



Stories for ears to hear...

Looking after the vineyard, *Matthew 21, 33-44*

The Parable of the Tenants – Matthew 21

33 'Listen to another parable: there was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall round it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. 34 When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.

35 'The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. 36 Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them in the same way. 37 Last of all, he sent his son to them. "They will respect my son," he said.

38 'But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, "This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance." 39 So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

40 'Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?'

41 'He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,' they replied, 'and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.'

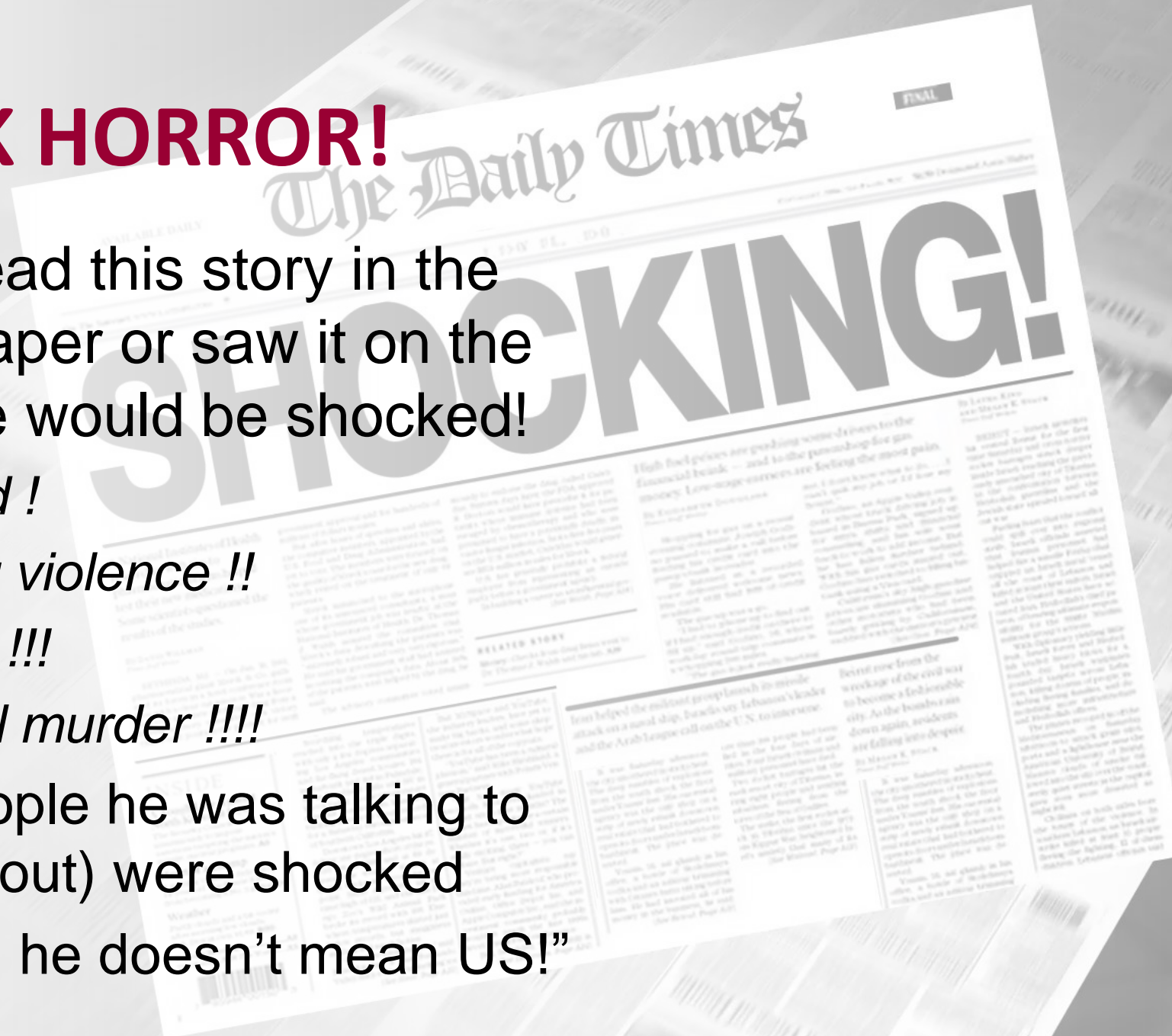
42 Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures:

The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
the Lord has done this,
and it is marvellous in our eyes?

43 'Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.

