

Ice breaker question:

Do you have a funny landlord or renter story to share? Has it ever been difficult being a renter or renting your property to someone else?

Discuss:

1. In Jesus' parable, the owner of the vineyard sends three servants and then his son to the renters to get them to pay their part of the produce they owe. He could have sent armed guards earlier to throw them out, but he showed grace several times. What does this tell us about the owner and what can we learn from him?
2. There is an absurdity in the parable that the renters somehow think by killing the son they could inherit ownership of the vineyard. We sometimes feel we own everything in our vineyards, instead of God being the owner. In what ways do we live as if we are the owners of everything?
3. If we don't own all our own land, things, even our lives (they are in God's hands as the giver of life), how can we be better stewards of the things in our vineyards? How do we keep the role of the owner and our role as the steward in the right order?
4. In the parable, once the renters are thrown out of the vineyard after killing the son, the vineyard is given to others. You, as a follower of Jesus, are part of the others! How does it feel to be part of the hope of the owner (God) to tend to the vineyard (God's Kingdom) even after the son (Jesus) is no longer here? What kind of practices can we glean from this parable to tend to the vineyard today?
5. Jesus quotes from the Psalms at the end of the parable that the builders (the scribes and chief priests) rejected a stone which became the cornerstone. Rejecting Jesus, the cornerstone, leaves people without hope. As laborers in the vineyard, how can we help those around us who don't have hope in Christ? What can we say or do that brings hope?
6. In this parable, the Owner and the Son are more selfless than selfish. They show grace instead of greed. What is one way this week you might choose God over self, and choose grace over greed?

Telling Our Stories:

Share more about your stories this week with your group by answering the question: "What have you been struggling with?"

Prayer:

Keep the following prayer requests from our church family in mind as you close.

- > Please pray for healing for Steve Wright.
- > Please pray for the women going through the Great Banquet here at ZPC and for the men going through the Great Banquet in Brownsburg (including our own Jerry Deck) both finishing up tonight.

Upcoming service opportunities at ZPC:

- > A few spots are still available to serve homeless families through IHN
Contact: Margaret Gordon [shirazguru@aol.com; 317.219.9017]
- > Serve through Kairos Prison Ministry. Contact: Craig Olney
[colney828@gmail.com; 317.733.0215]

Background for home group leaders:

Most scholars agree the players in this parable are pretty easy to identify. They are:

Owner of vineyard = God	Vineyard = Israel
Tenants = religious leaders	Servants = prophets sent to Israel
Son = Jesus	Others = Gentiles, or Jesus's disciples

It's good to remember that the owner, being God, shows incredible grace in the face of violence by sending his Son (Jesus) to the vineyard. Since the renters of the vineyard are thrown out, we can now be part of the others – tending the vineyard, or God's Kingdom here on earth, even today.

[Question 1] The owner shows vulnerability in the face of violence. When the renters show greed, the owner and the son show grace. We can try to do the same by seeing God's perfect love.

[Question 2] We don't really own everything, rather everything is a gift of God. We feel because we have worked hard, had education, and made good choices, therefore we are successful. But we might set aside the fact that we were born into a blessed country, have good health, have even our very lives, as a gift from God.

[Question 3] We need to remember that every good thing is from God. He is the rightful owner of the world. We are stewards. We are called, even from Adam and Eve in Genesis, to show good stewardship – not only over the earth, but over our own lives and families and even our church.

[Question 4] We can feel humbled that God has asked us to play our part in God's story. We have a role to play! This is humbling and exciting. We must figure out our parts to play each day, whether it is a word we say, or an action we take, or if it is changing our schedule or priorities to answer God's call to tend to the vineyard he has given us.

[Question 5] We can borrow from Kairos Prison Ministry to "listen, listen, love, love" those who are hurting or without hope. By showing them the love of Christ in actions and in words, we can be bringers of hope to those who are hurting, or without hope. Some specific times might be when friends have lost loved ones, have a sick child, move to a new city, have a broken relationship; we can be there for them and provide hope.

[Question 6] Think of ways we might go against the grain this week – by being gracious when someone makes us mad, or when we are called to love our enemies, or be the Good Samaritan. May we be ready when called upon to act.