

Series: Parables: Did You Hear That?
Message Title: ***The Parable About Authority***
Date: Sunday, October 28, 2018
Scripture: Luke 20:1-19
Speaker: David H. McKinley
Location: Warren Baptist Church, Augusta, GA

Introduction

Before you arrived in this place to gather and worship, most of you—if not all—have stood in the presence of one of the most powerful and imposing authorities in life—a mirror.

Without ever speaking a word, the mirror renders judgment and with it comes compliance or resistance.

Mirrors exercise authority by exposing errors—what needs attention—and illuminating our need for change.

Disputes over authority are rampant today. More than any in my lifetime, parents, employers, government and churches are filled with disputes of authority and abuses of power.

However, resistance to authority does not remove the reality of authority.

“One day, as Jesus was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders came up and said to Him, ‘Tell us by what authority You do these things, or who it is that gave You this authority.’ He answered them, ‘I also will ask you a question. Now tell Me, was the baptism of John from heaven or from man?’ ... And Jesus said to them, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things’” (Luke 20:1-4, 8 ESV).

How did Jesus respond to this challenge of His identity/authority? He asked a question about the authority of John the Baptist. If they disputed, the people would rise up, but if they affirmed, Jesus would be right and His authority could not be resisted. So how did they answer? They shrugged their shoulders.

So Jesus told a parable:

“And He began to tell the people this parable: ‘A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while. When the time came, he sent a servant to the tenants, so that they would give him some of the fruit of

the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed'... 'Then the owner of the vineyard said, "What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him." But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.' And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them?"...But He looked directly at them and said, 'What then is this that is written: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone"?'"
(Luke 20:9-10; 13-15; 17 ESV).

To help us with this story (and whenever you open your Bible to read, investigate and apply), there are three questions you must ask:



1. What did this story mean then? (Past)

Read Luke 20:1-2.

Characters:

Landowner = God

Tenants = Religious Leaders

Servants = Prophets

Son = Jesus Christ (See Matt. 3:17; John 3:16)

Others = Us (See Luke 20:16)

Context: One of the deficits and struggles we have when we read the Bible is that we often do not share the same historical and cultural context. This does not make the Bible and its truth any less relevant or authoritative, it just makes our understanding a little more difficult.

For the Jews and their leadership, this was a story with prophetic context and purpose—to see and understand all that had happened leading up to this moment. The Messiah isn't just coming, the Messiah has come!

Isaiah 5:2—Israel is known as God's vineyard.
Important image and identity for Israel.

Psalms 118:2—The cornerstone is a messianic view of Christ. *Week between triumphal entry and crucifixion.*

Luke 20:19—The plot to kill Jesus was already underway.

In many ways, this story is a microcosm (and a mirror) of all of history—what God planned and purposed was now unfolding before their eyes. Rather than receive Him, they rejected the Messiah.

2. What does this story mean now? (Present)

It is a story with a continuing/contemporary consequence.

Jesus was the Son—not just in the story, but in history—who was rejected and killed. See Luke 23. Jesus was accused of claiming to be King, mocked by an angry mob, led to the place of the “Skull,” crucified at the hand of Roman soldiers, then placed in a borrowed tomb.

Yet, in Luke 24, Jesus rose on the third day, and the visitors who came to pay their respects discovered an empty tomb and went out to change the world, even giving their lives as they were convinced of the gospel

message. "Men may live for a lie, but few will die for a lie." —Adrian Rogers

Because of this, Jesus is the Cornerstone of life and faith. The most important question today and in every generation is the one Pilate would ask just before the crucifixion, "What shall I do with Jesus who is called the Christ?" Everything rises and falls on Jesus Christ, whether you receive or reject Him.

