



SESSION 01 / MARK 12:1–12

The Rejected Son & the Cornerstone

A Scripture-first conversation through Mark 12:1–12

THE AIM

See the authority of God's beloved Son, feel the warning and mercy of his claim, and respond with trusting obedience.

SESSION RHYTHM / 35 MINUTES

Move from the text to the life

- 04 **Welcome, pray & read.** Open briefly, then read Mark 12:1–12 aloud with the passage in view.
- 07 **HEAD / See it.** Trace the story's movement, escalation, and outcome.
- 12 **HEART / Reveal it.** Notice how our hearts respond to the Son's authority, warning, and mercy.
- 09 **HANDS / Live it.** Name one concrete response of repentance, trust, or stewardship.
- 03 **Pray & follow up.** Pray specifically and name what the group will revisit next time.

Before you lead

Read Mark 11:27–33 for the immediate conflict. Note the echoes of Isaiah 5:1–7 and Psalm 118:22–23. The live path is intentionally short: use the printed questions in order, but let a fruitful Heart conversation breathe.

Four movements to keep in view

- 01 **A prepared vineyard.** The owner provides everything and entrusts it to tenants. (v. 1)
- 02 **A violent refusal.** The tenants reject, shame, wound, and kill the owner's servants. (vv. 2–5)
- 03 **The beloved son.** The owner sends his one beloved son; the tenants kill him for the inheritance. (vv. 6–8)
- 04 **Judgment and reversal.** The owner judges the tenants. The rejected stone becomes the cornerstone. (vv. 9–12)

HEAD / SEE IT

7 MINUTES

Listen for the story's escalation

HEAD-LEVEL PURPOSE *Observe what Jesus actually says before explaining what it means.*

Invite one person to read verses 1–5, another verses 6–8, and another verses 9–12. Then ask the group to retell the story in its own words before interpreting it.

OBSERVE / Essential questions

01 What does the owner do for the vineyard before he entrusts it to the tenants?

LEADER CUE

Let the group name the fence, pit, tower, lease, and journey from verse 1.

02 How does the tenants' treatment of the servants grow more violent? What happens when the owner sends his "beloved son"?

LEADER CUE

Trace the repeated sending, the increasingly violent verbs, and what makes the son unique.

03 How does Jesus say the story will end? How do the rejected stone and the leaders' response help us understand the story?

LEADER CUE

Hold together judgment, the cornerstone reversal, and verse 12: recognition does not equal repentance.

IF THE GROUP MOVES TOO QUICKLY Ask, "Where do you see that in the passage?" or "What word or action makes you say that?" Silence is not an emergency.

BIBLICAL BACKDROP Isaiah 5 / The vineyard. Jesus draws on God's vineyard song: God lovingly prepares a vineyard and rightly expects fruit. Mark 11 / The authority conflict. Jesus tells this parable after the temple leaders challenge his authority. Psalm 118 / The rejected stone. Human rejection does not overturn God's verdict: the rejected one becomes the cornerstone.

Let the truth expose our response

HEART-LEVEL PURPOSE Name how our desires, fears, and defenses respond to what we have seen about God and his Son.

Heart questions do not ask only what the passage means. They ask what happens within us when its truth comes close. Listen for gratitude or resistance, trust or self-protection, repentance or defensiveness.

REVEAL / How is your heart responding?

01 When you hear that God is the generous owner who rightly expects fruit, how do you feel: grateful, pressured, resistant, or something else? What might that response reveal about how you see him?	LEADER CUE <i>Do not correct the first response. Help people name it honestly, then connect it to the truth they just observed.</i>
02 Where do you see the tenants’ desire to enjoy God’s gifts without accepting his rule in your own heart? What are you most tempted to protect or control?	LEADER CUE <i>Listen beneath behavior for entitlement, fear, independence, or the desire to remain in charge.</i>
03 When you consider Jesus’ authority over your life, are you drawn to trust him, defend yourself, delay, or pull away? Does the rejected Son becoming the cornerstone bring you comfort or stir up resistance? Why?	LEADER CUE <i>Make room for mixed responses. The aim is honest self-recognition before moving to action.</i>

THEOLOGICAL GUARDRAIL The parable pronounces judgment on unfaithful tenants—especially the leaders opposing Jesus—and announces a new stewardship under the Son. Do not turn it into a claim that God has simply discarded ethnic Israel.

TRANSITION TO HANDS Summarize: “God has entrusted us with gifts that remain his, and he has spoken decisively in his Son. Where is this asking for a response from us?”

Turn insight into faithful action

HANDS-LEVEL PURPOSE *Name one response to Jesus that can be practiced, supported, and revisited this week.*

APPLY / Choose one faithful response

01 Thinking about what you have noticed in your heart, what is one practical action you could take this week to trust Jesus’ authority?

LEADER CUE
Keep the response specific and realistic: a decision, conversation, confession, habit, or act of stewardship.

02 Who can support you, and when should we ask about this again?

LEADER CUE
Pair accountability with grace; record only what the person wants revisited.

Pray the passage

01 Confess

Name where we have treated God’s gifts as ours or resisted Jesus’ authority.

02 Thank

Thank the Father for his patience and for sending his beloved Son.

03 Ask

Ask for grace to repent, trust Christ, and bear fruit in the specific areas named.

04 Entrust

Place what God has entrusted to us back under the owner’s care.

FOLLOW IT Before the group leaves, name when you will revisit the commitments or prayer needs that were shared.
Celebrate grace and faithfulness, not mere task completion.