

October 18, 2020

## The Double Whammy

Over the last three weeks we have been looking at the foundational teachings of Jesus that are found in Matthew chapter 21 and following; and these are the teachings that Jesus gave on Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week. It's His final teachings and therefore these are the things He really wanted the people to remember. So far, we've seen three parables, the Parable of the Two Sons, the Parable of the Tenants and last week, the Parable of the Wedding Feast. Three messages come through loud and clear in all three of those parables. The first message Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Redeemer, the Son of God most high and He has all authority in heaven and on earth. The second the religious leaders of the time were corrupt, and they changed the practices and the teachings of the people to pad their pockets for financial gain. This was easy to do because the people themselves had itching ears and they wanted to hear a message that pleased them. Third, as a result of those teachings and those practices and the people's hearts the gospel was going to go to all who sought the truth; both Gentile and Jew. The result of those three parables is found in chapter 22 where right after that third parable the parable of the wedding feast we read, then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle Him in His words.

This is where we get the double whammy, the highly theological term. A two-pronged approach to nail Jesus. It starts with these Pharisees who went and plotted how to entangle Him in His words; and this was a natural thing for the Pharisees, because the Pharisees were the experts in the law. They were the teachers in the law, or we have a very special term for that in this day and age; the lawyers. What did the lawyers want to do? Entangle Jesus in His words. And isn't that what we see lawyers oftentimes still doing today? In fact, especially during this political time of presidential elections. You have those legal experts who want Senator Joe Biden to answer the question, will you pack the Supreme Court if you're elected president? They want to catch him in his words. Because when he was a senator back in the 80s, he said that it was totally wrong, the concept of packing the court, an idea that started with Franklin Delano Roosevelt. On the exact opposite side of the spectrum what do we see the lawyers doing? We see the lawyers this past week grilling a nominee for the Supreme Court; trying to what, trying to catch her in her

words so they can say well she's not qualified. Why do they do this kind of stuff? Because they want to get a certain result; and that result is a win in their eyes which often means a destruction of another life in doing so.

Consider Michael Flynn, former head of the NSA who was brought in and grilled and questioned by legal experts looking to see if they could entangle him in his words and they did. Was it really about truth, was it really about honesty? After all, as we've seen in the last couple of weeks, the whole premise for the investigation that involved Michael Flynn was known to be corrupt and false from the very beginning. So, what we see is that often times, mankind with a heart that's deceitful above all things, in the area of the law, will try to use the law to destroy and will manipulate it for their own purpose.

Here are the Pharisees, the experts at this, and what did they do? They sent their disciples to Him along with the Herodians. Why didn't they go? Why did they send their disciples? Well I think there are three reasons actually why. First, if they send their disciples, it's less of a threat to Jesus and there's a better chance of catching Him off guard. Because if they themselves came with their long flowing pharisaical robes, Jesus would be immediately on guard. Oh, these are the Pharisees. But these disciples weren't yet there, therefore they wouldn't be wearing those robes. Second, history. If we look back in the Gospel of Matthew in Matthew chapter 12, the Pharisees came asking for a sign and in Matthew chapter 15, they questioned Jesus on the washing of hands their traditions on that. And in chapter 19 they asked him questions concerning divorce and in all three situations, Jesus turned to right back on them and showed them where they are thinking was wrong. I don't think they wanted to show up for that again. And the third thing, they have the Herodians going. Why go with the Herodians? Because the Herodians supported the Herod's, the kings that Rome had put in place. Therefore, the Herodians supported Rome. If the Pharisees walked in together with the Herodians, well that just wouldn't play well. It would look like they were in league with them if they were seen with them. So, I think you take all three of those together and you understand why the Pharisees sent their disciples along with the Herodians. But these disciples, you've got to know they didn't take the freshman. These were the seniors. These were the ones that were almost ready to become Pharisees. It wouldn't surprise me if they were told, 'when you get to Jesus in this you will be graduated. You'll get your robe.'

And so, they come to Jesus and say, ‘we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and you don't care about anyone's opinion for you are not swayed by appearances.’ Notice what they do, they start with flattery and a certain level of submission. We know your teachings are true. We know that you teach truthfully. In fact, they even start with that word “Teacher.” Jesus hadn't graduated, He didn't qualify, but they use that to flatter. They treat Him like a teacher, tell Him they know He teaches truth, and all of this. It's all there again to kind of smooth things out; make it so that He won't be on guard. Second, they say we know you don't care you don't care about anyone's opinion, so you're not swayed by appearances. In other words, we know you are quite opinionated. You are quite stubborn, and you tend not to move off your position. And we know that appearance doesn't sway you either. What is meant by appearance? Well the Pharisees again wore their pharisaical robes everybody that looked at them went those are the Pharisees, the smart guys. Kind of like today we oftentimes do that with I don't know, maybe scientists or professors at universities who have their doctorate degrees and are tenured professors. We tend to think we can't question them.

