

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCT 10TH-11TH, 2020 // BOOK OF MATTHEW

### A TRIUMPHAL ENTRY (MATTHEW 22:23-27)

Upon entering Jerusalem, Jesus had shaken things up a bit by cleansing the temple and doing some things that had caused quite a stir amidst the religious climate of the day.

- Now He returned to the temple to teach, since this was the place in Jerusalem where people came to hear the Scriptures taught.
- Jesus' behavior from the previous day had challenged the leadership of the temple officials.

But it wasn't just Jesus turning over tables and seats in the temple- His triumphal entry, His acceptance of praise as the "Son of David", & His miraculous healings were all done with a kind of authority that challenged the power of the "chief priests and elders" (vs. 23).

- So they came to Him demanding to know, "by what authority" He was doing these things.
- They were essentially asking, "Is your authority from God or man?"

The leaders were questioning Jesus' right to do these things. Who did He think He was?

- Even today people still question whether Christianity is from God or if it's just another man-made religion.
- While doubt is often the path to discovery and faith, sometimes it's just grounded in stubborn and hardhearted disbelief.

Sometimes doubt, at its root, is simply there because of an unwillingness to relinquish control.

- Such was the case of these religious leaders, and Jesus saw straight through them to the real condition of their hearts.
- It was a very common practice in rabbinic discourse to answer a question with another, harder question- and that's what Jesus does (vs. 25) when He asks them to identify where the authority of John's baptism came from.

John had made Jesus' identity clear, but the people respected John greatly as a prophet.

- Therefore, they couldn't reject John, or the people would turn against them.
- However, if they claimed that John's authority was from heaven, then they would be guilty of rejecting God, since they denied Jesus as Messiah (vs. 25-26).

Jesus knew this question would uncover their hearts full of unbelief and the fear of men.

- Their professed agnosticism- "we don't know"- was a smoke screen for the fact that they simply didn't want to relinquish control to Jesus (vs. 27) and acknowledge His authority.
- The question for us becomes, will we let stubborn, hard-hearted unbelief and the opinions of others control us? Or will we submit to the authority of God?

### TWO SONS (MATTHEW 21:28-32)

After exposing the religious leaders, Jesus goes on the offensive.

- He will indict this religious class through three parables- the two sons (vs. 28-32), the tenants (vs. 33-46), and the wedding feast (22:1-14).
- In this first parable, a father gave the same command to his two sons, but their responses were completely different (vs. 28-30).

The first son stubbornly says, "no" to the Father's command, but then later has a change of heart and goes to work (vs. 29).

- The second son enthusiastically says, "yes" to the Father's command, yet he doesn't go to work (vs. 30).
- So Jesus asks, which one did the will of the Father? (vs. 31)- it's a baited question that will draw out the hypocrisy of anyone truly listening if we'll contemplate it long enough.

The religious leaders knew the commands of the Father (the Scriptures) better than anyone and made a great show of their good intentions to say, "yes" to God through the showy-ness of external religion.

- They were even interested in the teachings of John the Baptizer (Mt. 3:7)- but ultimately they failed to "change their mind and believe him" (vs. 32) because they wouldn't repent.

But those who had originally said, "no" to the commands of the Father- the greedy tax-collectors and the immoral sex workers- realized their need for repentance and had "changed their hearts and minds" when John the Baptizer spoke the Word of God (vs. 32).

- Therefore, they're the ones who actually did the will of the Father and who would go into the kingdom of God before the religious elite (vs. 31).

Actions are more significant at expressing faith than good intentions or verbal professions.

- We can show great interest in the things of God and become ardent and vocal fans of church and organized religion- but if we refuse to humble ourselves, repent, and truly submit to God's authority we won't enter the Kingdom.
- Doing the will of the Father is not simply a matter of having an emotional episode.

It's having a "change of mind" (vs. 28) and committing to obedience as a response to the Father's commands.

- And what does the Father command for us primarily? Repent and believe.
- Repentance involves surrender, change, and letting go.
- Belief involves taking hold of Christ as our everything.

We can say all the right things, express our good intentions, and make a great show out of professing what we believe the right path of obedience should look like in our lives.

- But if we're not obeying, what good is any of that?
- What matters more than anything in our lives is that repentance and faith have genuinely occurred and are being expressed through real obedience.

### A PARABLE OF TENANTS (MATTHEW 21:33-46)

As in the previous parables, Jesus used the image of a landowner- someone responsible for his land, crop, and the workers who worked it.

- Any Jewish listener would've been able to see the connection between this parable and the "Song of the Vineyard" passage from Isa. 5:1-7.
- In that passage, God is the landowner and Israel is a vineyard that has been planted, cultivated, and given everything it needed to produce fruit.

And yet, Israel had only produced bad fruit, going its own way time after time.

- So God pronounces the destruction of Israel because of their failure to produce fruit.
- Now Jesus' parable provides a sequel to Isaiah's song with the new focus being given to those whom the vineyard had been rented- the tenants.
- The problem now isn't with the vineyard, it's with the tenants of the vineyard.

The owner of land carefully prepares a vineyard, rents it to some farmers, and leaves (vs. 33).

- When the time of harvest arrives, the owner of the vineyard sends servants to the tenants to collect what is due him (vs. 34).
- One servant they beat, one they kill, and another they stone (vs. 35-36).
- Finally, he sends his son whom they also kill (vs. 39).

Through the parable, Jesus is reminding the people of God's goodness to the people of Israel.

- God delivered them from Egypt and planted them in a land of milk and honey, giving them material and spiritual blessings for the purpose of bearing fruit for His glory.
- From time to time God would send His servants (the prophets) to the people to receive the fruit- but Israel mistreated the prophets.

Jesus states that Israel would mistreat Him- God's son whom they would cast out and kill.

- Jesus questions, "When the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do?" (vs. 40).
- The answer is fairly obvious- he will punish the wicked tenants and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will honor him by giving him fruit (vs. 41).

Jesus then quotes Psalm 118:22-23 to connect the rejected son from the parable with the rejected stone of the Psalm.

- The stone that Israel refused to receive and rejected would be used by the Lord Himself as the chief cornerstone of the temple (vs. 42).
- Israel rejected the Messiah, but God would take what they would reject and create something new that would carry His glory to the nations (vs. 43).

The Church of Jesus is built upon His identity as the Christ- He's the cornerstone.

- Israel was the builder that had rejected the stone, and therefore the Kingdom would be taken from them and given to people that would produce fruit (the Church).
- God isn't done with Israel! He grafted the Church into Israel's roots, and we will see that God's covenant and promises to Israel will be fully realized near the last day.

### THE REJECTED STONE IS A STUMBLING STONE (VS. 44).

- Everyone who encounters Jesus will experience brokenness.

Either we will stumble over the stone and be redemptively broken or the stone will fall on us and we will be completely and utterly destroyed.

- When the leaders heard this, they wanted to arrest Jesus, but were afraid (vs. 45-46).

### JESUS IS LORD (KING)...BUT DO WE UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT ACTUALLY MEANS?

- A true King has real authority- and real authority threatens the authority of others that claim it falsely (vs. 23-27).
- A true King values obedient deeds over intentions or claims to obedience (vs. 28-32).
- A true King will bring justice to those who reject and refuse to listen to Him (vs. 33-46).

**To see the Kingdom in its fullness requires us to first acknowledge and submit to the King.**