



Small group study materials, February 2020

Chapter & verse – Eve Parker (page 19)

Read Mark 12:1-12, followed by Eve Parker’s article.

1. Eve’s article begins by comparing today’s social inequalities to those of Dickensian/Victorian times. What other examples of social inequality have you noticed, or read about, in the UK and abroad?
2. What feelings did reading this parable evoke for you? Can you relate to why the chief priests, scribes and elders – to whom this parable is addressed – might want to arrest Jesus after hearing it?
3. ‘Jesus’ parable speaks instantly to class conflict in Jerusalem,’ says Eve in her third paragraph, before explaining how. Do you agree with her interpretation? Why?
4. The article’s fourth paragraph critiques simple representations of the ‘righteous’ landlord and violent tenants. Is either party in the right? Where is God within this parable?
5. Eve’s fifth paragraph reminds us that people in Jesus’ time felt that he showed deference to no one. By contrast, modern society is marked by a class deference that allows a culture of complacency to injustice, Eve argues. What is the Church complacent about? How can we address such complacency?
6. For Eve, the parable’s murdered people teach us that ‘partaking in a system fuelled by hate and greed’ takes us away from God’s kingdom. How can we work towards combatting the hate and greed we see today?
7. At the end of the parable, Jesus reminds listeners of the Old Testament text: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is amazing in our eyes.’ What does this text mean, and why do you think Jesus quotes it after this parable?
8. The article ends with Eve envisioning an alternative ending to the parable. What do you make of this ending? Is there a different way you would have liked the parable to end?



For further reflection: 'I gave you a land on which you had not laboured, and towns that you had not built, and you live in them; you eat the fruit of vineyards and oliveyards that you did not plant. Now therefore reverse the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness.' Joshua 24:13-14

Prayer: Father, in a world where injustice and violence proliferate, we confess that we have played our part in unfairness and division. Help us, we pray, to see the opportunities we have to help build justice and peace, and help us to take them. Amen.

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