

**MARK 11:27-33**

It's Wednesday morning of the Passion Week.

The key word in the conversation is **authority** — vv. 28, 29, 33. It is a freedom to exert will, and force, a freedom to rule. No one has ever had such freedom in a way as Christ has it and exercised it. As God Jesus declared “all authority is given to me in heaven and earth.” He is sovereign ruler over everything. He has the unilateral authority that belongs only to God. And it shows up in His ministry — for example, 75x He says, “Truly, I say to you...” No one said that. The Rabbis, for example, always had to quote a source. He didn't foot notes. E.g., Mk. 1:22, 27.

He had authority over nature (wind and sea) and sin (forgiveness). He is the One who gives the right to someone to become a child of God — a right to save (Jn. 1). He has the authority to judge everyone and He has the right to put down His life and take it up again. He did not have to consult anyone. He sought permission for nothing from any earthly authority.

Note Jn. 5:19 — the Father and the Son are unified in activity and His authority. Also 5:27, 30; 8:28-29. He exercised divine authority by acting in perfect unity with the Father. He also demonstrated His authority by what He said as well as what He did (Jn. 7:14-18 — His teaching is from the Father). Whoever speaks from himself seeks his own glory, whoever speaks from the Word of God seeks the glory of God. Also, Jn. 12:50 — ***I speak just as the Father told Me.***

The only authority we have is when we speak that which God has spoken. And that makes it a horrendous thing when evangelicals come along and make it a virtue to be “humble,” and to obscure the meaning of the text.

Jesus would never ask the religious leaders for any permission to do anything. It is a massive blow to their pride and their perceived power. They are furious with them.

After attacking the temple (11:15ff), Jesus returns on Wednesday. On this one day, Jesus reigned in the temple. The true King was in His true temple. He was reigning and acting with absolute authority. He preaches the gospel and teaches the true nature of the kingdom. And the Sanhedrin comes to confront Him. He sends them away on that day four times.

It is a day of conflict with the leaders and a day of instruction for the people as what is being taught in that place on that day is at last the truth.

Jesus had been having these conflicts with the leaders throughout His ministry, but it preceded Him, with John the Baptist (he called them snakes at the beginning of his ministry and Jesus called them snakes at the end of His ministry).

It is likely that they were constantly around Him in the crowd attacking and questioning and seeking to undermine Him. They were supposed to be the scholastics and the gatekeepers of the

truth, but they were never interested in the truth. They wanted to be rid of Him because they were stubborn unbelievers and hypocrites. They never came for truth, clarification, or understanding; their bent against Him was fixed and impenetrable.

So now it is Wednesday and Jesus is in the temple and there were some small boys who were in the temple recognizing Jesus and calling, “Hosanna,” further incensing the leaders. They want to expose Him and get Him to admit that He did not have the authority to do this and that there might be repercussions for the actions He has taken. They *burned* against Him.

### **1. The confrontation (v. 27)**

The chief priests, scribes and elders came to Him. He was walking around the temple teaching and interacting with the crowd. He was talking about the Kingdom and repentance and salvation. He is preaching the good news of salvation. Maybe he taught the things He had talked about earlier in His ministry — vain prayers, and follow Me, and count the cost to be My disciple, and the narrow gate, and building your house on the rock — He probably talked about many things on a very long day of teaching.

There is a similar scenario in which Jesus evangelizes. In Mk. 10, we have the example of Jesus doing personal evangelism (with the rich young ruler). The qualities of this man were all unique — he is rich (supposedly the blessing of God on a good man), he is young, and he is the ruler of a synagogue — the most revered and elevated man in the synagogue. Jesus has a reputation as a teacher, so he politely interacts with Jesus — *good teacher*.

He is interested in eternal life — he wants “God-life,” he wants God. He comes running and he comes kneeling — he is not confident, despite all his position, that he has eternal life. He is full of doubt and fear and anxiety.

Why didn’t Jesus make it simple, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ...” Why ask the question “Why do you call Me good?” It’s just the greeting... Because the man thought everyone was good. Jesus is making the point that no one is good except God. “You have a problem, sir. You have a bad definition of good. You don’t get it. Your problem is that you think you’re good. Let’s go after that. So let’s try the ten commandments. Let’s try the second half (the ones that relate man to man).”