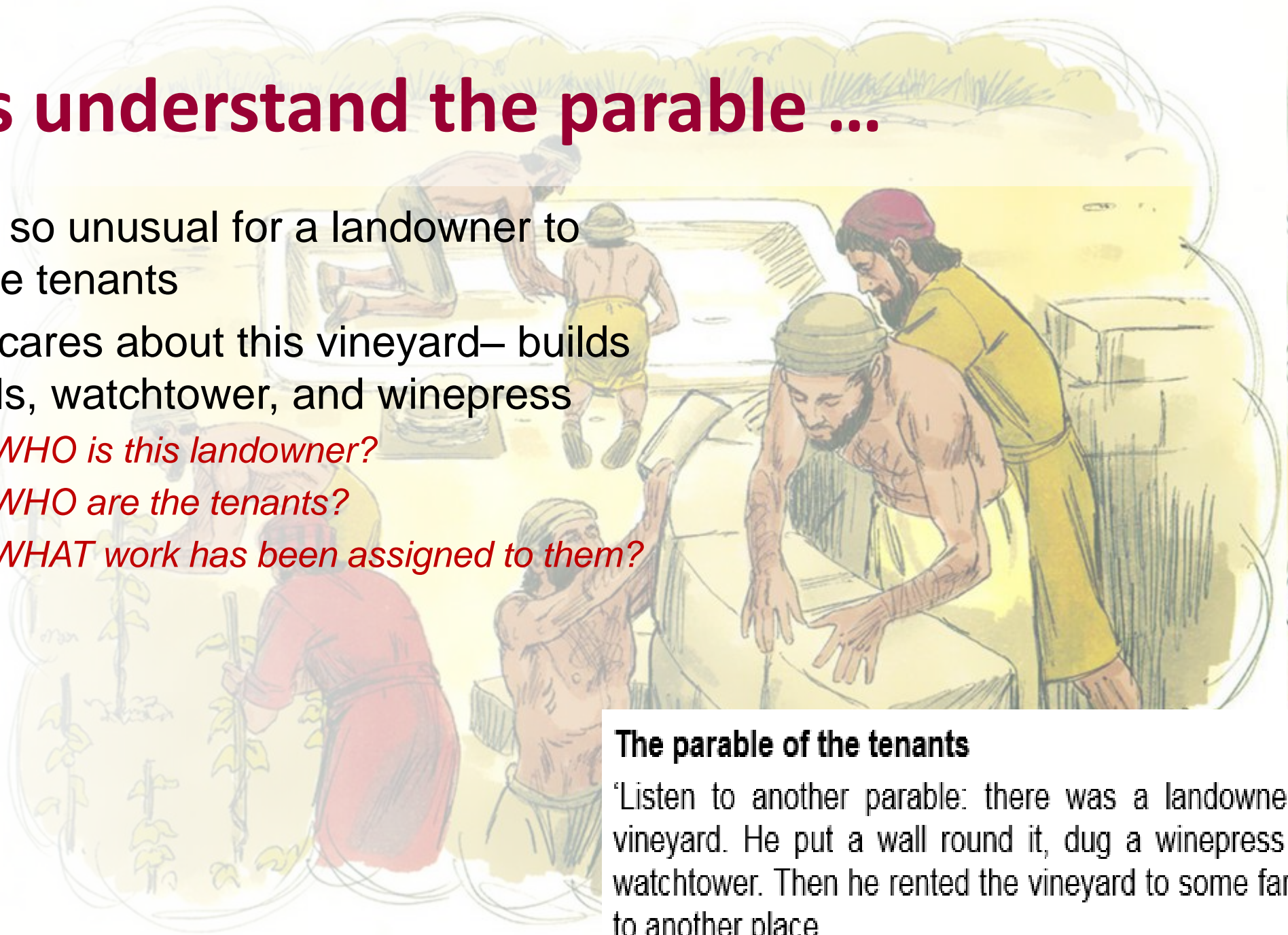
SHOCK HORROR!

- If we read this story in the newspaper or saw it on the telly we would be shocked!
 - *Fraud !*
 - *Gang violence !!*
 - *Theft !!!*
 - *Serial murder !!!!*
- The people he was talking to (and about) were shocked
- “Surely ... he doesn't mean US!”



Let's understand the parable ...

- Not so unusual for a landowner to have tenants
- He cares about this vineyard— builds walls, watchtower, and winepress
 - *WHO is this landowner?*
 - *WHO are the tenants?*
 - *WHAT work has been assigned to them?*