But Jesus didn't care that they had pharisaical robes, He had no problem engaging them in discussion. And for the Herodians, well King Herod wore robes and Jesus, what did He say about Herod? “Tell that Fox.” So, what they said was absolutely true but now they hit Him with the question, ‘tell us then what do You think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?’ There's the trap. It's a trap that is theological biblical, yet they couch it with the what do you think. If He says yes, it's right to pay taxes, well then, the word would immediately go out on Twitter Facebook and everything else that “Jesus supports Rome!” Which would not be popular in Jerusalem because they would say that Rome contradicts God's lordship. I think we understand a little bit of that feeling when we've come through this pandemic or coming through this pandemic, and the government tells us you have got to shut your doors. Is the government the head of the church? Is Christ the head of the church? So, this is the kind of question these Pharisees and Herodians are putting to Jesus. But on the Herodian side, they're the ones that would say yes, we have got to support rule. The Pharisees would be the ones who would not want to support Rome. Therefore, if Jesus said, ‘no don't pay taxes,’ well it would be the Herodians who would now take offense because they support rule, they support the Herods. So, if Jesus says, ‘no don't pay taxes,’ well they report it to Rome and Jesus could be arrested for treason. They saw it as a trap that Jesus

couldn't get out of. Jesus knows it immediately for what it is, and He comes back with; and listen carefully, "Why put me to the test?" What He is doing is echoing Deuteronomy 6 verse 16, which says "you shall not put the Lord to the test." And so in saying this, Jesus is basically saying, "I'm the Lord and why do you put me to the test?" This is against the law, in fact, He goes on and says, 'you hypocrites.' He judges them and the basic principle of the Bible is that only the righteous can judge the unrighteous and only God is righteous therefore only God can judge and if Jesus is calling them hypocrites he is judging and saying he's God.

"You hypocrites! Show me the coin." So, they bring Him a denarius and He asks them a question. Rabbinical teaching at its best. "Whose image is on it and whose inscription is there?" And they say Caesars. We know exactly what that denarius looked like. On one side it had the image of Tiberius Caesar and on the other side it had the inscription 'son of the divine Augustus.' They claimed the Caesars were God. So now you have the Roman God Caesar, the Jewish God Yahweh, His son, Jesus. And Jesus says, 'render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's. Wow! It's kind of ironic they asked the Son of God His opinion about what the son of god, of Caesar what kind of power he had. And when they heard render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and what is God's to God, we see they marveled. Why, because Jesus had instantaneously outwitted the professors the smart guys. They understood in the first three commandments it's very clear, we are to have no other gods before God. We are to not make any graven images and fall down and worship them and we are to remember Him by remembering the Sabbath day and worshipping Him. So that's what we are to render to God; that level of respect, that level of reverence, that level of worship. The coin means nothing. Give Caesar his due but give me you, is what God says. So, they left Him and they went away. In a way, that's very good news because they didn't go back to their professors. Perhaps at this point in time they were afraid of going back and admitting their failure in catching Jesus; or maybe the ease with which Jesus took their argument apart left them a little disenchanted. I don't know. I hope and pray it's the latter and that one day we see one of those disciples in heaven.

This is now where the Sadducees come in; they see the Pharisees have failed and they despise the Pharisees because they believed the polar opposites. The Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection, the Pharisees did. They did