He supposed himself to be good and having kept those commands (he was a liar). “Ok. Let’s try out the first half of the Decalogue — your relationship with God...” Why did He command him to sell his property and give it away? Because it had to do with the first commandments — no other gods, but total love and worship of God and you never blaspheme Him in any way. You worship only Him.

The Lord is working on those first four commands — who do you worship? Every time he led in worship, he demonstrated his hypocrisy because he worshipped money. Jesus didn’t do evangelism by having them add Jesus to their life. He crushed them with an understanding of their inability to do anything to save themselves.

So what did Jesus say on Wednesday in the temple? He was attacking their depravity and their sin of idolatry and worship of things other than God — He would have attacked their false understanding of their own goodness. You can't offer Jesus and forgiveness until they understand their sin.

He is moving through the temple redefining their idea of goodness.

So the chief priests and scribes come up to Him — they were enraged. The word means that they attacked Him. Their ire is escalating. All the enemies of each other with all their own idiosyncrasies come together because they all hate Christ and they confront Him. They want to see Jesus eliminated.

They asked Him the very same question (v. 28) that they had three years earlier at the beginning of His ministry. They were accusing Him of blasphemy — “He couldn't go in there and do what He was doing and teaching what He was teaching without rabbinical authority.” It was all about tradition — He was “way out of line because He had no authority.”

That Jesus returned a question with a question was the traditional way of teaching. He is not evading their question, but is using their method of teaching to correct them.

The *baptism of John* refers not just to the baptism, but applies to all of John's ministry and the cleansing that repentance brings, and his declaration of Jesus as the Messiah (Lk. 3).

So the question of Jesus is whether the ministry of John was either of men or of God. He then offers a strong challenge: *answer Me*. They're on the hot seat. They have to answer and they cannot accept John and reject Jesus. It's a package deal. And they get that (v. 31). If you affirm the ministry of John the Baptist you have to affirm the ministry of the Messiah.

They also knew they couldn't say that it was from men — because they would be stone (Luke says) because that would be blasphemy because everyone considered John to be a real prophet. And the penalty of blasphemy was stoning.

So they said, “we do not know.” So much for their omniscience.

Jesus answers, *nor will I tell you...* It's over. Let them go. It's Heb. 6 — it's impossible for them to be renewed to repentance. They're condemned. Jesus will not throw His truth to the dogs. It's over.

What is the point of this for us, tonight?

Look at chapter 12.

The vine growers were contract farmers of the land owner who had gone away. This parable is being told in the temple to the same group that has just rejected Him. He is describing them to them (vv. 6-7) — they stoned the prophets and now the Son. God sent His Son and they said, “Let's kill Him.” What will the vineyard owner do? The crowd knew. He will kill them.

Notice the next part — *He will give the vineyard to others* (v. 9). They got it (v. 12).

Who are the others? And what is the vineyard? It is language of Isaiah 5. The vineyard is Israel — God's people. And the contract farmers were the religious leaders — those responsible for Israel and responsible to return to God a righteous crop. The others are the apostles — the twelve ordinary men.

We know that because of Lk. 9:1 and Acts 2 (*they studied the apostles' doctrine*).

The authority the disciples had was the authority to build up the church in the truth (2 Cor. 10, 13). They are the new stewards of God and the stewards of the church. And they passed it down to the next generation and the next and the next. We have been given the apostles' doctrine and the Word of God.

We minister with authority when we preach that which was revealed to and through the apostles. Cf. Tt. 2:15. We don't make suggestions. We have all authority. Don't let anyone evade or get around that. You teach and reprove and exhort with all authority. Where does it come from? It is given by God to the disciples and to us.

Jesus spoke with authority and He passed that on to His new stewards and the Spirit of God has passed that on through His Word to all those who preach and teach.

Preaching that has authority is preaching that puts the Bible on display. Our authority is not our own; it is delegated and borrowed. By what authority do we say these things? By the authority of the Word of God.