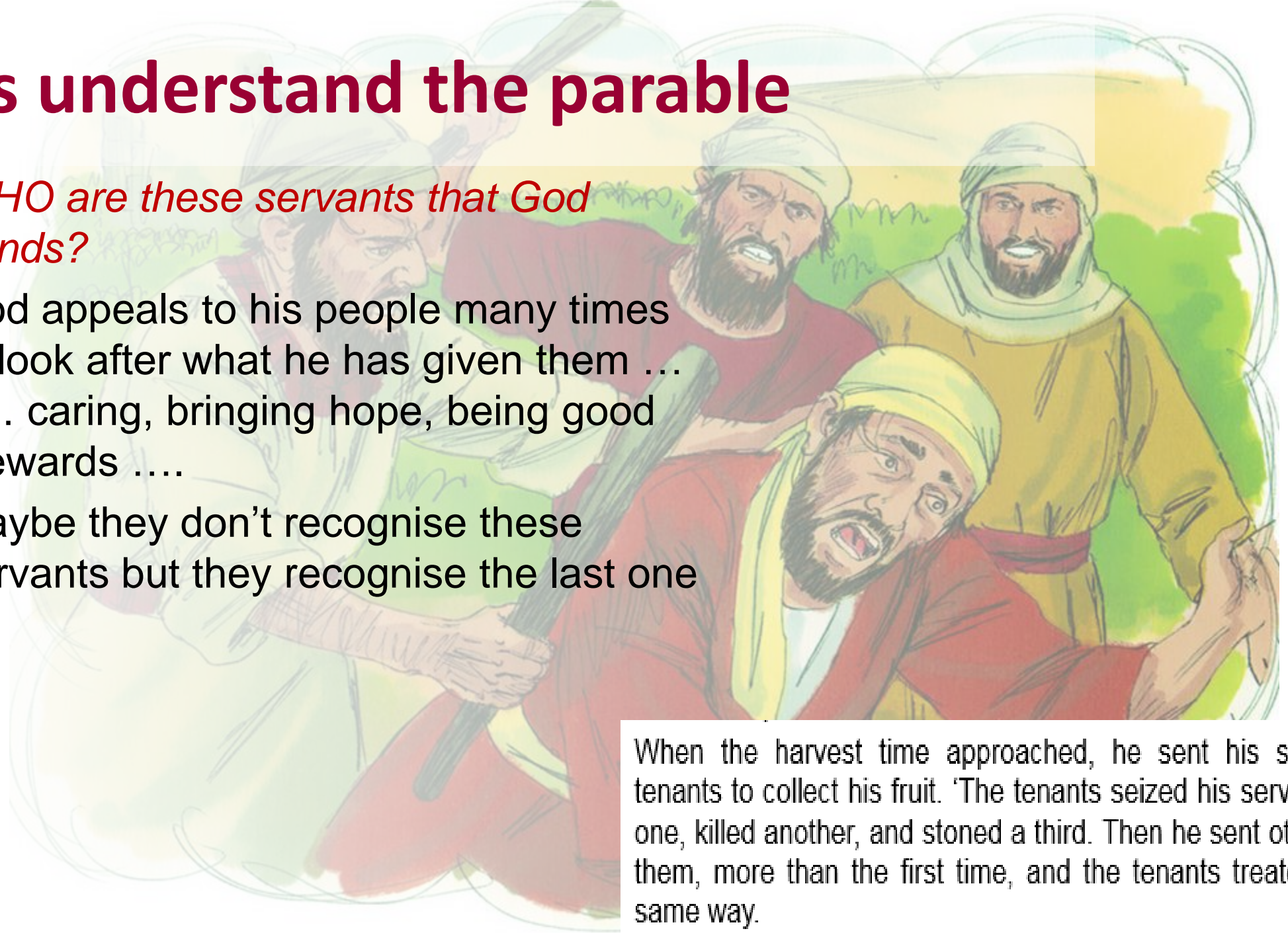


The parable of the tenants

‘Listen to another parable: there was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall round it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place.

Let's understand the parable

