The Rascals Out There

Getting Started
Ask: “Do you know any good ‘rascal stories’? The story could be about someone you know or even you.”

Focus Attention
The old TV show “Little Rascals” was about some kids whose rascally behavior was usually harmless and constantly entertaining. Jesus told a parable about some not-so-harmless “rascals.” Let’s read it. (Read Mark 12:1-12.)

Thinking It Through — Part One
Consider these questions.
- Who is represented by each of these:
  - the servants sent to the tenants?
  - the rascally tenants?
  - the vineyard owner?

- With whom did this parable hit home? (Tip: Look back to 11:27 to identify the “they” in 12:12.)

- Why did it hit home with them?

Parables generally aim at making one main point. Try to state the main point of this parable. (Suggestion: Over and over God tries to receive from people what really belongs to Him, such as their lives. But some are “rascals” and continue to resist.)

Transition: This parable speaks to some people’s resistant behavior toward God, but it also has a message about “sending.”

Thinking It Through — Part Two
Probe further with these questions.
- Remembering that the vineyard owner represents God, what does it mean to us that a second servant was sent? And how about the “many others” that were sent?


Bringing It into Our Lives
While this parable points out the danger of resisting God, the vineyard owner’s patient persistence in sending his servants to the tenants points out that the resistant can and do change.

- What sort of concern should we have about sending people to the “rascals” out there?
• Talk about ways all of us participate as “those being sent.”

• Using the rascally characters in the parable as an example, what kind of experiences should we be prepared for?

• What lessons can we learn from the vineyard owner’s hope and persistence?

Challenge
• Can you think of anyone in your life who might fall into the “rascal” category, but who might be ready to respond to God’s repeated attempts to reach out to them?

• How would you approach this “rascal” with the gospel message or make a deliberate step in that direction?

Take It Further on Your Own
Write a similar modern-day parable to illustrate that God saves “rascals.” Consider the parable we have studied and the Luke 15 lost son parable as the basis for your own parable.

And keep praying for the “rascals” out there!