**Authority Questioned**

Review: Last week we looked at Jesus Cleansing the temple

This week:

**Mark 11:27-33 “**They arrived again in Jerusalem, and while Jesus was walking in the temple courts, the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders came to him. **28**“*By what authority are you doing these things?” they asked. “And who gave you authority to do this*?”

**29**Jesus replied, “I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. **30**John’s baptism—was it from heaven, or of human origin? Tell me!”

**31**They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’ **32**But if we say, ‘Of human origin’ …” (They feared the people, for everyone held that John really was a prophet.)

**33**So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.” Jesus said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.”

In this section, the religious authorities—the chief priests and elders—question Jesus’ authority. “Who is this Jesus who comes into Jerusalem receiving the praises of the masses and drives the moneychangers out of the temple? The stage is set for the showdown.

He knew that they were very concerned about public opinion at this time, because they were rapidly losing credibility and popularity, first to John the Baptist and now to HIM.

After this, (according to Matthew) He immediately tells them *three parables*—the “*Two Sons”, the “Wicked Vinedressers”, and “the Wedding Feast”* *(although Mark and Luke only give the parable of the Wicked Vinedressers).*

Each of these parables is told to the Jewish religious leaders, each illustrates their rejection of Jesus, and each pronounces judgment on them for their rejection of their Messiah.

**Jesus Spoke to them in Parables:**

Parables are short allegorical stories meant to convey one covert message or meaning. Often times they are interpreted differently and sometimes even misinterpreted. Jesus intended that his parables were only understood by those who were “given ears to hear”.

We don’t often think of Jesus as a Creative Artist, but his short story authorship puts him in the same category as other Literary Artists like Homer and Aesop.

In Fact, if Jesus’ short stories (Parables) were compiled into volumes, they would probably not be in the “religious“ section in the library or Bookstore. *They were about Farmers, Sons, Kings, Sheep Goats, etc.*

His parables were brilliantly constructed with character development, plots, conflicts, settings, themes and a significant ‘moral’ to the story each time.

**Mark 12:1-12 “**Jesus then began to speak to them in parables: “A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. **2**At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. **3**But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed. **4**Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. **5**He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

**6**“He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’

**7**“But the tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ **8**So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

**9**“What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. **10**Haven’t you read this passage of Scripture:

[pause]

“‘The stone the builders rejected, has become the cornerstone;
**11**the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?”

**12**Then the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away.”

**Parable of the *Wicked Vinedressers*** *(or Tenants)*

*A Vineyard owner sent his servants to collect grapes from his tenants as payment for their rent, but the workers killed them. So, he sent more servants, the workers killed them as well. Finally, He sent his Son, the workers killed him as well.*

*Jesus asks “What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.”*

In this parable Jesus plainly tells the religious leaders that because of their disobedience and rejection of Him, thast they will be left out of the kingdom of heaven ( both individually and as “a people”);

Many of the parables in Jesus’ early ministry were secretly about the Pharisees, often casting them in a bad light and exposing their hierocracy. But they could never prove it, because they didn’t understand what he was talking about.

This time however, the Pharisees knew Jesus was talking about them, bet they were afraid to touch Him because of the people,

**Mark 12:12 *“***Then the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away.”

After these ‘pointed parables’, the Pharisees waged an attack on Jesus:

They planned and schemed a way to publicly humiliate Jesus and divide his following.

It’s mentioned in all three synoptic gospels, but *Matthew gives the most details,* so we are going to switch tracks to Matthew for this part of the story.

Here was their three-fold plan;

* First they sent a group of Herodians.
* Second they sent the Sadducees
* Finally, they sent one of their own, a Lawyer…

Each time they tried hard to ‘trick and trap’ Jesus, but he silenced and perplexed each one. He responds back to them with one of the most profound and definitive statements ever uttered, in the end they were dumbfounded and did not dare question Him anymore.

**MATTHEW 22:15-40**

***15****Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words.****16****They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians.*

*[ Herodians were Jews who were known for their loyalty to the Herod’s Dynasty]*

*“Teacher,” they said, “we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are.****17****Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax****[***[***a***](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23890a)***]****to Caesar or not?”* ***18****But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, “You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me?****19****Show me the coin used for paying the tax.” They brought him a denarius,****20****and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?”*  ***21****“Caesar’s,” they replied.*

 *[ Not because of poor eyesight]*

*Then he said to them, “So give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”* ***22****When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.*

***23****That same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question.*

[ Sadducees were a group of upper-class religious Jews who did not believe in the resurrection, they did not believe in eternal life, angels or spirits, *This is why they were so “SAD, YOU SEE…”]*

***24****“Teacher,” they said, “Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for him.****25****Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother.****26****The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh.****27****Finally, the woman died.*

***28****Now then, at the resurrection,*

[ remember, they did not believe in, they were trying to trick him]

*…whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?”*

***29****Jesus replied, “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.****30****At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.****31****But about the resurrection of the dead—have you not read what God said to you,****32****‘I* ***am*** *the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’****[***[***b***](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23905b)***]****? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.”*

***33****When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching.*

[The crowds become even more fervent about following Him, it had the opposite effect of what they’d hoped.]

