

Matthew: Taken Away From You

Discussion Guide for August 8 and 9, 2026

Summary

Jesus answers the religious leaders' challenge to His authority with two parables: the Two Sons and the Tenant Farmers (Matthew 21:28-46). One son obeys despite first refusing; the tenants reject and kill the owner's servants and son. The Kingdom is taken from unbelieving Israel's leaders and given to a people who bear its fruit, though Scripture affirms God's promises to Israel remain. The question for us: are we bearing the fruit God requires, or merely claiming to?

Ice Breaker

Think of a time someone said they would do something and didn't, or someone refused at first and then surprised you by following through anyway. What did that teach you about the difference between saying and doing?

Key Verses

1. Matthew 21:28-32
2. Matthew 21:33-46
3. Psalm 118:22-23
4. Romans 11:1, 25-26

Discussion Questions

1. In the Parable of the Two Sons, the son who said “no” and later obeyed represents sinners who repent, while the son who said “yes” and never acted represents the religious leaders who rejected Christ. Which son do you more naturally resemble in your walk with God right now?
2. Jesus told the religious leaders that tax collectors and prostitutes were entering the Kingdom ahead of them, because those sinners believed John's message and repented while the leaders did not (v32). Why is admitting you were wrong often harder for religious, respectable people than for those who know they've failed?
3. In the Parable of the Tenant Farmers, the landowner sends servant after servant, and finally his own son, to appeal to the tenants before judgment falls. What does the patience of the landowner reveal about God's character toward people who are resisting Him?

4. Jesus said the Kingdom would be taken from unbelieving Israel's leaders and given to "a people" who would produce its fruit (v43), and John 15 describes that fruit as coming from abiding in Christ. What does it look like practically, this week, for you to abide in Him and produce fruit rather than just claiming to follow Him?

5. Romans 11 makes clear that God has not rejected Israel and that His gifts and calling are irrevocable, even though Matthew 21 describes real, temporary judgment on an unbelieving generation. How does holding both truths together shape the way you think about God's faithfulness to His promises in your own life?

Life Application

This week, take an honest inventory of your own "yes" and "no" to God. Where have you told Him yes with your words but not followed through with your life, and where have you resisted Him at first but ultimately obeyed? Write both lists out. Then spend time in prayer confessing the gap between what you say and what you do, and ask God to help you become someone who actually produces fruit, not just someone who claims the right beliefs. Pick one concrete area of obedience you've been putting off and take a specific step on it before the week is over.

Key Takeaways

1. Obedience, not merely claiming the right beliefs, is what marks a true follower of Christ; a life that repents and changes course matters more than words spoken in the moment.
2. Disobedience and refusal to repent are signs of rejecting Christ, no matter how much religious heritage or status a person claims.
3. God is patient, sending appeal after appeal before judgment falls, but His patience is not indefinite; the tenant farmers' story is a warning as much as it is a picture of grace.
4. The Kingdom was taken from unbelieving Israel's leadership and given to a people, believing Jews and Gentiles alike, who bear fruit; bearing fruit is a defining characteristic of belonging to God's Kingdom.
5. God has not rejected His people Israel; His covenant promises stand, and Scripture points to a future day when a believing Israel will fully receive and display the fruit of the Kingdom.