

## **Introduction**

- There are so many warnings in our daily lives; when buying drugs from pharmacies, detergents from supermarkets, even on the user manual of electronic devices could contain several warnings.
  - I remember a few years ago we decided to switch back to antenna instead of cable because we didn't have time to watch TV. I went to the shop to buy an antenna, and I found some of the warnings pretty interesting:
    - ✓ Warning: Do not eat antenna. Do not apply this product to your spouse. Do not attempt to install it if you are pregnant, drunk, or both.
  - I shared this warning to a friend of mine, and he told me another good one. He bought a baby lotion for his baby-boy, and the warning label wrote: "Caution, keep this product away from children."
1. A warning label is designed to protect us from getting hurt. If we want to make a warning label attached to this passage, it would read: WARNING: IF YOU REJECT THE SON OF GOD, YOU WILL FACE THE WRATH OF GOD.
  2. After reading the Holy Gospel, I said, "And this is the Gospel of the Lord," and you responded, "Thanks be to God." Do you really mean it? "The parable of the Tenants" is indeed a warning, can you find Gospel, good news, in a warning passage like this?
  3. I am not going to just focus on the judgment; there is Gospel, good news, in this passage, too.

## **I. Exegesis**

1. We all know the content of this parable. A wealthy man leased a vineyard to a group of tenants. When the owner wanted to collect some products from their harvest, they refused to pay the rentals. They humiliated the messengers of the owner, and eventually killed the owner's son, the son who was going to inherit this property. The owner would destroy the tenants with anger and lease the vineyard to other tenants.
2. And then Jesus talked about the cornerstone. Actually, another translation will be keystone or capstone. There is a difference between cornerstone and capstone. Cornerstone is part of the foundation of the building; usually it's the connection between the corners of two walls. In the ancient time when you want to build up something, you need to lay down cornerstone first, use it as a standard for angles and measurements.
3. However, a capstone is the final stone of the arch-shape building, such as a bridge or a gate, or a roof that connects to both sides. Since it's on the top of the arch, usually it's big, strong, beautiful, and heavy. That's why Jesus said that He was like the capstone to test people. If the walls or buildings on both sides are not strong enough, the capstone will press them, crush them, and break them into pieces. Of course, Jesus was talking about the judgments.
4. Now, here is the problem. Which translation is right? Capstone or cornerstone? The answer is, both. The reason is because in Hebrew language, there is no capstone. So, they

use the same word to indicate both capstone and cornerstone. So how do we know which one? Well, we need to read the entire passage. In most cases the Bible refers to capstone; but there are some occasions talking about the foundation, and it refers to cornerstone.

5. In this case, I think we should mainly focus on capstone or keystone. Jesus is the capstone. He is indeed the most important, strong, precious, beautiful capstone of the building. With His presence, this capstone holds both sides of the building, which refers to our lives, is completed.

## **II. Application**

1. Since we know that Jesus is the capstone, how do we apply to our daily lives? I think the most important lesson is to manifest our Christian faith, Christian values, and Christian's moral standards to the world. Don't just keep your faith as a "foundation" that hides underground. Don't keep it in your pocket, let it shine, shine to the world.
  - Many people know that back to 1950's in China, there was a "cultural revolution movement. The communists were very aggressive to destroy all kinds of religions and theories (even education) contradictory to the teachings of Mao's. A faithful Christian grandmother sensed that she would be persecuted and put to jail, so she gave an old family Bible (with book-cover shown family-tree/genealogy) to her teenage grandson.
  - "This book contains Eternal Life; keep it and read it when you are in times of trouble, it will help you live an abundant life." Because this book was the only identity of the family, so this young man tried his best to keep it.
  - He went through many years of difficulties, hardships, poverty; traveled from towns to towns, eventually he survived and gradually established a business and family hundreds of miles away from his hometown.
  - One day when he was cleaning up stuffs for remodeling, he saw this old heavy family Bible, and all the memories came back to him. he dusted-off the book, and opened it the first time. It's the Word of God...and more! There were several pages stuck together, and after he carefully used knife to separate those pages, he found golden leaves...made by pure gold. His grandmother knew the day would come, so she sold everything to exchange for gold, converted the gold into golden leaves and hid them in the Bible.
  - This man finally got it. "This book contains Eternal Life; keep it and read it, especially when you are in times of trouble, it will help you live an abundant life." His grandmother literally meant Eternal Life and Abundant Life, spiritually and physically.
2. Brothers and sisters. Jesus is more precious than those golden leaves, and the Word of God really changes lives. Live out your Christian faith, let Jesus the beautiful Corner Stone be shown to the world in your daily lives. Let your life shine, shine for Jesus, shine to your neighbors and communities.