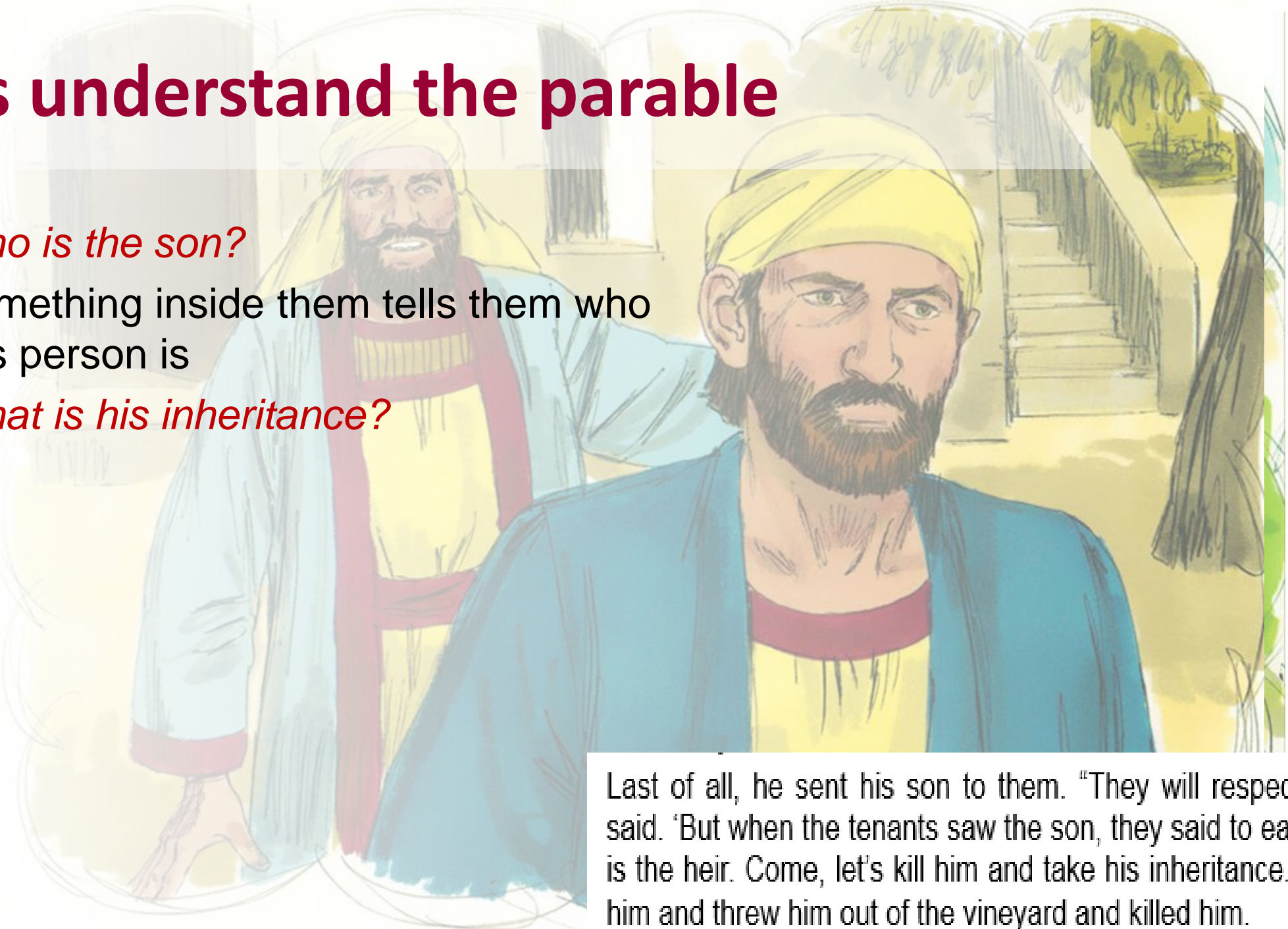
- *WHO are these servants that God sends?*
- God appeals to his people many times to look after what he has given them ...
... caring, bringing hope, being good stewards
- Maybe they don't recognise these servants but they recognise the last one



