

*The Authority of Christ*  
Mark 11:27 to Mark 12:12  
Series: Christ our Focus

1. Introduction:

- a. We now approach the midweek of the Passion Week. Here we are going to see the religious authority with one voice are going to challenge the authority of Christ.
- b. In today's lesson we are going to see the hardness of religiosity.
- c. We are also going to see into the very depth of the heart of religion and compare it to the very heart of a relationship.
- d. Today, we are going to discover the source of the authority of Christ.

2. Verses 27-28 – The official resistance to Christ

- a. The religious leaders are waiting for Christ.
  - i. This is the Sanhedrin –
  - ii. Priest, Scribes, and The Sanhedrin, a buffer organization between Rome and the Jewish nation, was composed of seventy-one members who had near complete freedom in religious matters and restricted power in political matters.  
Elders
- b. After having overturned the tables and cleared the Father's house, the religious leaders want to know from what authority does Christ act.
  - i. When Christ had overturned the tables, he had challenged these same religious leaders and their authority—they had allowed the practice.
- c. Notice that the religious do not address the issue of appropriateness—Whether or not what Christ did was right or wrong—but instead they want to know what his credentials are.
  - i. The religious are concerned with the peripheral and not the substantive
- d. This question acknowledges that no one possesses authority on his own to do what Jesus does. Such authority could only come from God. Yet, if Jesus were to attribute his authority to God, this would have led to the charge of blasphemy.

3. Verses 29-30 –

- a. Jesus poses a counterquestion
- b. John's work would have to be identified as holy or worldly.

- i. The works of John testified that his work was of God
  - 1. It was through John's work that Christ was revealed, baptized, attested to by the trinity
- ii. The work of Jesus would testify of the same.

#### 4. Verses 31-33

- a. A decision for John for John will appear to support the cause of Jesus, whereas a decision against John will alienate the crowds, for whom John was popularly regarded as a prophet.
- b. We do not know
  - i. A deliberate evasion of what they now know is true
  - ii. They are unwilling to know
- c. To those who are unwilling to commit themselves, Jesus is unwilling to commit himself.
- d. If you cannot be honest with yourself, then you cannot be honest with Jesus.
- e. Jesus states, "Neither will I tell you"
  - i. Jesus knows that it is not a matter of knowledge but of truthfulness.

#### 5. Chapter 12:1

- a. The only major parable outside chapter four
  - i. This speaks of its importance
- b. The Parable –
  - i. The man is God
  - ii. The vineyard is Israel as a nation
  - iii. Put a fence around it and dug a pit for the winepress and built a tower – God protected and provided for Israel
  - iv. Leased it to tenants – the religious leader charged with insuring fruits worthy of repentance.
- c. This parable must be understood through the lens of the Old Testament
  - i. **Isaiah 5:1-7** Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. (2) He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. (3) And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. (4) What more was there to do for my vineyard,

that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes? (5) And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. (6) I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and briars and thorns shall grow up; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. (7) For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!

## 6. Verses 2-5

- a. Verse 2 – because the land was leased, the tenants owed part of the crops to the landowner.
  - i. Here we see the owner sending a servant to collect what is rightfully his – the fruits of the land
  - ii. The servants are the prophets which called Israel and the religious leaders to demonstrate the fruits of repentance
    1. **Galatians 5:22-23** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (23) gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
    2. **Micah 6:7-8** Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (8) He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?
- b. Verse 3 – The reaction
  - i. The tenants – leaders – took the prophets and beat them and sent them back to the landowner – God – without the fruits expected – empty-handed.
  - ii. Religion leaves us empty-handed before God
- c. Verse 4 – God’s patience and religions obstinence
  - i. God continually called Israel to repentance
    1. **Jeremiah 7:25** From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them, day after day.

2. **Jeremiah 44:4** Yet I persistently sent to you all my servants the prophets, saying, 'Oh, do not do this abomination that I hate!'
    - d. Verse 5 – God’s unfathomable mercy
      - i. Their behavior progressively becomes worse.
        1. **Romans 2:5** But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.
7. Verse 6 – the climax of the parable
- a. In sending servants the owner appealed to the integrity of the tenants; in sending his son he appeals to the right of law
    - i. The son was the only person who possessed legal claim over the vineyard.
    - ii. The son goes as the father’s representative, with the father’s authority, to the father’s property, to claim the father’s due.
    - iii. He is the last and final word
      1. That is why the scripture states, “They will respect him.”
  - b. God’s love for this people
8. Verses 7-8 –
- a. The tenants reject the owner’s love by rejecting the son.
  - b. Notice: They know whom they are rejecting – they kill him because of who he is.
  - c. They do not only want the produce undue to them but now the property itself.
    - i. If humanity can kill God, then humanity becomes God.
    - ii. This is the desire of humanity today.
  - d. Notice that Christ understood that these very men were going to kill him.
9. Verses 9-11
- a. God is the owner
  - b. Verse 9 – destroy the tenants – this false religious system with its leaders and false adherents.
    - i. Notice that the tenants will be judged by the Father for the rejection of the son.
    - ii. He will give it to others – Gentiles
  - c. Verses 10-11 – The cornerstone –

- i. The human rejection of God's cornerstone was part of God's glorious plan.
- ii. This is a direct quote from Psalms 118:22-23 – speaking of the Solomon's temple

10. Verse 12 – Their reaction

- a. Conniving to destroy Christ
- b. Rejection turns to bitterness

11. Benediction –

- a. **1 Peter 2:4-6** As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, (5) you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (6) For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."