, He once again assumes the role of the Master Storyteller. He would draw His hearers close with a story or illustration which would then convict them of the truth He was teaching. That's what a parable is: a laying alongside. Like a story or illustration that a preacher might use in a sermon today that makes truth more understandable and relatable and that then drives that truth like a stake into the hearts of the audience, so Jesus often used such stories to convince the sincere and convict the sinner. This time, He says a man owned a vineyard. It was well equipped with a hedge to keep out thieves and animals that would try to destroy it, tower to protect them from danger, and give them a place from which to stay and work, and a winepress, anticipating a good crop. It had everything workers would need to do their jobs. The owner rented this vineyard to a group of men for them to cultivate it while He went on a journey. They would work for Him, and they would share in its profits when the work was complete, and He returned. But when that harvest season came, he sent three servants to collect the rent. But instead of collecting the rent, these servants were beaten and killed by the workers. So, the owner sent a larger delegation the next time, but they all received the same treatment. Finally, the man said, "I will send my son and surely they will respect him." But when the workers say the son coming, they said "This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' So, they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him." The Lord then turned to the crowd and asked the indicting question: 'What do you think the owner should do to those wicked men?' And reminiscent of how the guilty adulterer and murderer King David so boldly walked into the prophet Nathan's trap after he told a similar parable depicting David's sin a thousand years before: They said that the men who did such a thing should face the harshest punishment and be killed, and others allowed to rent and share in the fruits of the vineyard. In effect, the Lord told them what Nathan told David: "thou art the man". Jesus said in verses 43 and 44: "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. And (exposing the hardness of their willfully blinded hearts and predicting the doom they would bring upon themselves, He said) whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."

The application here was to the leaders of the Jewish nation who would reject and demand the crucifixion of Christ. God had given them the Promised Land and had called them His people. He covenanted with them to work together to fulfill God's redemptive purposes for the world and He expected to see fruit from them, but instead, found disobedience and sin. They failed Him again and again. One by one, He sent His prophets to them, and they all met the wrath of the people they preached to and were slain, and the people went on in their sin. So, "Last of all He sent His Son..." and what did they do to Him? "He came unto His own and His own received Him not" (John 1:11) In fact, it's as though the preacher Stephen was interpreting the Lord's parable when he preached his last sermon in Acts the seventh chapter. As they gritted their teeth and clenched their fists, Stephen said to the Jewish leaders "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it." Instead of receiving God's Son, they slew Him up a cross and God took His kingdom and gave it to the other nations of the world.

That's the immediate application of this parable when Jesus told it long ago, but today I wish to make a broader application to all of mankind perhaps including someone watching today who has thus far resisted Christ and turned away the patient and loving overtures of the gospel. The great drama of sin

and salvation began in the Garden of Eden when God placed innocent man in the Garden and men sinned. Everything God has done since that time has been in view of man's sin and his lost condition. I want you to consider all that God has done to bring you to Him. Are you, like the ones Jesus spoke of in this parable, rejecting those who preach repentance and ultimately crucifying Christ afresh by willfully continuing in sin?

Think about the many servants that God has sent to turn men away from sin and to Himself throughout time. For example, He sent Noah to call sinful man to repentance and warn of the coming flood. The sin which began in an isolated choice in the Garden of Eden grew until it invaded the hearts of men everywhere and covered the world. When God created the world He said, "It is good". But after a while He said, "I regret making man." The wickedness of man was so great it was the constant imagination of man's heart. The world needed cleansing and sent a flood to wipe it clean and start afresh. One man appeared before God as redeemable and finding grace in His sight, He saved Noah and his little family out of the flood. Did man learn the lesson? As the world repopulated, man was soon spiraling down into sin and the effect of the flood upon the moral character of people was short-lived. So, God sent Abraham and formed a people special to Him and made a covenant with them. When several generations later they were oppressed and enslaved in pagan Egypt, God sent them Moses to liberate them, make them a nation, give them the law, and more definitely define the idea of a blood sacrifice for sin. Moses took them to a land flowing with milk and honey. Wouldn't you think they would have been forever grateful for being freed from bondage and loved and served God forever? Friend, they weren't a hundred miles away from the flesh pots of Egypt before they were sinning against Him and worshipping idols. Still yet, God gave them a righteous law and a system of sacrifice. He showed them how to worship Him and said if they would remain faithful, He would bless them all their days. That's a picture of God's great loving heart. But it was to no avail, they went back into sin again and again. So, after the spiritual darkness of the Days of the Judges, God gave them David with His tender and sincere heart and His songs of salvation. He demonstrated in the life of David himself, His willingness to forgive sin if they would only repent. God took this broken and disgraced man and put a new song in his heart to sing to the people. But all the wonderful testimonies of God's patience and forbearance with David did not move them for they went on in their sin.