When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit. 'The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them in the same way.

Let's understand the parable

- *Who is the son?*
- Something inside them tells them who this person is
- *What is his inheritance?*

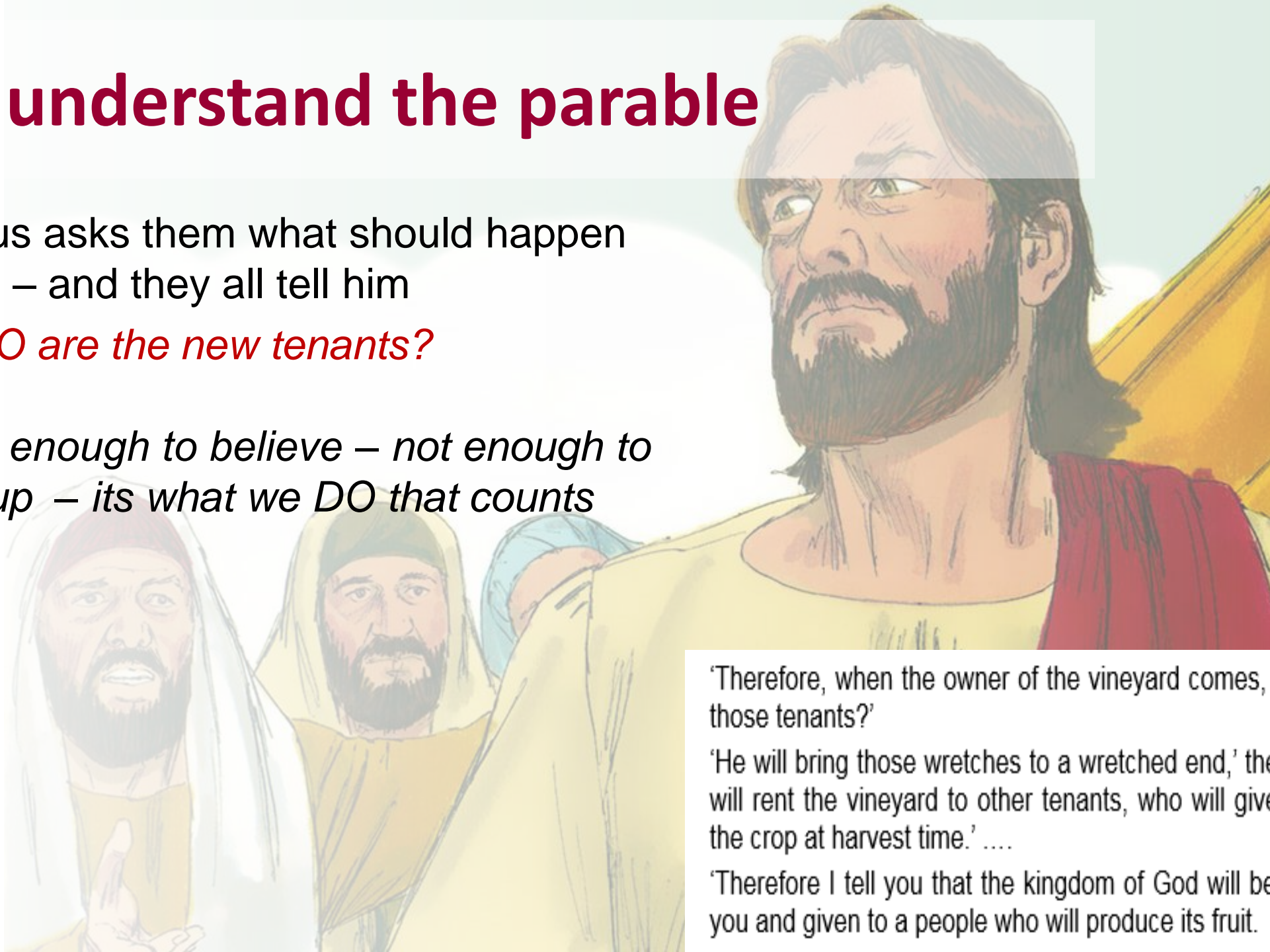


Last of all, he sent his son to them. "They will respect my son," he said. "But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.'" So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

Let's understand the parable

- Jesus asks them what should happen next – and they all tell him
- *WHO are the new tenants?*

It's not enough to believe – not enough to show up – its what we DO that counts



'Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?'

