

Series: **Palm Sunday 2020**

CDOBC

Today's Title: "The Authority of Jesus"

April 5, 2020 - Luke 20:9-18

Palm Sunday - video sermon

(Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic the Good Friday service was canceled - on-line services only)

OBJECTIVE: To help people understand Jesus, as the Messiah, as God, has divine, eternal authority.

During the final week of Jesus' life - the time from Palm Sunday to Easter - this week is called the Passion Week / Holy Week.

On Sunday (today) as Jesus entered Jerusalem He was praised as the Messiah - possibly the high point of His public ministry. Throughout the week He taught in the Temple area - and debated with His enemies - the religious establishment. Jesus was arrested on Thursday night and then crucified on Friday morning - and He died around 3:00 p.m., which gave Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus 2 or 3 hours to receive Jesus' body and prepare it for burial - and to place it in the tomb - before the Sabbath which would begin at sunset. Today - what we refer to as 'Palm Sunday' - marks the beginning of this most holy - most focused time on the Christian calendar.

Turn to Luke 20. We will look at one of the parables Jesus told during this week - likely on Wednesday - as He was in the Temple area.

Prayer

The parable's context...

The crucial issue I want to present to you today - is the issue - the question which was in the air throughout that last week. It was the crucial issue when Jesus made His glorious entry into Jerusalem - as He was praised by the crowds as the long-awaited Messiah. They were waiving palm branches and celebrating His entrance into the city. It was quite the parade!

The religious rulers criticized this behavior - they wanted Jesus to silence those who were praising Him.

Why? Why did they want Jesus to silence the people? Because they were His enemies - His popularity threatened their power - and they didn't recognize the authority of Jesus.

This is still the crucial issue today: ***Do you recognize Jesus' authority?***

Luke 20:1-2

One day as Jesus was teaching the people in the temple courts and proclaiming the good news..." Teaching & Preaching the Gospel
"the chief priests and the teachers of the law, together with the elders, came up to Him.

2 "Tell us by what authority You are doing these things," they said.
"Who gave You this authority?"

It's the question each of us must answer!

Does Jesus have authority over you - or not?

Is Jesus authoritative?

vs. 2 - “doing these things” - After His entrance into Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday - He entered straight into the Temple area - and we read in **Luke 19:45-46** that Jesus ‘cleanses’ the Temple.

In our current context, we hear ‘cleanses the Temple’ and we might think He was sanitizing it with Lysol wipes to get rid of any viruses!

Cleansing the Temple meant He tore it up - He drove out those who were ripping the people off - and this was a big money-maker for the religious establishment. Jesus caused them to lose a bunch of money that day - and subsequent days - this was Passover week - and this wasn’t the first time He did this!

Naturally, they ask for His *warrant!* By what “authority” do you destroy - disrupt our business??!!

19:47-48 (vs. 45-46 He cleanses the Temple)

“And He was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people (*establishment*) were seeking to destroy Him, but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on His words.”

Power struggle.

The people were choosing Jesus - and rejecting them.
Jealousy.

As the people were increasing in their devotion to Jesus, the religious establishment was not. Their hatred was growing!

20:2 - They ask Jesus, “Tell us by what authority You do these things, or who it is that gave You this authority.”

Instead of answering their question, He asks them a question in **vs. 3-8** about John the Baptizer’s baptism - which they refuse to answer - and then in **vs. 9** He tells a parable. The parable is about them - but they don’t know it until the very end.

Read vs. 9-18

This is a parable that summarizes Israel’s spiritual history in a few sentences.

Israel was full of vineyards. Wine was/is an integral part of Jewish culture and Judaism. Over the past decades, the number of vineyards and the wine industry in Israel has increased exponentially.

In Jesus’ time vineyards were very common - so Jesus tell this story / parable - and those listening would know exactly what He was talking about.

The shocking part of the story is the response of the tenants.

This behavior was outrageous - criminal - and socially unacceptable!

Matthew's recording of this parable expands on the violence of the tenants - having them killing / stoning some of the servants who were sent by the owner (Matt. 21:34-36).

The parable explained...

The parable is a brief summary of Israel's history - and the guilty party in the parable is the religious establishment.

In the parable **the Owner** of the vineyard is God - and **the vineyard** is Israel.

