

Luke 20:20-21:4

Missing The Main Thing

Image Church // Inverted Kingdom Vol. 2 / Controversial Jesus: Wk. 8

Pre-Bumper Easter Plug

Good morning Image Family!

*Hey, listen, believe it or not, **Easter** is right around the corner... We want to partner together as a church to leverage this specific weekend as an opportunity to engage people who are disconnected from the church...*

- *Our team has put together a tool for you that we're going to be leaning in on together...*
- *Card... Explain it*
- We want you to take this card with you to use as a reminder so that we can proactively participate together!
- The **First thing that we want to do is pray...**
- We're going to take some time right now to do that together...
- **PRAY**

Introduction

Alright, If you have your bibles go ahead and grab them and turn to Luke 20...

Tuesday is "rare disease day," so I am repping this shirt for my son!

Nail in the forehead... *Old Youtube video...*

- The nail is right there, sticking out, but ignored...
- I wonder for how many of us this is true when it comes to Christianity?

Ok, we're going to pick up in **verse 20 of Chapter 20**, but before we do, I want to set up how things are gonna go down this morning...

- Here's the thing that we have to keep in mind, the book of Luke was written by Luke as a personal account of the life and ministry of Jesus...
- And he's writing it for a guy named **Theophilus**, and Luke says that he's carefully investigated everything and that he's put together an *orderly sequence* of it all so that **Theophilus** would *know for certain* about the person and work of Jesus. (**Luke 1:1-4**).

This *orderly sequence* is not a play-by-play but a robust summary, meaning that we don't get every single thing that happens in the life of Jesus... *it wouldn't fit in 24 chapters...*

- What Luke does is he gives us different *snapshots* of Jesus' teaching and interactions so that we have a clear picture of the life and ministry of Jesus, **that ultimately shows us who Jesus is and what it means to follow Him...**

This morning, we're going to walk through a series of these *snapshots* that are going to orient us around the person of Jesus...

For some of you, you're here, and your perspective of God has been jaded, or you've been distracted today, we're going to see the simplistic beauty of the gospel and what it means for your life...

Now, remember, Jesus has entered Jerusalem, He went into the temple and started throwing people out as He confronts them on how they are degrading the House of God by turning it into a den of thieves by ripping people off through the sales of sacrificial items...

- And He doesn't leave after that, He posts up and starts teaching and preaching the gospel!
- The religious leaders are fired up... And they keep trying to come at him...
- They want Him to slip up so that they can kill Him, they want Him gone!

Luke 20:20-21:4

20 They [the chief priests and scribes] watched closely and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, so that they could catch him in what he said, to hand him over to the governor's rule and authority.

You see what's happening here... Messed up... But they want Him gone that bad, and trying everything they can to make it happen...

21 They questioned him, "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach correctly, and you don't show partiality but teach truthfully the way of God. **22** Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

Notice they try to butter His biscuit on the front end, **irony- what they said is actually true...** And then they play their hand with their question, and it's a **divisive political question** that they think will trap Him... *Imagine that!*

- If Jesus says: **Yes, it is lawful**, then He could be scrutinized by some of the Jews...
- If he says: **No, it's not lawful**, then He would be viewed as a revolutionary, and He would be in trouble with Rome, which is what they wanted, then they could hand Him over to Rome...
- So they try to force Him into an *either/or* situation...

Let's see what Jesus does here... Verse 23

23 But detecting their craftiness, [He sees through] he said to them, **24** "Show me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?" "Caesar's," they said. **25** "Well then," he told them, "give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Now, there are other implications and applications that can come from what Jesus says here, but for the purpose of staying within the scope of the narrative here, I want you to see the immediate implications here in this setting...

What Jesus does is He responds to this *either/or* question with a **both/and!** He gives a **principal statement** that doesn't appeal to either side...

- What we need to see in this is that Jesus **isn't** for *nationalism*, and He **didn't** come to start a revolution or overthrow Rome...
- He came to be the Savior of the world...