'He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,' they replied, 'and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.'

'Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.'

Summary of this Parable

- God gives management of this world to “tenants”
- But the world (vineyard) is being mis-managed
- He sends messengers (prophets) to collect the fruits and warn that all is not well
- Tenants reject messengers and the son in order to seize control
- Eventually God comes – but not as a prophet, as judge
- God gives everything to new tenants



What did it mean for them?

- This parable is about Israel's failure in its duties
- The kingdom (vineyard) is to be taken away from them and given to a new people
- Jesus himself is the Son



What does it mean for us?

- God's vineyard – we're left in charge
- Work is needed
 - "He put a wall round it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower"
 - ... clearing stones, planting vines, watering, pruning protecting ...
- The problem with the tenants?
 - There was "a spirit of entitlement"
- Looking after God's vineyard means:
 - His people ... and His world ...



Its His world but we're the caretakers

- Not the first application of this Parable
- But it is timely and relevant ...

What do you think of the Environment and Climate Change?

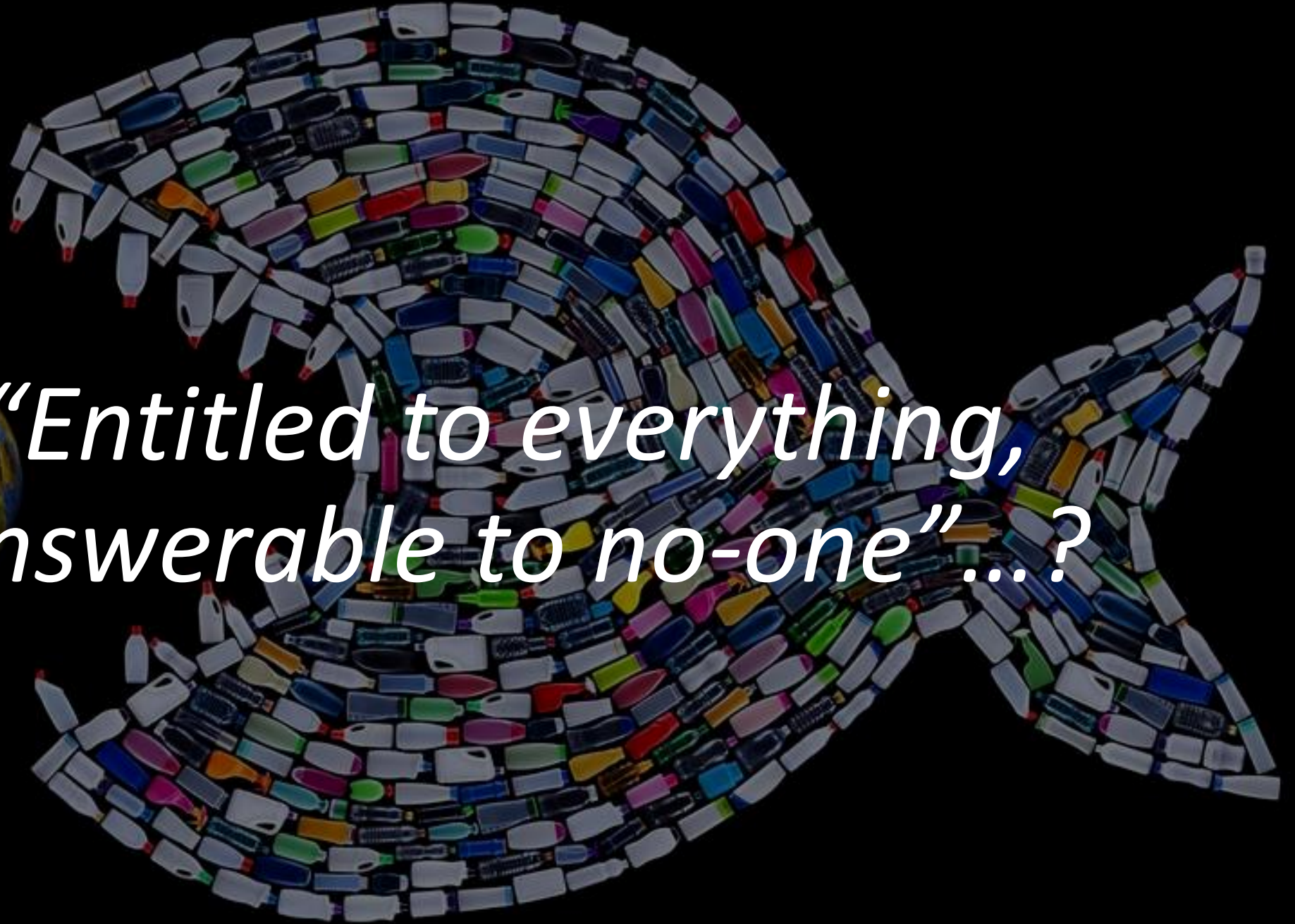
Over the next 12 months we will return to:

