

Render an Account Ninth Week in Ordinary Time Monday, June 4, 2018 8:15 AM
2 Pt 1:2-7; **Mk 12:1-12** (The world is for a purpose. It's to develop fruit for the benefit of the owner, and eventually we have to render an account to the owner for the fruit that we have or haven't developed and brought forward.)

So today Jesus is speaking to the chief priests and the scribes and the elders in parables.

Now the problem with parables, or one of the problems with parables, is that they are exaggerations. In this one **the owner of the vineyard is portrayed as a very foolish man**—he is very foolish. He sends servants. Finally they kill one, and then many others, and then he thinks that they will respect his son. Well that is completely irrational. Why would they? They have shown themselves to be malicious and violent, so why would malicious, violent people respect anybody? So this is the problem with parables. **Parables are frameworks that so exaggerate realities so that we might start to really wonder.** That's the point. We are supposed to start wondering: **Now what is going on here?**

Well the framework of the parable is first of all expressing **a fundamental truth** about the creation, and that is that **the creation is not for nothing; the creation is for something.** Nature does not explain itself, and therefore scientists are agnostic about the purpose of reality. And rightly they should be if all they can know is nature; nature won't tell you. **Nature won't tell you what it's for. Its very existence is supernatural.** Our consciousness is also supernatural; it can't be explained by anything in nature. The mind, the human mind, is beyond any natural explanation. In fact the attempt to explain the mind through the brain or neurology or neuroscience and so on, all these explanations and attempts to explain are actually laughable. They are so utterly inadequate. And it is astonishing that even those who do this kind of work don't realize how inadequate their work is. They keep thinking that by tiny little increments they

will build up something that is eventually an explanation, but they won't. They can't; **they are dealing with a mystery that exceeds their very capacity to appreciate and enjoy.**

So in many ways modern people are just like these tenants. A tenant, mind you, is not an owner. **We are all tenants on this planet, in this world. We are not owners;** we don't own the world. The world is not for whatever we want to do. **The world is for a purpose. It's to develop fruit for the benefit of the owner, and eventually we have to render an account to the owner for the fruit that we have or haven't developed and brought forward.**

Now this very idea of being accountable is of course the fundamental reason for atheism in our world. **Atheists don't want to be accountable,** so they have made a choice. And in making a choice they have married themselves to a **philosophy of materialism that they think will be plausible and will blend with science, but it doesn't.** In fact science itself is constantly leading us beyond materialism, constantly **pointing the way toward transcendence, but it takes free will to accept it, as it took free will for these tenants to accept the fact that they owed something. They had to render an account to someone for their lives.** You might say this is the basic moral issue. **This parable is about people who won't face the basic moral issue, who want to think life is all about them and what they want,** and that what they own is really theirs, and what they can control is really up to them. This is the most dangerous of all ideas, and it's prevalent.

And then the other part Jesus adds, and that's **the absurd part, that in spite of all this, God nonetheless still loves his creation and actually sent his very own Son, even though he had no reason to believe that he would be accepted.**