

## **Parables: Jesus the Storyteller**

### **Lesson 18 - God's Love**

#### **Warm up -**

1. Has there ever been a time that you've gotten lost or separated from the people you were with - like on a road trip or at an amusement park? Or maybe even a time that your getting separated wasn't an accident - you were "ditch?" How did it feel?

2. When's the last time you were bowled over by the beauty and power of God's creation? Was it the intense greens of early spring after a bare, brown winter that you got to you, or a spectacular butterfly, or a neon sunset at the beach? What do such things tell us about God?

3. No doubt you've heard the expression "When the cat's away, the mice will play." Why do you think it might be harder to do something you're supposed to do when the person in charge leaves you alone?

#### **Lesson -**

Ever take a moment to be amazed at how great God is? Think about it. That you're reading this lesson right now (or listening to someone else read it) is a tribute to the mind God gave you. That you are wearing nice clothes in a nice room with these nice friends shows how God takes care of you. That you can walk outside and see bugs and birds and trees and clouds and sky and weather and everything else are clues that should tell you how much God thinks of you.

Someone said once that God waits impatiently for each of us to be born so he can have a conversation with us. Imagine that - the Creator who spoke this whole lovely world and all the galaxies and every blade of grass into being is waiting to hear from you.

One thing, though - God won't wait for you forever. There is a limit to God's patience. God is calling you. And sooner or later you've got to say yes, or it will be too late.

Jesus told this story about the tenants in a vineyard to all the religious leaders of the day - the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders. These people saw Jesus as a serious threat to their whole way of life. Ultimately, Jesus know, they'd kill him. This story was his way of saying, "Listen up, people. God won't allow weeds to grow in his vineyard forever. He's going to do away with those who try to ruin everything."

So listen up! Learn what God expects of you when you're working in his vineyard. You'll be glad you did.

#### **Read Mark 12: 1-9**

1. As you read this, look for ways the tenants rejected the owner.
2. What was the condition of the vineyard as the owner left it when he went on a journey?
  - neglected
  - dirty
  - orderly
  - profitable
3. Who do the following people in the parable represent?
  - a. owner
  - b. tenants
  - c. servants
  - d. owner's son
4. What kinds of "fruit of the vineyard" does God want to collect from us? What happens if we don't have anything to show for ourselves?
5. How long will God be patient with the tenants in the vineyard? With us?
6. What did you learn from the parable? How will it affect the way you do your work at home and school and on the job?
7. What are some of the things you do that get in the way of having a great relationship with God? Ask your group to suggest ways to overcome these obstacles.
8. In what ways do we make Jesus and his servants welcome or unwelcome in our lives?
9. How would you explain what God wants from us to someone who doesn't know God?