- Environmental issues
- Ethical trading



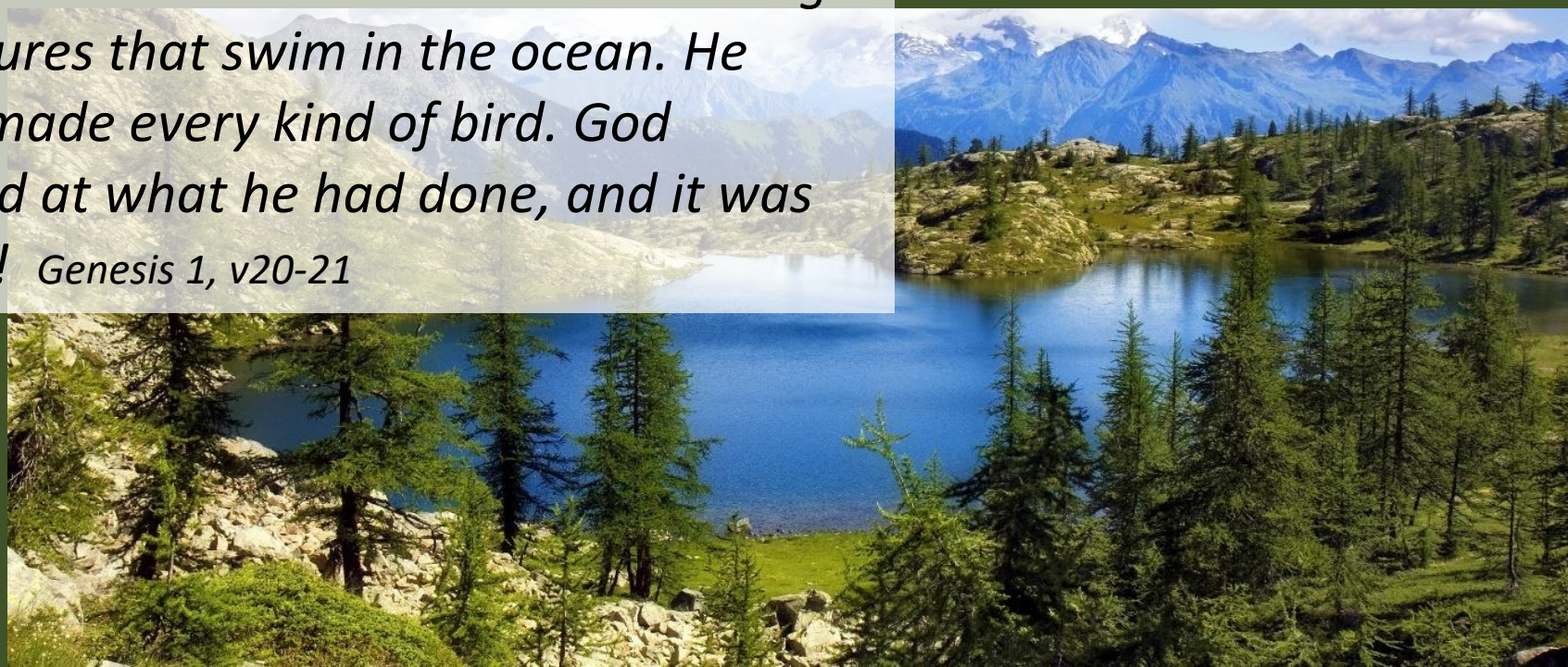


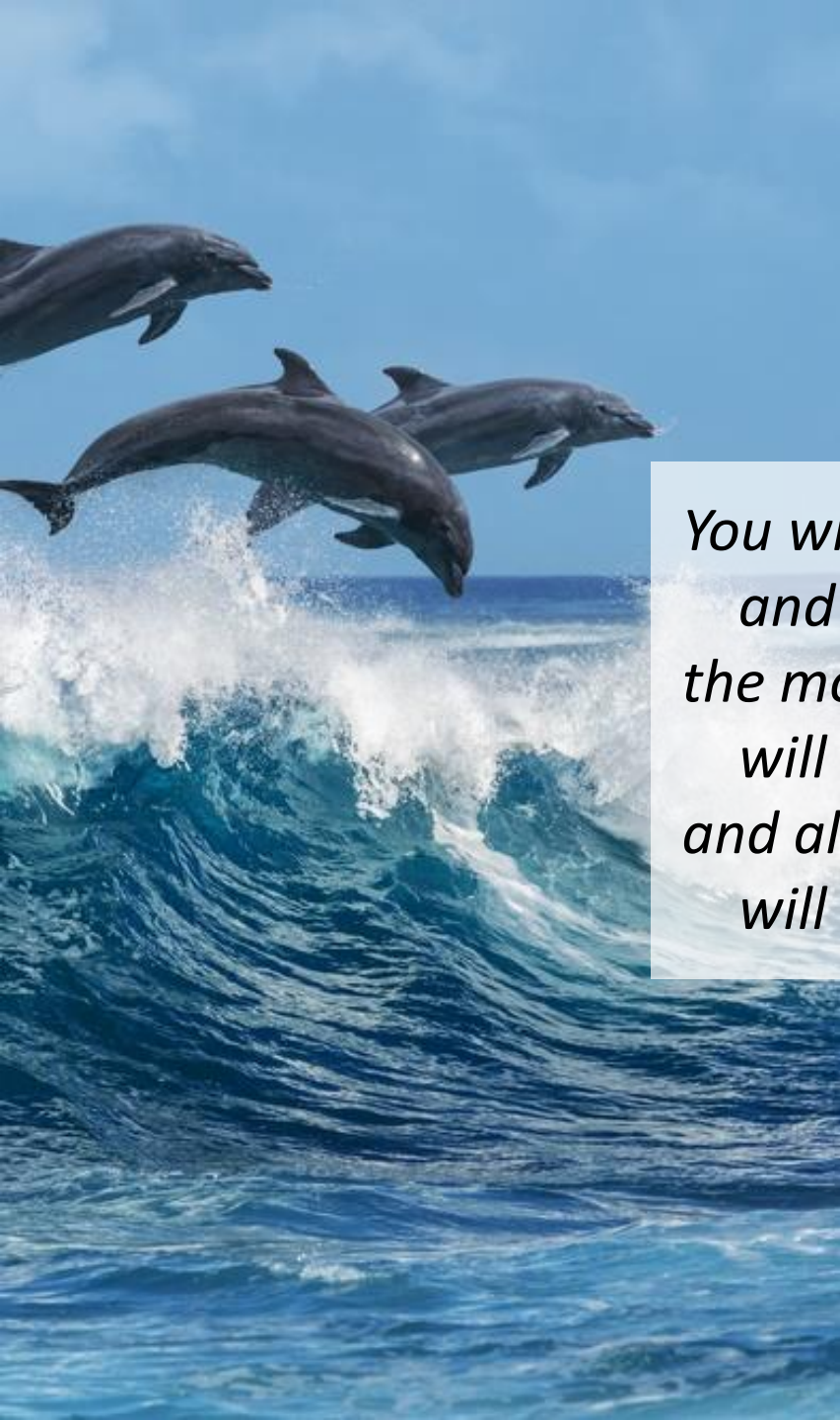
*“Entitled to everything,
answerable to no-one”...?*



