

Understanding the Allegory of the Olive Tree

“Hey Mom?” Auggie knocked on the office door. “A friend told me his family just skips reading Jacob chapter 5. Why?”

“Sometimes the scriptures can be a little hard to understand,” Mom turned around in her chair. “Jacob chapter 5 is one of those scriptures.”

“Well, maybe you could help me understand?” Auggie wondered.

“Sure!” Mom turned back to her computer and looked up a picture of an olive tree. “See this? This is an olive tree! Zenos the prophet talks about taking care of a vineyard of olive trees. His story talks about the lord of a vineyard and his servants. See, olive trees need a lot of special care.”

“Really?” Auggie asked. “What kind of care?”

“Well branches need to be cut. And trenches need to be dug around the tree to help give the roots water. That way they can grow good fruit. And you could take a branch from the tree and plant it somewhere else to make a new tree! Isn’t that cool?”

“Yeah,” Auggie thought. “I didn’t know trees could do that.”

“Most can’t. That’s why an olive tree is so special.” Mom winked. “Okay, so in the story, some trees needed extra help. So the lord of the vineyard asked the servants helped them grow! Now, here’s the tricky part. We need to figure out the meaning of the story. Who do you think the lord of the vineyard is?”

“Um...” Auggie stopped. “Well when I hear the word ‘lord,’ I think of Jesus.”

“Yes!” Mom smiled. “The lord of the vineyard is the Lord Jesus Christ! Okay, so if Jesus is the lord of the vineyard, what is the vineyard?”

“Well,” Auggie ran his fingers through his hair. “Jesus is Lord of all the earth. Is the vineyard, like, the world?”

“Auggie!” Mom clapped. “You’re getting it! Awesome! So then what are the olive trees?”

“Well if a vineyard has a bunch of trees, I guess the world has a lot of... people?”

“Yes!” Mom was getting excited. “The olive trees are like people in the world. Some are good and some are bad! Here’s a harder question. Who are the servants?”

“Um...” Auggie couldn’t figure it out. “I don’t know.”

“That’s alright!” Mom assured. “The Lord’s servants are missionaries! They are asked to help the trees grow fruit and help bad trees become good! Just like we, as missionaries, can help others gain a testimony!”

“Okay, so let me get this straight.” Auggie closed his eyes. “The lord of the vineyard is Jesus. The vineyard is the world. The trees are the people. And the servants are missionaries. So the story is telling us that Jesus wants us to be missionaries and help people be good and learn the gospel?”

“I think you’ve got it!” Mom hugged Auggie. “See? You didn’t need to skip that chapter!”