

Series: **Gospel of Mark**  
Today's Title: **"The Authority of Jesus"**

January 31, 2021 – Mark 11:27-12:12- (Also: Matthew 21:23-27, 33-46; Luke 20:1-18)

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**Objective:** To help people know the authority Jesus has as God...Son of God...Messiah.

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**Prayer**

Flashing red lights in your rear-view mirror...

Going before a judge...

Being called into the boss' office...

Each of these scenarios cause us to take notice.

*Your heart beats a little faster.*

*You sit in your chair with better posture.*

Because these are **authorities** in our day-to-day life.

When we go before an authority - we listen - take note of what they say - follow through on the directions given.

We know from history and from the N.T., there is no greater authority than Jesus.

**Matthew 28:18**

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me."

**Ephesians 1:20-22**

"that He (God) worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

And He put all things under His feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church..."

**Philippians 2:9-11**

“Therefore God has highly exalted Him (Jesus) and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

**Colossians 2:9-10**

“For in Him (Jesus) the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in Him, who is the head of all rule and authority.”

**1 Peter 3:21-22**

“...through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to Him.”

As God incarnate, Jesus had divine authority.

As the resurrected Son of God - the Father has glorified Jesus and placed Him in authority over all things.

There is no greater authority than the resurrected Jesus Christ.

In our passage this morning the religious leaders will question Jesus' authority. Their questioning is not genuine - they weren't seeking to know the truth about Jesus, but instead, they were seeking to embarrass Him publicly.

***Turn to Mark 11:27 - 12:12.***

They intended to embarrass Jesus in front of the people, but their plan backfires and Jesus turns the tables on them - and puts them on notice of impending divine judgment on them and the nation.

**Does Jesus have authority? 11:27-33**

***Read 11:27-33***

Jesus has messed up their thriving, but corrupt business in the temple by disrupting everything the day before. They didn't / couldn't stop Him when He was '*cleansing*' the temple, but now - 24 hours later - they ask Him, "By what authority are You doing these things, or who gave You this authority to do them?" (vs. 28)

They had already concluded the authority behind Jesus was demonic.

**Mark 3:22**

And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "by the prince of demons He casts out the demons."

They were not sincere in their query of Jesus - they had already made up their minds, but they were playing a public relations game - they were trying to shame Him because He didn't have the religious credentials they had.

- Jesus wasn't trained in their Rabbinic schools - by a well-known rabbi.
- In our modern view - Jesus didn't have any advanced degrees - didn't go to seminary - didn't have a good resume.

By revealing this they were hoping to embarrass Jesus - hoping to publicly shame Him.

What is your view of Jesus?

***Do you believe He has authority? Authority over you?***

Jesus had clearly proven His authority over spiritual forces by His countless miracles. Hundreds...thousands of people had been healed by Him - eyewitness testimony about His miracles was commonplace. The religious establishment had witnessed His miracles on many occasions - only to attribute His power over demonic forces to demonic forces - the logic of which Jesus destroyed in **Mark 3**.

It was common rabbinical practice to answer a question with a question - which is what Jesus does in **vs. 29**.

In reality, the answer to Jesus' question was the answer to the question of authority posed by the chief priests, scribes and elders (**vs. 27**).

**vs. 30** - “Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man? Answer Me.”

*(“the baptism of John” refers to John the baptizer’s entire ministry.)*

The religious establishment didn't like John the Baptizer.

He didn't follow their rules either...He was critical of their leadership.

**Read Luke 7:24b-30**

- John was the last prophet - before Jesus - He broke the 400 years of silence from God since the last prophet - Malachi.

- The people believed John was a prophet from God.
- John preached repentance - and he proclaimed there was one coming after him greater than he was - and his job was to prepare the way for this next prophet - the Messiah.

Jesus put them in the corner with this question...we have their discussion in **vs. 31-32**.

If they said, '*Yes, we believe John's ministry was from God.*' they knew Jesus would ask why they rejected John's baptism. They knew that affirming John's ministry was from God would be an admission that Jesus was from God - not the Devil as they had claimed - and that Jesus was the Messiah - because that's what John proclaimed.

If they said, '*No, we don't believe John's ministry was from God - it was of man.*' then they would not only face the anger of the people - but the people might also stone them for ignoring and discrediting a prophet from God!

The abrupt end to their discussion in **vs. 32** adds to the tension they were in - the dilemma Jesus' question put them in.

They weren't looking for the truth - they didn't care about the truth - they only cared about preserving their

position and power and getting rid of Jesus, so they took the cowardly way out, “We do not know.”

As a result, Jesus says He won't answer their question.

***Are you so set against Jesus that the truth about Him doesn't matter - you just want to get rid of Him - avoid Him - resist Him?***

**How do you treat Jesus / react to Jesus? 12:1-12**

***Read Mark 12:1-12***

Jesus said He wouldn't answer their question, but He did answer it in the form of a parable.

To better understand this parable, we need to know the base of knowledge and context of the religious leaders and the people listening to the debate between Jesus chief priests, scribes and elders.