Brilliant and gifted Oxford scholar, C.S. Lewis, articulated the "trilemma" in his investigation of Christ and resulting faith. Given the claims Jesus made to forgive sin, to establish a kingdom, to rise from the dead, you have to come to one of three conclusions: "Mad, Bad, or God"

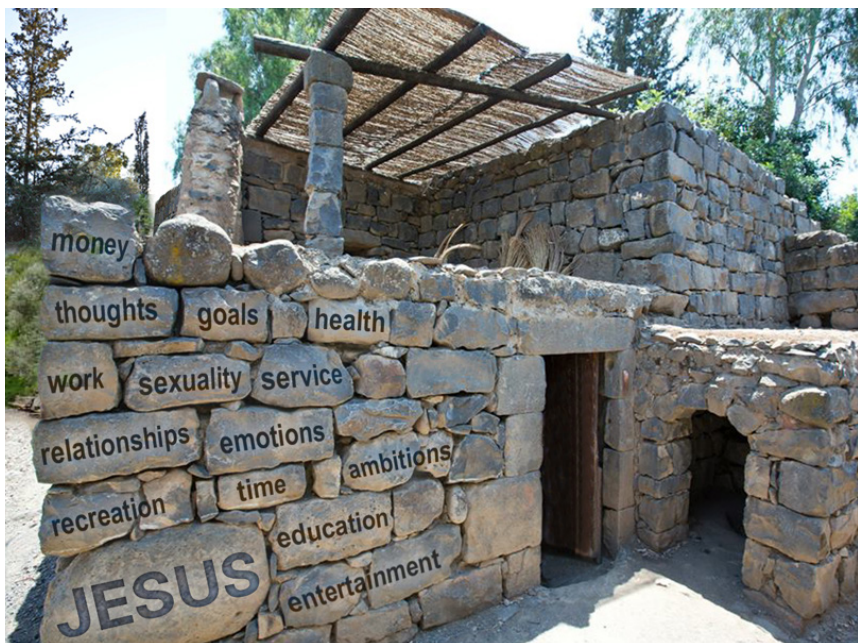
To this end, Jesus will either be the cornerstone of your life or a stumbling stone. The cornerstone (foundation stone or setting stone) is the first stone set in the construction of a masonry foundation. This is important since all other stones will be set in reference to this stone, thus determining the position of the entire structure. It is the final authority for construction as it goes up.

Over time, a cornerstone became a ceremonial masonry stone, or replica, set in a prominent location on the outside of a building, with an inscription on the stone indicating the construction dates of the building and the names of architect, builder, and other significant individuals.

For those who receive Christ and follow Him, the following becomes a powerful image of our new identity in Christ:

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy” (1 Peter 2:9-10 ESV).

Read 1 Pet. 2:4-6.



Christ re-oriens and directs the total course of life—your time, your service, your money, your relationships.

Yet for those who reject Christ:

“So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,’ and ‘A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.’ They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do” (1 Peter 2:7-8 ESV).



They stumble in two ways—Luke 20:18.
Destruction, Brokenness

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons” (1 Timothy 4:1 ESV).

Deception.

In the 1970's, Francis Shaffer prophetically wrote, “When mankind comes to the end of rationalism, then they will lose their rationality and they will believe myths and fables, rather than the truth of God's word.”

The result is this:

“But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God... always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:1-4, 7 ESV).

So the broad resistance and rejection of the authority of Christ results in divine judgment and human insanity.

3. What does this mean to me? (Personal)

Because of who Christ is and what He has done (when we receive Christ), we gain new identity and inheritance.

Read 1 Pet. 2:9-10.

- **Resistance is replaced with acceptance.**

We are no longer rebel-squatters living on God's planet, we become what God intended for us—people of His glory. In Christ, we gain acceptance before God and we share the inheritance with Christ. We are right, righteous and redeemed.

- **Arrogance is replaced with gratitude.**

The tenants wanted to be "owners"—MINE vs. "servants" HIS. We should see our lives in light of God's purpose and not our own—the posture of a servant toward God.

- **Brokenness is replaced with security and blessing.**

Remember our first parable, Matthew 7:24-27? Everything rises and falls on the integrity and security of the foundation.

"And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at His teaching" (Matthew 7:28 ESV).

In all of this, Jesus Christ is the sure foundation and the chief cornerstone. The cornerstone becomes our confidence and comfort. Did you hear that?