**The Greatest Commandment**

***34****Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together.****35****One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question:****36****“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”*

[A trick question - designed to turn at least part of the crowd against him. According to the statement of Jewish writers, there had been an old and interminable dispute among the rabbis as to which was the greatest commandment. The fought and divided themselves over these things and the Pharisees knew it.]

Jesus responded first with: THE SHEMA (Deut 6:4 and Lev 19:18)

***37****Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’****[***[***c***](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23910c)***]38****This is the first and greatest commandment.****39****And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.****40****All the* ***LAW*** *and the* ***PROPHETS*** *hang on these two commandments.”*

*(THE MESSAGE -* ***37-40****Jesus said, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence.’ This is the most important, the first on any list. But there is a second to set alongside it: ‘Love others as well as you love yourself.’ These two commands are pegs; everything in God’s Law and the Prophets hangs from them.”)*

**The LAW and the PROPHETS** – The two *most important things* to them

**The Law – (Torah) The words from God and about God**

**The Prophets – (Nevi**'**im) What was spoken from God and what will come to pass.**

Jesus was saying that the two greatest things in their entire faith hang on these two commandments; “Love God, and Love Others”

Jesus swiftly and dramatically silences his attackers…

 **46**No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

***Loving God and Loving Others***

That’s why we’re here.

The closer we get to that goal, the more our lives will be fulfilled and purposeful

The farther we get from that goal, the more our lives will be; unfulfilled, difficult angry, depressed, violent, stressful, etc. (all of what you see in the world today).

The Pharisees neither loved God nor the people, they only loved themselves and were only interested in protecting their power and authority.

This is why the very first questions they asked Jesus in this sections was;

**Mk. 11:28** “By what authority are you doing these things?” “And who gave you authority to do this?”

*AUTHORITY: “The word “authority” is a strong word. When we hear the word “authority,” there’s a certain force about that word. There may be even a certain intimidation about that word. We talk about the authorities, and we rightfully have a sense of respect, maybe a sense of awe, maybe a sense of fear.*

*The word “authority” denotes permission. It denotes privilege; it denotes power; it denotes rule, control, influence. When someone has authority, that means they’re on top of other people. They have responsibility beyond the norm. They are able to determine things, to decide things, and to render judgments.*

The Pharisee saw that the people recognized the Authority that Jesus walked in and they did not like it.

In fact from the very beginning of our Journey in Mark, this was the thing that people recognized in Jesus that made Him different from all the others;

**Mark 1:22** “The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had *authority*, not as the teachers of the law.”

It was also why Jesus was never afraid, never intimidated and why He never lost hope.

He knew that *God the Father* was the creator of all things and is the authority over all things.

**Isa. 45:18** “For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: “I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other.”

Imagine how YOU would feel if YOUR Father created the whole earth and was the ruler of the universe.

You don’t have to imagine, because He is!

**Matt 6:32** “*Your Heavenly Father* knows your needs”

That’s why in these days, we cannot give in to fear or worry over anything going on around us.

**Not**; The Virus, Politics, social unrest, the economy, the weather, NOTHING.

Do not worry about the *world and everything in it*, Because the *Authority over the world and everything in it* is Your Loving Heavenly Father.

**Psalm 100:3** “Know that the Lord, He *is* God;
*It is* He *who* has made us, and not we ourselves;
*We are* His people and the sheep of His pasture.”

God will take care of us and shepherd us.

Nothing comes to us unless it passes through His hands first.

Jesus proved exactly what He proclaimed in

**Matt 28:18** "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”

That was true of Jesus then, but it’s also true of Him now.

Because *Jesus* was given all authority, WE are given all Authority because we are “Children of God”, joint heirs with Jesus..

**Romans 8:15-17**.

 **15**For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” **16**The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, **17**and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him,* that we may also be glorified together.

When the Devil tries to scare you and deceive you into thinking that you are not a child of God or that the power his powers of darkness are taking control of the world…

Remind yourselves of these words, repeat them and hide them in your heart…

**1 John 4:4 “You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.”**