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Jesus, What Will You Do With Him?

LUKE 20:9-18

Introduction

1. At least three times a week we gather in this building to worship our God and learn from His Word.
2. There is one central message which we continually declare.
3. It is that God sent His Son, Jesus, “into the world . . . that the world (you and I) might be saved through Him” (John 3:17).
4. It is that in Him we might obtain the forgiveness of our sins (Acts 2:38) and receive eternal life (John 10:10).
5. But what happens if we reject Him?
6. Our text this morning follows Jesus response to the Jewish leaders’ question concerning His authority to cleanse the temple and teach in its precincts.
7. These leaders have made it their goal to silence Him, whatever the cost.
8. As Jesus has often done throughout His ministry, He tells a parable, an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.
9. It has to do with *their* rejection of His authority, but Luke has recorded it for us as well, that we might each think about our own response to Jesus.

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I. A Parable About Rejected Authority

A. AUTHORITY ENTRUSTED

“And He began to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard and rented it out to vine-growers, and went on a journey for a long time.” (Luke 20:9, NASB95)

1. In Luke's account of this parable, a man does three things:
 - a. First, he planted a vineyard.
 - b. Second, he then rented it out to vine-growers
 - c. Finally, he went on a journey for a long time.
2. Matthew and Mark, in their accounts, provide us with more detail on the planting of the vineyard:

“There was a landowner who planted a vineyard and put a wall around it and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower” (Matthew 21:33).

“A man planted a vineyard and put a wall around it, and dug a vat under the wine press and built a tower” (Mark 12:1).
3. This landowner invested a good bit of his time and money into this vineyard:
 - a. Not only did he plant a vineyard.
 - b. He also “put a wall around it” to keep out various animals which might destroy his vineyard as well as individuals who might be intent on stealing its produce.
 - c. He also “dug a wine press” with “a vat” underneath for the extraction of the juice from the grapes.
 - d. In addition to all this, he also “built a tower” where someone could keep a watch over his vineyard.
4. With everything in place, he then rented his vineyard out to vine-growers, men who were skilled in caring for the vineyard and producing quality wine from its grapes.
5. They would only need to pay him the rent he charged for the use of his vineyard.
7. We aren't told how long he was gone, simply that he “went on a journey for a long time.”
8. As we noticed at the beginning of this lesson, a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.
9. In this parable,

- a. God is the landowner who planted His people in the midst of His promised land.
- b. He prepared everything so that they might grow, flourish and glorify Him.
- c. The vine-growers were the kings and priests whose responsibility it was to watch over God's people and feed them on His Word.

Slide 3**B. AUTHORITY VIOLATED**

“At the harvest time he sent a servant to the vine-growers, so that they would give him some of the produce of the vineyard” (Luke 20:10a, NASB95)

1. The time finally arrived to harvest the grapes — this could be as long as five years:
 - a. Under Old Testament law (Leviticus 19:23-25), it was forbidden to eat the fruit of newly planted fruit trees for the first three years.
 - b. The fourth year's crop was to be offered to the Lord.
 - c. Finally, in the fifth year it could be eaten.
2. How ever long it may have been, when the time harvest did arrive, the owner of the vineyard sent a servant to the vine-growers to get his share of the produce from his vineyard.
3. However, the vine-growers were determined that he should not have any of harvest.

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4. They mistreated each servant that the landowner sent to them:

- a. The first servant (v. 10).

“... but the vine-growers beat him and sent him away empty-handed.” (Luke 20:10b, NASB95)

- b. The second servant (v. 11).

“And he proceeded to send another servant; and they beat him also and treated him shamefully and sent him away empty-handed.” (Luke 20:11, NASB95)

c. The third servant (v. 12).

“And he proceeded to send a third; and this one also they wounded and cast out.” (Luke 20:12, NASB95)

5. Just as these vine-growers mistreated the servants sent to them, so had Israel mistreated God’s messengers of old.

a. Any astute listener to Jesus’ parable that day would have immediately recognized Israel’s own actions toward the prophets which God had sent to them over the years.

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b. Shortly before King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian army destroyed Jerusalem, the writer of Second Chronicles tells us that . . .

“all the officials of the priests and the people were very unfaithful following all the abomination of the nations; and they defiled the house of the Lord which He had sanctified in Jerusalem. The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and His dwelling place; but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets . . .” (2 Chronicles 36:14-16, NASB95).

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c. Earlier here in Luke’s gospel, we find Jesus denouncing the experts in the law of Moses (Luke 11:47-51).

“Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and it was your fathers who killed them. So you are witnesses and approve the deeds of your fathers; because it was they who killed them, and you build their tombs. For this reason also the wisdom of God said, ‘I will send to them prophets and apostles, **Slide 7** and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute, so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be

charged against this generation.” (Luke 11:47–51, NASB95)

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6. The sending of his beloved son (vv. 13-15a).

