

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 20TH–21ST, 2025 // GOSPEL OF MARK

AUTHORITY (MARK 11:27–33) THE SANHEDRIN

As Jesus and the 12 returned to Jerusalem, the religious leaders who controlled the temple and the implementation of the law approached Jesus again to question Him.

- They did not have enough courage to arrest Him because of the crowds, but they did have enough to confront Him.

JESUS DID NOT HAVE THE EARTHLY CREDENTIALS

Jesus was not a priest, Pharisee, or elder, so the decorated religious leaders asked by what authority He paraded into town and drove out the merchants in the temple.

- Education is great, and there is nothing wrong with degrees or titles, but **ultimately all true authority is given by God.**

DEMONSTRATING HIS AUTHORITY

Jesus set a trap of His own and returned their question with a question. This was not evasive but common practice by rabbis.

- If they answered that John's authority was from Heaven, they would have to admit Jesus was the Christ. If they said it was not, they would face the anger of the crowd.

ARE WE REALLY WANTING THE ANSWER?

Jesus had no desire to answer their question because He knew the heart behind it. There are some great lessons here.

- **It is a waste of time to argue with people who have no desire to find truth. We must also ask if we are willing to hear truth when we approach Jesus and His Word.**

A LOT OF FEAR AND VERY LITTLE FAITH

After deliberating, the only answer the Sanhedrin could come up with was, "We don't know." This showed their selfishness, fear of people, and spiritual weakness.

- **Many today stand for little and lack real authority because they refuse to hear truth out of selfishness or fear of the crowd.**

CONSEQUENCES (MARK 12:1–12) "HE BEGAN TO SPEAK TO THEM IN PARABLES"

Jesus then spoke a parable to the religious leaders meant to further reveal the truth of who He was. This was not meant to be cryptic but very straightforward.

- The "vineyard" symbolized Israel, and the owner of the vineyard went to great lengths to make sure it was protected.

PEOPLE SENT TO TAKE CARE OF THE VINEYARD

The "tenant farmers" represented the religious leaders who were supposed to spiritually protect God's people, but when "servants" (prophets) were sent to "collect...fruit" (check progress), they were attacked.

- Note that the treatment of the prophets grows worse as the story continues.

EVENTUALLY, THE OWNER'S SON IS SENT

In the parable, the vineyard Owner sends His "beloved Son" because only a fool would not respect the Owner's Son. But, in their selfishness, **they thought killing the Son would give them control over the vineyard.**

- **In the absence of God, we become gods. This will prove to be destructive.**

HUMILITY AND OUR VIEW OF THE SON

We reject Christ and His claims, not because we do not understand them but because we understand them too well.

- We have the freedom to live as we please, but **we must understand that our treatment of the Son determines our judgment.**

GOD WILL ACCOMPLISH HIS WILL

The end of the parable reveals the vineyard will be given to "others." This refers to opening the invitation for Gentiles to be God's people.

- All are invited to be saved, but **we must accept the invitation.** We must also know that **if we squander our responsibilities, they will be given to someone else.**

"HAVEN'T YOU READ THIS SCRIPTURE...?"

Jesus quoted Psalm 118:22, which they would have all known. Through the parable, Jesus answers the question "By what authority?" and clearly claims to be the "cornerstone."

- **If we let anything other than the Bible determine our thoughts on Jesus and His mission, we will miss the point.**

BALANCE (MARK 12:13–17) A GAME OF CAT AND MOUSE

The Sanhedrin thought that if they could not stump Jesus religiously, maybe they could recruit the Herodians and get Him for treason.

- The Herodians were obsessed with political alliances, just as the Pharisees were with religious ones. **What we learn is politics and religion are often the enemies of Jesus.**

SHOULD WE PAY TAXES TO A CORRUPT GOVERNMENT?

As they "flattered" Jesus, they asked about a Roman tax which equated to a day's salary. It was not an expensive tax, but it represented foreign domination and submission to a government that practiced evil things.

- Jews prohibited "graven images." Tiberius's would have been especially repulsive.

ANOTHER FAILED TRAP

If Jesus answered, "Don't pay," that would be treason against Rome. If He said, "Pay it," He would offend the Jews who despised Rome.

- Jesus' answer paints a picture of **balanced responsibility for Christian citizens. There are some obligations we have to the state and others we have to God.**

SO WHAT BELONGS TO EACH?

Citizens who benefit from government amenities (everyone) have an obligation to contribute to those amenities (roads, schools, military, etc.). More importantly, **those who benefit from God (everyone) have an obligation to contribute to what belongs to Him** (our soul, worship, righteous living, etc.).

DECENCY AND HONOR

Christians can't receive the benefits of society without honoring those who provide them, just like our gift of life, freedom, and salvation must be honored as citizens of God's Kingdom.

- **In this life (not in the next) there will be some level of submission to things that are corrupt (jobs, marketplace, government).**

- Romans 13:1–7 CSB

HOW DO WE BALANCE THIS?

Acts 5:29 says, "We must obey God rather than people." This means Christians are to follow the laws of the land (1 Peter 2) until human laws demand disobedience to God's.

- This is a consistent principle throughout the entire Bible. **We are to be examples of decency, honor, and righteousness.**

WANTING THE TRUTH

- Life should be an exploration of truth and meaning. Jesus said if we look, we will find (Matthew 7). Do we actively pursue truth?
- **Are we prepared to be responsible for and accountable to what we will find?** Or will we despise truth because it conflicts with our desires?

AUTHORITY

- The truth is that **there is only one ultimate authority from which all authority derives, Jesus Christ.** We must trust Him and know that **He is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, and always in control.**
- Knowing and living this out protects us from the overwhelming evil in the world.

HONOR TO WHOM IT IS OWED

- An even harder truth to live out is that **we are to honor whatever kind of authority is placed above us.** This includes our **boss, government, parents, and church**, even when those things have corrupted aspects.
- **We cannot be beneficiaries of amenities without being contributors to them.**

KEEPING IT ALL IN BALANCE

- **Our top priority and highest allegiance must always be the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33).** No man-made law, institution, or cultural principle should ever have more value in our lives than Jesus and His Word.
- **We must be people of honor, decency, and respect, especially to our King, Jesus.**