

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 21ST, 2025 // GOSPEL OF MARK

### AUTHORITY (MARK 12:27-33)

#### "WALKING IN THE TEMPLE"

Unlike the previous encounter outside the temple, we now see Jesus casually walking in the temple. This time, the religious leaders would turn His visit into a question and answer session.

- Jesus continued His teaching ministry, but He still took time to answer their questions. The questions were loaded, but His answers were truth.
- **Today, the questions are still loaded. Are we prepared to answer with truth?**

#### "WHAT AUTHORITY...?"

The question they posed was whether His authority was inherent or conferred. They were implying that no one in leadership had given Him the authority to do what He had been doing.

- They were the most powerful people in Jerusalem and controlled the legal, political, and financial affairs of the Jewish people.
- Their question was not objective or theological; it was legally and politically charged.
- **This sounds more like 2025!**

#### "ONE QUESTION"

Because they were not seeking truth but evidence, Jesus reveals their motives and hypocrisy with a single question of His own.

- Jesus took them all the way back to the beginning of His earthly ministry in the days of John the Baptist.
- Why? Because that is where they first rejected truth. With all they had heard from Jesus over the last three years, they still had not listened.
- **Questions are not bad, but our motives can be.**

#### "AFRAID OF THE CROWD"

After some discussion, we find that these corrupt leaders do not want to lose credibility with the crowds because that would weaken their plan to eliminate Jesus.

- Their fear of the crowd reveals that their authority came from people because they did not fear Heaven.
- **It is easy to see the modern culture in this text. Do we see ourselves? Are we avoiding the questions Christ is asking us?**

#### "WE DON'T KNOW"

Their answer was not a lie. It was the truth, but it revealed that they could not know the answer because they had not been open to the truth for years.

- Because they did not seek the truth, but were attempting to silence it, it was not given to them.
- **Jesus has clearly revealed Himself as a servant and savior. Are we asking questions so we can know Him more, or are we trying to find another way? Motives matter.**

### THE VINEYARD (MARK 12:1-12)

#### "HE BEGAN TO SPEAK TO THEM IN PARABLES"

He may not have answered their question, but He was not letting them off the hook either.

- In a short story, Jesus is going to reveal a long and difficult relationship with Israel that will point directly to these leaders.
- Because of Old Testament Scripture, they understood that the vineyard is Israel and that the landlord is a representation of God.

#### "HARVEST TIME"

The farmers had been on the land for the customary amount of time before sending back produce with thanksgiving and kindness toward the landlords.

- Because they wanted the produce and the land for themselves, they abused or killed every servant the landowner sent to them.
- **We should note here that God is VERY patient and continues to send messengers into a world that does not want to surrender.**

#### "THEY WILL RESPECT MY SON"

As Jesus tells the story, every listener knows that the tenants are wrong in their actions. They also know what will happen to the son but agree that the tenants SHOULD respect the son.

- These tenants represent the religious leaders in front of Jesus and their hard-heartedness that led them to violence and murder.
- **God did send His beloved Son into a violent world. The world SHOULD have respected Him. Instead, WE killed Him.**

#### "WHAT THEN WILL THE OWNER...DO?"

The tenants thought their worries were over as soon as they killed the son.

- They believed that everything would become theirs. They believed they would no longer be bothered by the owner. They believed they won.
- **Death of His servants and His Son does not stop God from doing what He wills to do. He delivers justice and then continues to offer what He has to others who will receive it.**

### "THE CORNERSTONE"

Before they can respond, Jesus shares a familiar psalm about a large stone that was rejected by the builders but ultimately became the essential cornerstone that held the building together.

- In the psalm, the Gentiles had rejected and persecuted the psalmist who would later be exalted to a high position.
- These leaders understood that Jesus was declaring that His rejection would soon turn to exaltation. So, they walked away... again.

### THE TRAP (MARK 12:13-17)

#### THE COALITION

After the "theologians" failed to gather effective evidence against Jesus, they sent Pharisees (religion) and Herodians (politics) to trap Him in His words.

- We were introduced to this unholy coalition in Mark 3 as they began to work together to devise a plan to execute Jesus.
- **Evil will unite against truth. The question is, will truth unite against evil? Will people be able to tell the difference?**

#### ANOTHER LOADED QUESTION

Their question was a subtle trap. No matter how Jesus replied to their question, He was in trouble with either Rome or Herod.

- Their plan was to show that Jesus was either anti-Temple or anti-Caesar—or anti-both. Their goal was to find a reason to arrest and kill Him.
- **This is not a text about church and state. This is false religion connecting with corrupt politicians to suppress and eliminate the truth. Jesus could tell the difference.**

#### GIVE TO CAESAR. GIVE TO GOD.

Jesus reveals that it is lawful and right to pay taxes to the government and, in the same sentence, to be faithful and surrendered to God.

- He does not speak to the quality of the government, only the responsibility of the Believer.
- **Yes, we may not agree with our government, and we CAN/SHOULD voice our opinions. But are we good citizens? Are we still faithful to God and His mission for us? It is amazing that so few Christians follow Christ's example.**

#### SIMPLE

- We prefer simple.
- **Life is not simple. It seems to be getting harder every week.**
- **Our problem is that we think simple is the same as easy. Actually, life can be simple but it will not be easy. So, what makes life seem so complicated?**

#### FOUNDATION

- It is a simple problem of foundation.
- **Where we stand will determine how much we can stand.**
- **In a world that builds its foundation on self-satisfaction and pride, there is no room for grace and mercy. Evil will rise and stand tall in the face of truth. It will even call truth evil. Can we stand?**

#### STRENGTH

- Only the strong will endure.
- **We are not so strong, but Christ in us is, and He will stand strong through surrendered followers.**
- **The presence of Christ in every Believer will strengthen us to stand strong in faith. But we will also stand strong in grace and mercy, knowing that many will still become followers. The mission is not to win; the mission is to win others to Christ. Are we ready to be His messengers?**