And as the Savior of the world, He points to a greater reality when He says, **give to God the things that are God's...**¹

- **IOW**: A coin may belong to Caesar, give it to him, but everything belongs to God, surrender to Him...
- **You could say it like this**, a coin bears Caesar's image, give him the coin, you bear God's image, give Him your life... *There's a tax fine pay it, but what are you going to do with your life?*²

Jesus is showing us that there's something bigger at hand here- that's **the main thing** in all this...

That leaves us with this question: **Are you willing to give to God what is God's?** You were made in the image of God, He's the one that gave you life- will you surrender the life that he's given you to Him?!?

- Or will you just live how you want to live?

See, the reality behind the religious leader's question is that ultimately they didn't want to give to God what is God's... They didn't want to surrender their lives to Him...

- They wanted to benefit from God, but they didn't want to submit to God at a heart level... *Jesus exposes this over and over again!*

For some of you, this is where you are... You want God for what He can do for you, but when it comes to surrendering your life to Him, you're not having it... You want to control the narrative just like the religious leaders...

- You want to call the shots on your life, but Jesus points us to another way...

Give to God what is God's... *Where are you not doing that? Where are the places in your life where you're calling the shots?*

- In your job, in that relationship, with your generosity? You're time? Your commitment to the church and the people of God?

¹ Jesus draws an important distinction here, and that is, **Caesar isn't God**, which means that they're not equal, Caesar is under God along with all other rulers...

² Section influenced by, and italics quote from Tony Merida, *Christ and Controversy*.

Is God the one shaping your life?

- Here's the beauty of the gospel, when you see God for who He is and what He's done through Jesus... Your perfection and your punishment, and new life through the resurrection...
- When you surrender your life to Jesus, **Romans 8:29** says that God conforms you become more like Christ...

So the gaps in your life are not places you work harder, they are places where you ask for God to transform you through the power of the Holy Spirit in you!

- **Some of you need to give to God what is God's today, and stop withholding certain areas of your life!**

Alright, let's look at their response after this Jesus-juke, **verse 26:**

26 They were not able to catch him in what he said in public, and being amazed at his answer, they became silent. They can't hang w/Jesus Jesus, Jesus literally shuts them up...

So the chief priests and scribes slide to the background and another group is about to try their hand at Jesus... **Verse 27**

27 Some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came up and questioned him:

Now, who are the **Sadducees?** They don't believe in the resurrection, so they are **sad, you see**...

- *Sadducees were not Pharisees- BTW* shows how everyone was coming out the woodwork trying to get Jesus!
- When you think Sadducees, don't think self-righteous; think *old money name recognition, close with the high priest, in with political leaders.*³

28 "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that **if a man's brother has a wife, and dies childless, his brother should take the wife and produce offspring for his brother.** **29** Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife and died without children. **30** Also the second **31** and the third took her. In the same way, all seven died and left no children.

³ Walter Strickland, *A sign in the shadow*

32 Finally, the woman died too. **33** In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For all seven had married her."

Ok, so here's their play, they're calling Jesus on the resurrection by trying to show that there's no way that it can be legit because otherwise, the family unit is all jacked up, meanwhile, they give this really weird situation to try and prove their point- reaching... *Extreme*

But here goes Jesus **verse 34:**

34 Jesus told them, "The children of this age marry and are given in marriage. **35** But those who are counted worthy to take part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. **36** For they can no longer die, because they are like angels and are children of God, since they are children of the resurrection. **37** Moses even indicated in the passage about the burning bush that the dead are raised, where he calls the Lord **the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.** **38** He is not the God of the dead but of the living, because all are living to him."

The point Jesus makes here **is not simply that there won't be marriage in heaven, but why we don't need marriage when we get to heaven!**⁴

Marriage is a temporary thing that points us to an eternal thing...

- Some of y'all need to hear that because your spouse is your everything or the hunt for a spouse is everything... God didn't design it to be that way!
- Earthy marriage is designed to point us to an eternal marriage- the relationship between Christ and His Bride, the Church...
- And it's through this relationship w/Jesus that we have the right (*John 1:12*) to be the **Children of God** that Jesus talks about here in **verse 36**...