God set up this wonderful vineyard - winepress and all. Isaiah 5:7 "For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel..." (Psalm 80:8 "a vine out of Egypt"; Jeremiah 2:21 Israel is "a choice vine")

Israel is the beautiful vineyard, and the owner of the vineyard is God.

The owner sends His servants to collect his share of the harvest. **The servants are the prophets.** The prophets were the servants of God - sent to Israel - to call Israel back - for Israel to repent and return to the Lord.

The wicked tenants are the religious establishment who time and time again rejected the prophets of God and refused to repent. This rejection often became violent as many of the prophets were beat, imprisoned, or killed.

(Hebrews 11:35-38)

It doesn't make sense what the owner does after his servants were repeatedly mistreated - even killed. But the owner decides (vs. 13) to send His beloved son - His heir - with the hope that "they will respect Him."

The tenants have no respect, only arrogance and disrespect.

They kill him, in order to gain ownership of the vineyard.

vs. 15b - Jesus asks a question: "What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them?"

Easy question - justice must be served!

The injustice is clear for everyone listening to the parable.

Luke doesn't give us the response of those listening, but Matthew does.

They said to Him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons." Matt. 21:41

Remember...this answer is coming from the religious leaders. This parable is about them - but they don't realize it yet - and their answer is speaking judgment on themselves!

Remember **Luke 19:47-48**

"The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy Him, but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on His words."

They want to kill the son!!!! They're plotting His death!
The answer they gave (Matt. 21:41) is the right answer...and
Jesus affirms the answer - but when He says it, they
begin to understand the parable's meaning - and they
don't like it!

vs. 16 - “He (the owner - God) will come and destroy those tenants
and give the vineyard to others.”

The tenants - or their heirs - cannot continue to be in
charge of the vineyard! That only makes sense, right?
As soon as Jesus said this, they understood what He was
saying.

He was telling them because of their plot to kill the Son
(Him), they would be destroyed and the vineyard (Israel)
would be given “to others”.

This was devastating - and they were guilty.

vs. 16b - When they heard this, they said, “Surely not!”

2 important details here...

1) “heard” - Greek word doesn't refer to sound - to
hearing sounds - but to understanding - comprehension.

‘When they understood what Jesus was saying.’

2) “Surely not!” - The strongest negative in the Greek
language - *‘No, no, no, no! Never...No!’*

They didn't accept the Owner's Son - they refused to
abide by the Owners contract with them.

They were never going to let go of their control of the vineyard - control of the nation.

“Surely not!” - they believed they were the owners - they thought they could make up the rules - decide what was right and wrong!

They rejected Jesus’ authority - and believed in their own authority.

The parable’s picture of God...

God is merciful and longsuffering.

God displayed His mercy throughout the history of Israel.

When they rebelled against Him - when they rejected His commands in favor of their own preferences - His love for them compelled Him not to judge them but to try and bring them back to Him - so He sent the prophets to them - to call them back.

Instead of repenting, they became more rebellious and their rejection became more violent.

Jeremiah 7:25-26 (God speaking)

“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.

26 Yet they did not listen to Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers.”

They got worse - they didn't listen to the prophets - as they rejected the truth of the prophets they moved further from God.

God has been reaching out to you too - He wants you to be His child - to put your faith in Him - and His love for you is undeniable - proven by the cross.

The parable shows God as full of hope - persistently reaching out to you - giving you chance after chance to come to Him.

The parable's picture of Jesus as the cornerstone.

The parable exposes your view and understanding of God - and of His Son - Jesus.

- Does Jesus carry the authority of God?
- Should He be listened to - obeyed...or ignored - pushed aside?
- Is Jesus just another religious figure - like all the rest - good for philosophical discussions and ethical debates - or is He more than that?

Luke 20:14 “But when the tenants saw him, they talked the matter over.” - (see **John 11:47-53**) - after Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead - instead of understanding the significance of the miracle - a man dead for 4 days was just raised back to life - this was a sign of the Messiah - instead of faith in Jesus - the religious leaders begin to plot against

Jesus - to kill Him - because He was threatening their power.

John 1:11 - the Prologue to the Gospel...

“He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him.”

Our first inclination is to reject Jesus - to resist Him in order to hold onto what we have - what we want.

