

The Parable of the Vineyard

Luke 20:1-19; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 1-19-2020

- We are in Passion Week. (Luke 19:28)
- Jesus enters Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. (Luke 19:37-38)
- Jesus cleanses the Temple for the second time on Monday. (Luke 19:45-46)
- Jesus is teaching in the Temple on Tuesday. (Luke 20:1)
- Confrontation on the Way to the Cross: Luke 20 is filled with attempts by the religious leaders to trap and destroy Jesus.

The Theme: Authority

*And they spoke, saying to Him, "Tell us by what **authority** You are doing these things, or who is the one who gave You this **authority**?" – 20:2*

Debate: The authority of the religious leaders versus the authority of Jesus. (20:1)

Question: Whose authority is from heaven and whose authority is from man? (20:4)

1. **The religious leaders reject Jesus' authority for no good reason.** (20:1-8)

- Jesus is teaching the people to obey God and proclaiming the good news of the gospel of reconciliation with God when the religious leaders, who are supposed to represent God, confront Jesus with a hostile attitude and entrapping questions.
- A delegation from the Sanhedrin (the Jewish Ruling Body) made up of the three component parts of the Sanhedrin: priests (Sadducees, stewards of the temple), scholars (Pharisees, interpreters and teachers of the Law), and lay leaders (heads of tribes, ruling elders).
- The delegation wants to know by whose authority (kind or sphere of authority and source of authority) Jesus cleansed the temple (and maybe other things like teaching and preaching and healing).
- If Jesus says 'By my own authority' then the people could see Him as lacking the right to do so and if Jesus says 'By God's authority' then the religious leaders could accuse Him of blasphemy.
- It was common in rabbinic debate for a question to be answered with a question.
- This ploy by Jesus was a way of avoiding the trap set by the religious leaders while at the same time it is a way of giving them His answer in light of the fact that John the Baptist's ministry and Jesus' ministry were intimately linked and John the Baptist pointed to Jesus as the One who was to come.
- The religious leaders discuss and debate among themselves how to answer in light of their fear of upsetting the people and affirming Jesus by affirming John the Baptist.
- The religious leaders attempt to undermine Jesus in the eyes of the people, but Jesus turns the table on them and undermines their status in the eyes of the people, because, if they don't know what to say about the ministry of John the Baptist how can they speak authoritatively about the ministry of Jesus?

- Essentially, Jesus has answered the religious leaders' question with His question, but He refuses to give a direct answer because they refused to do the same; He will not cater to their attempt to trap Him.

2. **Jesus rejects the religious leaders' authority for very good reasons.** (20:9-19)

- Jesus goes on to tell a parable to the people with the religious leaders in view as a warning to the people regarding the leaders and as a prophecy of His own impending crucifixion.
- There were vast estates in the upper Jordan/Galilee region of the country owned by foreigners who lived elsewhere who had agreements with sharecroppers to receive produce from their land.
- But the sharecroppers/farmers in the story refuse to follow the contract and actually mistreat the slaves of the owner.
- There was a law that said that if the owner died and had no heir, then the first to claim the property would become the owner.
- The sharecroppers assume the owner has died and decide to kill the only heir so they can lay claim to the property.
- The owner decides to give the property to others and the response of the religious leaders is 'God forbid!' because they realized that the implication is that the privileges of the nation of Israel as God's people would be given to another 'nation,' in this case, the universal church of Jews and Gentiles.
- Jesus quotes an OT Scripture from Psalm 118 that affirms the point of the parable and challenges the error of the religious leaders who thought it impossible for them to fail to receive God's Messiah when He came.
- The stone referred to is the large stone in the corner of the foundation of the building that shaped the rest of the building.
- The picture that is painted is that if one rejects this cornerstone then this cornerstone will crush him!

Why would we reject Jesus and His authority over our lives?

- We reject the call of God's Word to repentance. (20:4)

It is a humility issue. – *Matthew 3:7-10; Matthew 5:20-22*

- We reject the call of God's Word to submission. (20:10)

It is a happiness issue. – *John 15:1-11*

What will be the consequence of rejecting Jesus?

- We will not love others. (10-12, 15) *see also 1 John 4:7-16*
- We will be destroyed. (17-18) *see also Luke 19:47-48; Luke 20:15-16*

But the threat of destruction is a call to deliverance! – *Luke 19:10, 41*