Jesus also points us to an incredible hope here for those who are in Christ...

⁴ Ibid.

God is not the God of the dead, but of the living...

- And Jesus explains this in a very logical way...
- If God speaks of Himself **as** the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, then they still exist... God wouldn't announce Himself as the God of people that are dead...
- And since they still exist, then it means that they *have, or will*, experience the promise of the resurrection...

IOW: What we see here for those who have faith in God's promise that that's been revealed through Christ is ***the death you die is not the end, you get to experience everlasting life*** (John 3:16) ***with God forever...***

- Where there is no more hurt, pain, tears, ailments, disabilities, sickness of anything else like that... This is the beauty of what you experience through the ***resurrection*** that comes through the work of Jesus!
- That's good news!

And so, yet again, Jesus deals with another question... *And yet again, we see people who are not seeing ***the main thing***, the person that's in front of them and the beauty of the hope found in Him...*

- Instead, they're trying to hang onto their own narrative and attempting to try and out Jesus...

Let's look at how they respond to what Jesus says about the resurrection in **verse 39:**

39 Some of the scribes answered, "Teacher, you have spoken well." **40** And they no longer dared to ask him anything. *Silenced again...*

Now Jesus turns to ask them a question, **verse 41,**

41 Then he said to them, "How can they say that the Messiah is the son of David? **42** For David himself says in the Book of Psalms: **The Lord declared to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand**

43 until I make your enemies your footstool.'

44 David calls him 'Lord.' How, then, can the Messiah be his son?"

What Jesus is doing here is yet again pointing them back to the ***main thing***... He wants to get them thinking about the Messiah, And so Jesus asks them a question based on **Psalm 110:1**...

He asks them, how can David call a son, who is a descendant, by the title *Lord*?

- This point Jesus makes is significant, it would have caught them off guard, esp. in such a patriarchal society, where a son is always *under* his father.

The answer is literally right in front of them...

- David is referring to the ***Messiah*** who would come through his family line, who is the Lord over him...
- And by application, this coming Messiah would bear the title Lord...⁵
- The Messiah is more than David's son!

Meanwhile, the religious leaders are speechless... The ***gospel of Matthew*** says that they were literally speechless, unable to answer Him...

- What Jesus does here is show them how big of a gap there is in their understanding of God and His redemptive plan...
- He basically 1-ups them... You think you have all of this figured out, but you don't... You don't even understand the meaning of this Psalm!

And the ***ultimate proof*** of the gap in their understanding of God is the fact that He's standing right in front of them, and they don't even see it...

- Jesus, who is God in the flesh, who came through the line of David and bears the title Lord is right in front of them, and they don't see it!
- They've actually been trying to kill him... They've been so distracted by all these other things, meanwhile missing the person that's right in front of them...

⁵ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: 9:51–24:53*, vol. 2, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, 1639.

And yall, *this is a huge miss here... These are the people that we would have expected to see it... This is what's so scary to me...*

Listen, for some of you, Jesus is right in front of you, and you've been missing it... He's standing right there, arms open wide, and you've been missing it...

- He is the main thing that you need to see today!

Now Jesus moves on past the Q&A and takes the opportunity to transition to a key warning in light of all that Jesus has just walked through with these religious leaders... **Verse 45:**

45 While all the people were listening, he said to his disciples, **46** "Beware of the scribes, who want to go around in long robes and who love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the places of honor at banquets. **47** They devour widows' houses and say long prayers just for show. These will receive harsher judgment."

Jesus highlights how these religious leaders were missing the main thing... It's not about popularity, prestige, and power...

- This is what they were about, neglecting what God had called them to, abusing their role and taking from those most in need...
 - And they will be judged harshly for this...

What we need to see is These religious leaders are self-absorbed and self-centered...

There's a warning in here not just for those that are in ministry, but for all of us... If we're not careful, we can end up just like these religious leaders...

