

**Love Reigns Supreme**  
**Matthew 21:33-46**

**May 7, 2017**

33 "Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. 34 When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. 35 But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. 36 Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. 37 Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' 38 But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.' 39 So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. 40 Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" 41 They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time." 42 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 amazing in our eyes'? 43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. 44 The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls." 45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. 46 They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

Today I am going to talk about love that is like no other. The title of this sermon is "Love Reigns Supreme." Today's Scripture takes place during Passion Week whereupon Jesus is in Jerusalem and is about to be killed. He uses a parable as a way to talk about the current situation where he tells his own story and reveals the hypocrisy of the religious leaders. Matthew reveals the final controversy that Jesus has with the religious leaders. The authority of Jesus is questioned. His response to the challenge is to tell a parable of two sons and a parable of wicked tenants.

Today's Scripture is about the wicked tenants. These are not lazy tenants. These are not irresponsible tenants. These tenants are evil, they are wicked, and they are corrupt. Through the Scripture we see something magnificent, the best thing ever; we see God's love in action. God's love reigns means it is powerful, it is influential, and it is sovereign. Supreme means it is the best, the highest, the ultimate, and the utmost. God's love is absolutely terrific it is the greatest thing ever. Our response is – or it should be – one of appreciation. God offers to us a totally free gift because and an investment in the relationship with God's self and humanity.

The imagery portrayed by Jesus is that of a parent and child relationship. God is known as the father figure and Jesus is known as God's son. We are adopted into the family of God as the children of God.

The relationship has a real life connection. Children grow up taking everything for granted. Once they are born everything is provided for them through nurturing. Children have always known the mother has provided for them. Therefore, they take without considering all of the love and sacrifice that the mother endures for the child. It takes a level of maturity to fully appreciate what the parent does for the child. I have given my life story.

My first job was at Oakwood Country Club and I was the youngest person working in the kitchen. The staff there was really good to me and we were not just colleagues, with some we became lifelong friends. One day I was complaining about my relationship with my mother. I can't remember what I was disgruntled about probably just typical teenage dissatisfaction. In the

middle of my tirade a woman affectionately referred to as “Ma Miller” stopped me. I don’t remember her exact words but she told me that my mother has risked her life for me. I thought about that for a moment and ended up disagreeing with her. She corrected me by telling me that when my mother decided to have me as a child she risked her own life for mine as there are a certain percentage of women that die during child birth. I owe this woman a tremendous gratitude! Her words changed my life forever. I changed my attitude and began to appreciate my mother. I began to realize all of the things that she did for me. The amazing thing is that when I changed our relationship changed.

There is a problem within life that I will refer to as a challenge of living. We get busy in life and focus on our own problems and situations. As such we often take our relationships for granted and fail to invest in the relationships. Jesus gives us a clear picture of God’s love for us. God as a parent was engaged in a broken relationship with humanity. Out of love God offered to mend this broken relationship. The people were lost in their relationship with the divine. Since it is far too easy for people to fall into sin God offers redemption and the relationship with God is re-established.

Jesus tells a story of a landowner that has a vineyard. The landowner sends some servants to the vineyard to collect the harvest. However, the tenants beat one, kill another, and stone yet another. The landowner sent more servants to the vineyard and the tenants treated them the same. Finally the landowner sends his own son and they killed him. Then Jesus reminds them of the scriptures. God sent the prophets to deliver God’s word to the people but the prophets of God were rejected, mistreated, and even killed. So now God has sends the Son and you plan to kill him. Instead of changing they want to arrest him. Jesus has given them new enlightenment that should have had an effect that was comparable to my conversation with Ma Miller. His words should have changed their lives forever. Instead of receiving a revelation, an “aha now I Get it” moment they want to arrest him. Instead of acknowledging or even recognizing their hypocrisy and changing their attitudes, they want to arrest him. Instead of repentance and appreciate what God has done for us they want to arrest him. We owe God and Jesus a tremendous gratitude! Realizing what the divine has done for us changes us and because we have changed it changes our relationships.

What is absolutely amazing is what happens next. God still loves us. This is a prime example of love. It is absolutely magnificent! God’s love truly reigns supreme. What God does next is God continues to reach out to us to offer forgiveness. We have something that is fantastic! We have Jesus. We have the word. We have the love of God whose love reigns supreme in our lives today.