God’s desire is for you to put your faith in Jesus - to come to Him and confess your sins - repent of your sins.

God loves you - and He is reaching out to you right now!

The Son willingly came into the vineyard knowing it was unsafe - He knew they would reject Him - and likely kill Him.

vs. 17-18 - Jesus identifies Himself as the “cornerstone” - which is a significant statement!

A cornerstone is a construction thing.

Throughout history it was the most important stone when a building was being constructed. If your cornerstone was not perfect - if the alignment was off in any of the angles - the building would not be strong and stable - the lines would be off - the angles would not be square - the walls would be crooked. The entire building relied on a perfect cornerstone.

In Scripture, a cornerstone is used as a metaphor to refer to the Messiah.

Psalm 118:22, 26

“The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”

Why would builders reject a stone? If it didn't meet their standards - what they were looking for. The cornerstone is the most important - needed to be perfect. Other stones in the building didn't have to be perfect - you had more margin to work with when you're placing the normal stones - but the cornerstone - there was no margin for error - it had to be perfect.

The “builders” - the religious establishment - rejected Jesus - but they only saw Him as a normal stone (a brick?)! Jesus wasn't in their club - He came from Nazareth - didn't come up through any of their Rabbinical schools - He didn't fit their idea of what a Rabbi should be - let alone what the Messiah would be!

All the evidence was there - the miracles prove His authority and His power over evil - prove He was able to forgive sins - but they still rejected Him - didn't even consider Him good enough to be a normal stone for construction.

But the “stone” they rejected “became the cornerstone”!

You can form your own idea about Jesus - you can ignore the evidence of His life and resurrection - discount what He taught - and you can reject Him as a religious teacher. But the reality is - He's not an ordinary “stone” - He's “the cornerstone” - the perfect one on which everything else is built and measured!

“Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!”

Luke 19:37-38 (Triumphal Entry quoting Ps. 118) ...the whole...began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice...saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Luke 20:17 - Jesus questions “them” after the parable of the Wicked Tenants But He looked directly at them and said, “What then is this that is written: ““The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone’?” (*quoting Psalm 118 - which they were very familiar with*).

Acts 4 - Peter’s sermon before the council - when asked:

(4:7) “By what power or by what name did you do this?” - just like the religious establishment asked Jesus in **Luke 20:1-8** by what authority He was doing what He was doing.
(4:11) “This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.”

1 Peter 2:6-8a

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.”

So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,” and “A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.”

Jesus...while looking “directly at them” - gives them this warning.

Luke 20:18

“Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”

This is serious - and it's a warning to those leaders - and to anyone who rejects or ignores the authority of Jesus - the cornerstone.

Apply it...

As we enter the Easter Season - Holy Week - Passion Week - what will your response be to Jesus?

Do you recognize His authority?

Do you realize He is the cornerstone - the perfect cornerstone that sets the standard for everything else?

Believe in Jesus - put your faith in Jesus.

Romans 9:32-33

Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, as it is written, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame."

There's no middle ground here...

Either you believe in Jesus - or you don't.

Either you believe in Jesus - or you will stumble and trip over Him - resulting in you shame - your judgment.

Admit your sins...

Believe in Jesus...

Commit each day to following Him!

Obey Jesus - recognize His authority.

“Oh...I’m already a follower of Jesus.”

But are you becoming like Him? Are you being transformed into the image of Jesus (Rom. 8:29b)?

Are you submitting to Him?

Are your attitudes - your thoughts - your opinions - being changed into the attitudes of Jesus?

What are His attitudes and opinions?

Read the Gospels. Read through the N.T. - you’ll get a sense of the spirit and person of Jesus.

He has come to you - died for you - so you could be like Him.

“Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!”

Prayer

For those who may have questions or doubts about Christianity and its claims – here are some helpful resources.

“More Than A Carpenter” by Josh McDowell (free! Hand out on Easter Sunday)

“When Skeptics Ask” by Norm Geisler and Ron Brooks

“The Case for Christ” by Lee Strobel

“The Case for Easter” by Lee Strobel

“The Unshakable Truth” by Josh and Sean McDowell

“Jesus Among Secular Gods” by Ravi Zacharias & Vince Vitale

“The Story of Reality” by Greg Koukl

“The Reason for God” by Timothy Keller

“The Son Rises” by William Lane Craig