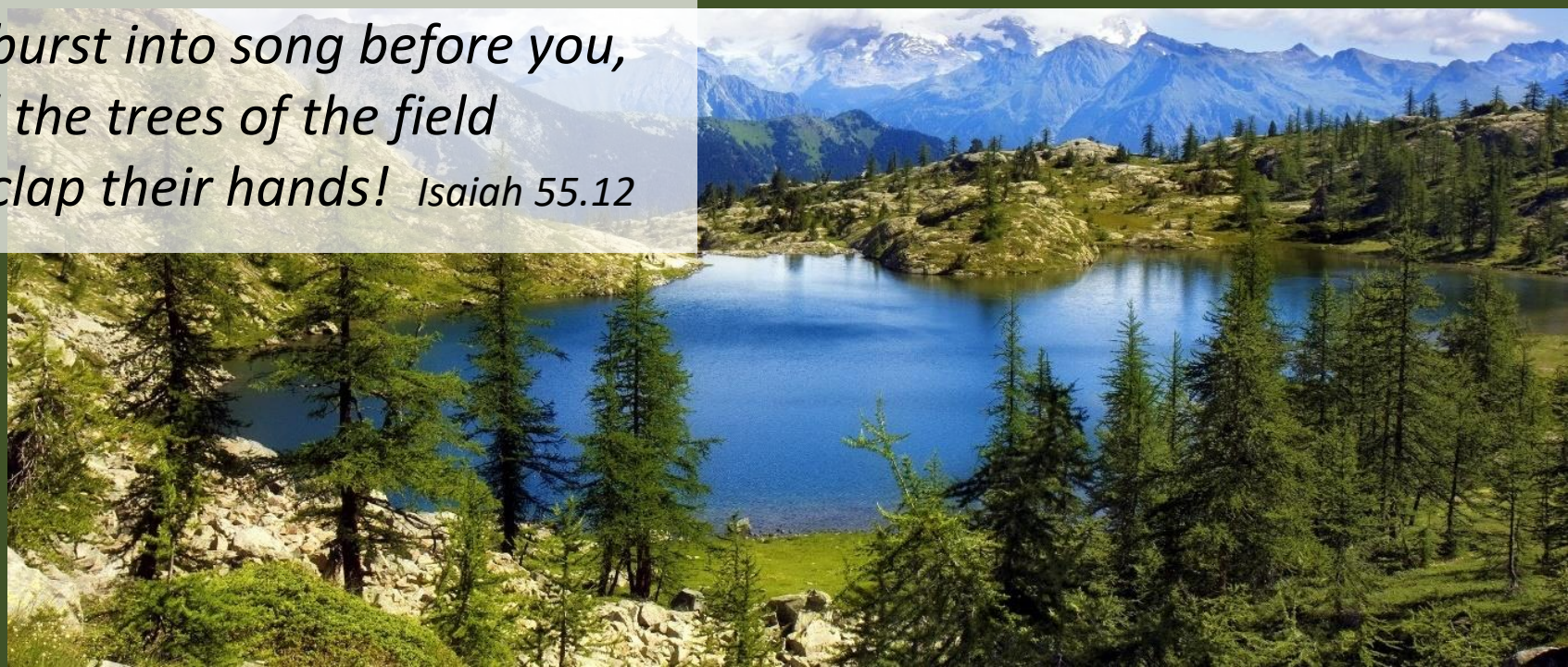


God said, "I command the ocean to be full of living creatures, and I command birds to fly above the earth." God made the giant sea creatures and all the living creatures that swim in the ocean. He also made every kind of bird. God looked at what he had done, and it was good! Genesis 1, v20-21





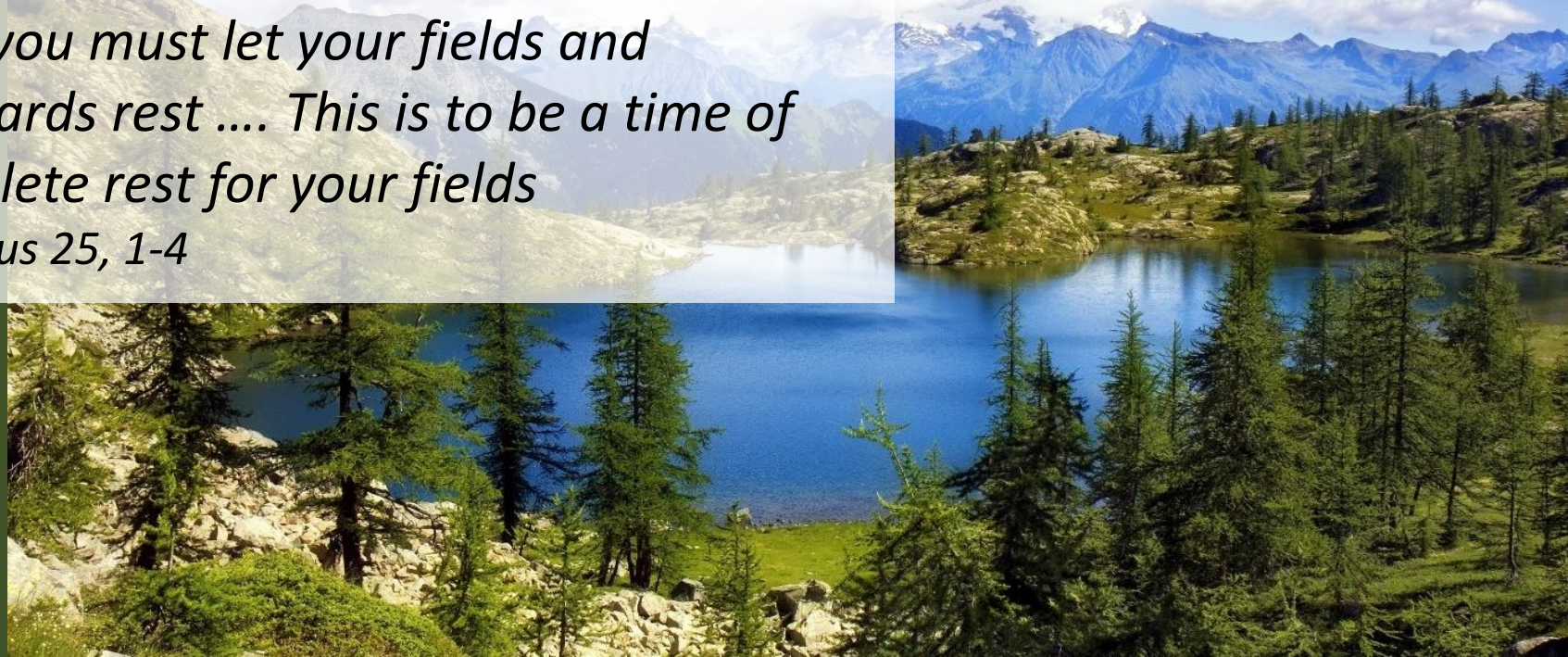
*You will go out in joy
and be led forth in peace;
the mountains and hills
will burst into song before you,
and all the trees of the field
will clap their hands! Isaiah 55.12*





After you enter the land that I am giving you, it must be allowed to rest one year out of every seven. You may raise grain and grapes for six years, but the seventh year you must let your fields and vineyards rest This is to be a time of complete rest for your fields

Leviticus 25, 1-4





The rainbow that I have put in the sky will be my sign to you and to every living creature on earth. ...When I send clouds over the earth, and a rainbow appears in the sky, I will remember my promise to you and to all other living creatures. Never again will I let floodwaters destroy all life Genesis 9, 12-13