One Pastor says it like this: *When we don't reorient our lives around Jesus, we are going to replace the worship of the Lord Jesus with worship of ourselves and our own desires.*⁶

⁶ Shane Shaddix, *The big E on the Eye Chart*.

When we miss the **main thing**, we become about other things... And those other things are destructive...

Now right after Jesus has issued this warning, Jesus holds us an incredible example of what our lives should look like...

Chapter 21, verse 1...

1 He looked up and saw the rich dropping their offerings into the temple treasury. **2** He also saw a poor widow dropping in two tiny coins. **3** "Truly I tell you," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all of them. **4** For all these people have put in gifts out of their surplus, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on."

I want you to see something here... This is yet another time when we see Jesus holding up the marginalized as an example for how we should respond to God... I want you to see the beauty in this...

- Those that the world looks down on Jesus holds up, and those that the world holds up Jesus confronts...
- This is the incredible nature of the inverted Kingdom... **The way up is the way down...**

So, this widow comes to give and gives a very small gift, but I want you to see this, counter to the religious, **rather than seeing the smallness of her gift, Jesus sees the bigness of her faith.**⁷

Yall, be encouraged, Jesus sees and rejoices when we walk in faith...

- Some of you need to hear this today... *Appeal...*

*Often times the size of a gift is not always indicative of the sacrifice... In fact, oftentimes it's the small gifts that are really most costly...*⁸

- And most often they come with them comes no recognition... And sometimes it can feel like the impact is insignificant...
- **But what the world does not notice, Jesus does!**

What this widow models for us is a way of life that's not about self-advantage, but radical self-giving...

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: 9:51–24:53*, vol. 2, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, 1647.

This widow is a tangible expression of where we started... ***This woman is giving to God what is God's...***

She's fully surrendered and dependent... Her life and her livelihood are in His hands...

- *Is that true for you?*

I want you to see this morning, that ***Jesus is worth giving up everything for...***

- He's worth surrendering everything for...

Listen for some of you, you've been distracted from the main thing...

- Maybe you're being lured away by the things of this world,
- maybe you've been distracted by the things of religion,
- Maybe you've been distracted by culture,
- maybe you've been distracted by your objections...

This morning, I want you to see the main thing that all of Scripture points to... JESUS!

*What we've seen today is Jesus drawing that out, the movement of the text leads us to see what the religious don't see, in who Jesus is, what He came to do, and what our response should be to God in light of His grace and mercy...

JESUS came into a broken world, lived, died, resurrected...

- Offers us new life when we don't deserve it...
- Our resurrection is made possible through His life, death, and resurrection!
- We have an incredible hope in Jesus!

I want you to fully surrender to Him in all areas of your life...

- Some of you need to stop trying to skate around Jesus... Stop trying to do things your way, stop being about your self-interests and self-gain... Get off the throne of your life...

Conclusion [VAMP]

This is the call of the Christian life, that we are constantly confronted by the **main thing**, Jesus, and it exposes all of the other places where we've been missing Him...

- And as those areas are exposed we come to God and acknowledge it, and ask Him to model and shape us in those areas, to make us more like Him...
- And there is beauty in this process... It's not easy, but there is beauty in it because it takes you deeper into who He is...
 - You see His love in the midst of your mess...

So here's where I want to close this morning... Where are you not about the **main thing**? What areas of your life are you holding onto?

Where do you need to surrender??

- Your whole life?
- Certain areas of your life?
 - Your plans, that
 - relationship, your job, your family?
 - Control?

Where do you need to submit to Jesus? Where have you been pushing against His Lordship in your life?

My hope and my heart is that we wouldn't miss the main thing, that we will be all about it, that we will see Jesus for who he is and what He's done and we would surrender every area of our lives to Him!

Where do you need to do that?

ALTER PRAYER: Come forward for prayer...

Questions for Discussions

- How do we know God is the one shaping your life?
- What are things in life that can distract you from the main thing, Jesus?
- What are guardrails for us to avoid becoming distracted and lured away from the main thing, Jesus?
- Where do you need to submit to Jesus?
- Where have you been pushing against His Lordship in your life?