

Island Group Discussion Guide

Abide • Connect • Share

Week of October 12, 2025

BOOK OF MARK • WEEK 37

THE CORNERSTONE QUESTION • MARK 12:1-12



OPENING PRAYER TIME

Begin your meeting with 10-15 minutes of prayer using these prompts:

- Thank God for His presence with us today and His desire to work in our hearts
- Ask the Holy Spirit to guide our discussion and open our minds to His truth
- Pray for hearts that are willing to surrender fully to Jesus as the foundation of our lives
- Invite Jesus to reveal areas where we may have built our lives on something other than Him
- Ask for wisdom to recognize what fruit our lives are producing
- Pray for courage to make Jesus the cornerstone of every area of our lives

DISCUSSION

- **Ice breaker:** Have you ever started a project or built something only to realize later that your foundation or starting point was off? What happened?
- **Read Isaiah 5:1-7.** The sermon began by reading this passage where "my beloved" is God and the "vineyard" is Israel. God gave Israel every opportunity to bear good fruit, but they produced wild grapes instead. Why do you think Jesus began His parable by connecting it to this well-known prophecy?
- We're in Passion Week - Tuesday morning - and Jesus had just been challenged about His authority by the religious leaders. **Read Mark 12:1-5.** In Jesus' parable, who do each of the characters represent? (The Owner = God, the Vineyard = Israel, the Tenants = religious leaders, the Servants = prophets)
- Pastor Charlie suggested the servant who was "struck on the head" in verse 4 might be John the Baptist, who was beheaded while the religious leaders did nothing. How does Israel's history of rejecting God's prophets help us understand this parable?
- **Read Mark 12:6-8.** The tenants killed the beloved son and threw his body out of the vineyard like trash. Jesus was prophesying His own death on Tuesday - by Friday, these same religious leaders would fulfill this parable. What does their treatment of the son reveal about the human heart's resistance to God?
- **Read Hebrews 1:1-2 and John 1:11.** How do these verses confirm what Jesus was teaching in His parable about God sending prophets and then His Son?



- **Read Mark 12:9-11.** Jesus quotes Psalm 118 about the stone the builders rejected becoming the cornerstone. The cornerstone is placed first and everything else is built from it - if it's wrong, the whole building is crooked. What does this teach us about building our lives?
- It was shared that in Hebrew, "stone" (eben) sounds almost identical to "son" (ben), and Jesus was likely playing on this: "the Son they rejected would become the Stone they could not remove." **Read Ephesians 2:19-22.** How is Jesus the cornerstone of our faith today?
- Pastor Charlie asked a crucial question: "*Who or what is the cornerstone of your life?*" He said we can't just give the right answer - we have to look at the proof in our lives. **Application question:** What does your schedule, your priorities, and your reactions to stress reveal about what's really your cornerstone?
- Many people put their spouse, kids, job, comfort, or politics as the cornerstone of their life. **Application question:** How can we keep Jesus as our cornerstone while still engaging responsibly in the other areas of life?
- **Read Mark 12:12.** The religious leaders understood Jesus told this parable against them, but they didn't surrender. Pastor Charlie said, "Understanding truth without surrendering to it is still rejection." Where in your life might you understand what God is asking but haven't surrendered to it?
- We as believers are now "grafted in by faith" into God's vineyard, and God still expects fruit - the fruit of the Spirit. It was stated in the sermon that, "The fruit of your life reveals the foundation of your heart." What kind of fruit is your life producing right now?
- Pastor Charlie gave practical examples of what it looks like when Jesus is our cornerstone. Which of these resonates most with you or challenges you most?
 - **My identity is built on Christ, not circumstances** (staying secure in Jesus even when circumstances change)
 - **My decisions align with the Word, not the world** (choosing God's way over culture's way)
 - **My relationships reflect Christ's heart** (fighting for each other, not with each other)
 - **My words build, not break** (encouragement over sarcasm or criticism)
 - **My inner life bears the fruit of the Spirit** (calm under pressure, thankful in hardship)
 - **My mission becomes God's mission** (serving others with dignity in everyday roles)
- The sermon concluded: "*Making Jesus the cornerstone means everything else in life takes its shape, direction, and strength from Him.*" **Application question:** What is one specific area of your life where you need to realign so that Jesus is truly the cornerstone? What's your first step this week?

CLOSING PRAYER TIME

Share prayer requests and concerns with the group. Be sure to write these down and send them to all group members so everyone can pray throughout the week, including those who were absent today.