This parable had very familiar images and themes - because its roots are in **Isaiah 5. (*Read Isaiah 5:1-7*)**

The vineyard is planted (vs. 1-2) but instead of good grapes it produced bad grapes - sour berries.

vs. 7 - The vineyard is God's ("LORD of hosts") and the vines/grapes/sour berries is Israel.

This is a severe judgement on Israel, which would become a reality in the Babylonian captivity [Israel-northern kingdom] 722 B.C. / Assyrian captivity [Judah - southern kingdom] 586 B.C.)

Instead of justice (good grapes / “pleasant planting”) Israel produces “bloodshed”.

There is a word play in the Hebrew of vs. 7 - “and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!”

‘justice’ & ‘bloodshed’ sound similar in Hebrew.

‘righteousness’ & ‘outcry’ sound similar in Hebrew.

**Mark 12:9** - “What will the owner of the vineyard do?”

Destroy them. O.T. Law - **Genesis 9** - capital punishment!

Most shocking part of the parable for the religious leaders: “and give the vineyard to others.”

Interpretation - story of Israel’s history

**vs. 1** - “A man planted a vineyard...” - God is the owner - Israel is the vineyard (Isaiah 5).

**vs. 1b** - “leased it to tenants” - The tenants are Israel - but specifically the religious leaders of Israel - those charged with the spiritual and civic care of Israel - to guide them to spiritual truth - to nurture Israel - stewards of the vineyard.

**vs. 2** - “he sent a servant(s)” - Prophets - from Moses to John the Baptizer. Israel’s history is littered with the abuse and mistreatment of God’s prophets.

It’s very likely the prophet **Isaiah** was sawed in half

(Hebrews 11:37).

**Jeremiah** was constantly mistreated, thrown into a large cistern (Jeremiah 38). Tradition says Jeremiah was stoned to death.

**Ezekiel** faced exactly the same hatred.

**Amos** had to flee for his life.

**Zachariah** was rejected and, according to 2 Chronicles 24:21, he also was stoned.

**Micah** was beaten in the face, according to 1 Kings 22:24.

**Read Matthew 23:29-37a**

**Matthew 21:43**

“Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits.”

How do you treat Jesus...react to Him?

Are you producing “fruits” of the kingdom of God?

**vs. 10** - “Have you not read this Scripture”

They had read it - but they dismissed it - never saw themselves in it.

2 days earlier - as Jesus entered Jerusalem - the parade - the people were praising God and praising Jesus as the Messiah. The people were quoting from Psalm 118:26,

“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Here, in vs. 10-11, we have another quote from Psalm 118:22-23.

“The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes!”

This is another indictment of them - they are rejecting the cornerstone - the most important stone on which all else is built and lined up.

Jesus is the cornerstone - He is what the Church is built upon (see: Acts 4:11, 1 Peter 2:6-8, Romans 9:32-33, Ephesians 2:20).

The Apostles and their teaching will be the focus of the new tenants of the vineyard.

The rabbis and their traditions will not be part of the vineyard.

In the cursing of the fig tree - which was a parable referring to the nation of Israel - and the parable here of the vineyard and the wicked tenants - both are prophetic statements of judgment against Israel and its leadership - because of their rejection of the Messiah - Jesus - the cornerstone.

In A.D. 70 the Roman general Titus led an assault on Jerusalem. In that battle the temple was destroyed - every stone torn down.

Thousands of Jews throughout the land were brutally murdered as the Roman troops went town by town. Since then, the temple has not been rebuilt.

The tribal records were destroyed in that attack and since then it's been impossible to know what Jewish person belongs to what tribe - which means nobody knows who the priests are supposed to be (tribe of Levi).

The temple has not been rebuilt.

There have been no sacrifices. No ceremonies.

The entire religious system of Israel was destroyed.

They knew Jesus was talking about them.

vs. 12 - “And they were seeking to arrest Him but feared the people, for they perceived that He had told the parable against them. So they left Him and went away.”

What a perfect time for repentance - when you’ve been called out and your sin exposed.

Instead, they are more determined to get rid of Jesus - to destroy Him - but they can’t because He’s too popular with the people.

They walk away - after being verbally pummeled by Jesus in His question to them about John the baptizer - and through the parable which they “perceived the He had told the parable against them.”

### ***Apply it...***

I’ve put forth 2 questions to you today.

Does Jesus have authority?

Do you recognize and submit to the authority He has over you?

Do you obey Him - worship Him - follow Him?

Or do you resist Him - push Him away - deny His authority believing you are your own authority??!!

How do you treat Jesus / react to Jesus?

Do you welcome Him as the beloved Son?

Do you serve Him and produce spiritual fruit?

History...and the bible are clear - Jesus has authority over all things.

Even me...even you.

There is nothing outside of His ultimate authority.

Will you recognize His authority?

Will you worship Him? Submit to Him? Believe in Him?

Do you welcome Jesus into your life as the Son of God - or do you reject Him - ignore Him?

The choice is yours.

Nobody else can make this decision for you.

Won't you decide to believe in Jesus?

To put your faith in Him and His sacrifice for your sins?

*Closing prayer*