“The owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.’” (Luke 20:13, NASB95)

- a. Having been unsuccessful in the sending of his servants, the owner asked himself, “What shall I do?”
- b. As Jesus said this, He drew His listeners into the story so that they began to consider the landowner’s options.
- c. Many of those listening to him may have thought the logical thing to do would be to send a large enough force to seize the vineyard and punish the tenants, before giving his vineyard to more worthy tenants.
- d. However, the owner, chose a different course of action.
- e. He decided, “I will send my beloved son” (Luke 20:13b).
 - 1) “Beloved son” is a reflection back upon Abraham’s love for Isaac (Genesis 22:2) and Jacob’s love for Joseph (Genesis 37:3).
 - 2) It is also the declaration of God for His Son, Jesus, at both His baptism (Luke 3:22) and His transfiguration (Matthew 17:5).
- f. The human response is to get even, to settle accounts once and for all.
- g. The divine response, however, is one of compassion and unconditional love — it is also a costly gamble — “perhaps they will respect him.”
 - 1) The owner knows that apart from going himself, he has no one more important that he can send.
 - 2) The son goes as the father’s representative, with the father’s authority, to claim that which belongs to his father.

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“But when the vine-growers saw him, they reasoned with one

another, saying, 'This is the heir; let us kill him so that the inheritance will be ours.' "So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him."
(Luke 20:14–15a, NASB95)

- h. However, when the tenant vine-growers see the owner's son coming, they reason to themselves, "This is the heir, let us kill him so that the inheritance will be ours" (v. 14).
 - 1) The tenants were no longer content with the produce from the vineyard; they wanted the vineyard as well.
 - 2) When the son came in place of his father, the tenants perhaps thought the father to be dead.
 - 3) They greedily assumed that if they got rid of the son then the property would be theirs.
- i. So it was that they "threw him out of the vineyard and killed him" (v. 15a).
- j. Jesus is that Son whom the Father sent to "seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10), to redeem His people.
- k. He knew, even as He spoke this parable, that the intent of "the chief priests, scribes and elders" that day was to ultimately kill Him.

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C. AUTHORITIES JUDGED

"What, then, will the owner of the vineyard do to them? "He will come and destroy these vine-growers and will give the vineyard to others." When they heard it, they said, "May it never be!" (Luke 20:15b–16, NASB95)

1. Jesus asked the second question of this parable, "What, then, will the owner of the vineyard do to them?"
2. He was forcing His listeners to see this scandal from God's perspective.
3. The owner will at last intervene in a decisive way — He will destroy the vine-growers and give his vineyard to others more deserving.
4. The Jewish leaders understood the implications of what Jesus was saying,

that God would withdraw Israel's inheritance and give it to others.

5. They responded, "May it never be!"

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II. What God Says About Rejecting Authority

A. THE STONE REJECTED BY THE BUILDERS

"But Jesus looked at them and said, "What then is this that is written: 'The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief corner stone'?" (Luke 20:17, NASB95)

1. Jesus looked at them and asked, "Then what is the meaning of this Scripture: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone'?"
2. He quoted from Psalm 118:22 in which the psalmist is saying that something seemingly insignificant, a stone thrown away by the masons, was really the most important stone.
3. The "chief cornerstone" was the stone which bore the weight of two intersecting walls — it was crucial to the building's stability.
4. Jesus' point: God had sent His only Son, but they rejected Him.
5. If they kill Him what will happen then?
6. God would establish a whole new building upon Him — Jesus would build His church, the temple would be destroyed and Gentiles would become a part of God's new building.

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B. THE STONE'S JUDGMENT UPON THOSE WHO REJECT IT

"Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust." (Luke 20:18, NASB95)

1. Jesus then changed the image a bit — from a stone upon which something is built to a stone which smashes or crushes something.
2. His words are an allusion to Isaiah 8:14, in which Isaiah speaks of God and

writes, "Then He shall become a sanctuary; but to both houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over" (Isaiah 8:14, NASB95).

3. It was Simeon, who, when Joseph and Mary brought their baby, Jesus, to the temple over 30 years earlier, blessed them and said, "this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel" (Luke 2:34).
4. Jesus point: You may reject God's Son, even kill Him, but you cannot kill God or defeat His mission.

Conclusion

1. There is a hymn written many years ago by Albert Simpson which asks the question, "What will you do with Jesus?"

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2. In the second line of the hymn, he writes . . .

**"You can be false to Him if you will;
You can be faithful thru good or ill;
What will you do with Jesus?"**

13a

3. The chorus concludes with these words:

**"What will you do with Jesus my friend?
Neutral you cannot be:
Some day your heart will be asking, O friend,
"What will He do with me?"**

4. Will you respond in obedient faith to Him today?