God then sent a succession of prophets to preach and warn and to woo them back to Him. He sent Jeremiah and his tears. The weeping prophet went up and down the land pleading with tears in his eyes and a lump in his throat. He said, 'God has loved you with an everlasting love.' (Jeremiah 31:3) 'Turn unto Him, repent of your sins and His blessings will once again flow. But Jeremiah's tears didn't move the people. So, He sent Isaiah to picture to them His glory and holiness and to offer them His loving invitation in Isaiah 55:1. "'Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price.'" He said in Isaiah 1:18-20, "...Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land; But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword..." But Isaiah's entreaties fell on deaf ears. So, then He even sent the loving but firm discipline of a disappointed and heartbroken father. He sent the kings of earth to take them into captivity and chastisement. They would briefly turn but it wouldn't last. In captivity, some learned their lesson and turned back to God but once they were back in their own land, again God was soon forgotten.

Every plan of God was met with rebuff and stubborn refusal. Man continued in his sin. And then the great hour struck. God made His master stroke. God did the greatest thing He ever did for man. "...when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to

redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” (Galatians 4:4-5) Or, as Jesus Himself said: “Last of all He sent His Son.” Here is an artist who paints many pictures and finally said “I will paint My masterpiece. He gathers His materials, takes the image He conceived before time itself, and paints the portrait of Himself with outstretched arms to the world. Except that image took the form of His Son stretching out His hands on a Roman cross to die for man’s sin. In that portrait, one hand reaches up and takes the sinless and spotless hand of God and the other reaches down and clasps the dirty, sin-stained hand of man and He brings them together over His blood-soaked chest and says, “It is finished”. As Jesus bled His life away upon the tree, God was saying, “This is the greatest thing I can do for the world. This is the ultimate sacrifice and demonstration of love and grace that I can show. And if men and women will not turn and believe and obey My Son, I must give them up to their sins and allow them to be lost forever. Don’t accuse God of being cruel for allowing people to go to hell when He was willing through NO MERIT of ours to send His Son to suffer, bleed, and die on a cross to pay the debt we owe so that we might be free. If that isn’t love, I don’t know what is. But God said the workers in that vineyard rejected and killed His Son. What then is there for them but to be destroyed? Friend, you must climb over the cross to go to hell. You have to go around the mountain of God’s mercy and grace to be lost. Don’t blame God. He has wooed man from the time of Adam to love and serve Him and man has repeatedly rejected His grace. Last of all He sent His Son. Are you crucifying Him afresh by your sin and your stubborn refusal to repent and surrender to Him?

Why did God send His Son? What did the sending of Son as we read about Him in the gospels tell them and us? First, His Son revealed God’s being to the world. God is Spirit and no man has ever looked upon Him and lived yet, Jesus, the Godman, came as the express image of the Father. (Hebrews 1:3) He showed us in fleshly form while He dwelled on earth the unseen God who dwells in Heaven. He showed to us the perfection of God. He lived a spotless and holy life. He never told a lie. He never committed a single act of evil. He never spoke a defiled word. His life stands in contrast to the darkness of this sinful world, thus saying “I am the light of the world.” He showed to us the heart of God. Not only did He go about in this world doing good, showing compassion, having pity, lending a healing, and helping hand to the hopeless, but “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.” (John 15:13-14). He even showed us God’s hatred for the sin that took us away from Him to begin with. The bloody scene of Golgotha is the awful portrait of sin’s consequences as Jesus was bearing the punishment our sin demanded. He sent His Son to reveal Himself.

He sent His Son to RECONCILE us to Himself. He allowed Christ who had no sin to be made a sin-offering for us so that sin might be punished, and God remain just but at the same time justify those who put their faith in Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5:21, Romans 3:26). He sent His Son to show us how to live for Him. Jesus not only taught the golden rule, He WAS the golden rule. Everything Christ did was for the glory of God and for the good of mankind. And last of all He sent His Son to open the door to heaven. “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but through me.” (John 14:6) There is no other way to God. You can’t pay your way. You can’t earn your way. You can’t pray your way to heaven. You can’t ride some person’s coattails. The only person who can lead you to the throne of God is Jesus, the beloved Son whom He so sacrificially and graciously sent.

It’s a terrible thing to reject His Son. It’s a FINAL thing to reject Him. Because one day, the Father is going to send His Son again. But He will not appear as a Lamb but as a Lion and will not come in love and pity but in judgment and vindication. “...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence

of the Lord and from the glory of His power,” said the apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9. Just as Jesus said to those unbelieving Jews of long ago who would reject His Son: “...whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.”

How long has God waited for you? How many times has His mercy pleaded with you through the preaching and hearing of His word and yet you’ve chosen to continue in your own way. God’s patience and His mercy have a limit. Last of all He sent His Son and there will be no other opportunity every given you to be eternally saved. Won’t you receive His Son today by placing your trust in Him, repenting of your many sins, confessing Him, and hastening without delay to the water to be buried with Him in baptism and have your sins washed away?

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