not believe in angels, the Pharisees did. They did not believe in the prophets, Pharisees did. And they did not believe that God would intervene and act in this world; and the Pharisees did. They now come to Jesus and they give this elaborate story, there's a man he's got six brothers he marries a woman he dies love Moses says if that first man does not provide a son for his wife she is to be given to the second brother so that she may bear a son through him and this woman goes through all seven of the brothers they all die. Now notice the difference between their argument and the Pharisees argument or question. Where the Pharisees were biblical, theological; they come back with human logic. The resurrection can't be true because, whose wife should she be? She can't be the wife of all seven, that's impossible. Christ's response back, and notice His response, 'you are wrong.' He understands it's a test and He is putting them on notice, 'you're wrong.' Why are they wrong? Because you know neither the scriptures, nor the power of God. And dear brothers and sisters in Christ, is that not a struggle we have today? People don't know what the scripture says and as a result they do not know the power of God. Jesus takes it right to the Bible and right to the core of our faith. He says in the resurrection people neither Mary nor are they given in marriage, but they are like the angels in heaven. There's a lot of discussion on what Jesus means by that, but I think the discussion is too long winded. I think it's exactly what Jesus is saying; when we're in heaven we will be like the angels. How will be like the angels? The angels who are in heaven are just as they create were created by God. They have not been tarnished by sin. When we get to heaven, our sin is removed. There is total restoration back to the way God created us. How did God create us? He created us, man and wife. That's God's first reference to the female? Why did He create man and wife? So they could be fruitful and multiply. In fact, it goes on to say so that He might have godly offspring. There's the original plan, the untarnished plan. This is what we get to look forward to in heaven.

Sin entered here and sin corrupted that relationship. God had created and man began not to follow what we were created for, to be husband and wife forever. A ceremony was introduced where vows were taken to remind us of what God created us for. And so, when Jesus says in the resurrection you'll neither marry, nor be given in marriage, but are like the angels in heaven; we will be restored to that original husband and wife relationship of Adam and Eve in the garden. Please do not, if you are a widow or a widower, fall to the trap that some people say oh and haven't you won't know them anymore.

That's not going to happen because you won't be given or taken in marriage. No, we won't be given, we will be back to being created for marriage for each other. Don't worry.

Jesus then says to them, “have you not read what was said to you by God?” Which tells us something, Jesus looks at the Bible as God's word, His direct word to us. What did God say to them? I am that's present tense. I am the God of Abraham I am the God of Isaac I am the God of Jacob, I am the God of the living, not of the dead. There went the Sadducees argument.

Now how does all of this apply to us today? It really comes back to what the Pharisees had asked, who are we going to follow? Are we going to render to God what is God's? What belongs to God? Us, He created us, we fell away, He redeemed us and bought us back. I'm going to say something that some people aren't going to like. When we render to God what is Gods, we give ourselves to God, and we are Christian first; we now are American's second. I know that's a hard pill to swallow for many people, especially for our veterans of war, but then again, I've often run into veterans of war that for them that just makes total sense. They love this country, they risked their lives for this country, and they understand that God didn't just risk His Son's life, He gave His Sons life for us. They see Jesus as veteran of the ultimate war, the One who defeated sin. As a result, yes they are proud to be an American and have served this country as well they should be. They're prouder to be a Christian. As a Christian we render to God what is God's; all authority, all truthfulness.

If ever these two parables came into play now is the time because in a couple of weeks, we're going to be asked to render a vote and think about that. How will you render that vote? Will you render it according to personality? I like this person. I don't like this person. Will you render it according to personal feelings and self-gratification? I'll vote for this because it means I get this in return. Will you render a vote under God and vote in accordance with His word? Here is reality, as Christians we are called to be a light in the darkness. We are called to be salt in a saltless land. We are called to render to God our very selves and therefore our vote. And so as you go to vote ask yourself, am I voting, and in my vote am I promoting the sanctity of creation? For it is God who created us man and woman. There's no confusion on that. If you vote in accordance with the gender is all of mindset, you are voting against the sanctity of creation. Coming out of the sanctity of creation, is the sanctity

of marriage and God made Adam and it is the first husband and wife it is the example that God is given us for all time. There is no other marriage in God eyes than between one man and one woman for life. What is the result of that man and woman for life? Well now we come to the sanctity of life because man and wife create children, godly offspring. When we abort that life, we are killing God's grandchildren.

We vote for the sanctity of work. God created Adam and Eve not only to be fruitful and multiply but to work the garden. When a country starts stopping work or promoting people not to work, it's wrong. The Bible is very clear, 'he who does not work, neither shall he eat.' Understand, I believe totally in mercy and grace and love and if one of you lost your job and you were having a hard time making your payments, buying food, I and this whole church; we would be right there to help you. But this idea of people, well, just not working and we're going to get them homes and we're going to give food and medical care and give them the drugs they want and everything like that; that's just totally wrong!

You see we are at a crossroads. It's time to render to God what is God's and at the same time to celebrate the message God is God of the living. Death has been defeated. There is resurrection. With resurrection, there is restoration and reunion. That reunion is a reunion that is totally and truly perfected. It will be a reunion of God and man as it was in the garden of Eden. It will be a reunion of husband and wife as it was meant to be, and it will be a reunion of the entire family of God for all eternity.

In our Savior's name, Amen