

Journey to the Cross: Passion Week - Tuesday

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[0 : 0 0] We have been in a sermon series where most recently we have been looking at the last week of Jesus' life, earthly life, where a few weeks ago we looked at what occurred on the Sunday prior to His resurrection.

The Sunday prior, Jesus allowed people to recognize Him as Messiah as He rode on a colt into Jerusalem, where the people proclaimed Hosanna.

Hosanna, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. And then Monday, that evening on Sunday night, He goes into Jerusalem, and then that evening He retires to Bethany.

The next morning He wakes up, He goes into Jerusalem the next day, and we record where it's recorded, where last week we looked at Jesus being upset at what the people had done and made of the temple as a den of thieves.

And He chides those and He overthrows the table, overturns the tables, and He ushers people out of there who have unduly exploited the people who are simply trying to worship God.

[1 : 4 0] And His house shall be called a house of prayer, and He retires that night to Bethany. Tuesday is the day we will be looking at today.

There's many things, of course this is not extensive, we're not giving you everything that occurred on these days, but just a flavor of the things that are recorded that occurred on this last week of Jesus' earthly life in Jerusalem.

On Tuesday, Jesus awakes, once again goes down into Jerusalem, and we pick up the account in Luke chapter 20, and Melissa read earlier the passage that we're going to look at today.

It begins in verse 19, but we must understand the context in which that passage is spoken, and to gather that context I want us to go back to verse 1 of chapter 20.

Chapter 20 verse 1 records that one day Jesus was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel, and the chief priest inscribes with the elders came up and said to him, tell us by what authority you do these things, or who is it that gave you this authority?

[3 : 0 0] Their question is one of authority. By what authority do you do this? Now what are the things that they're referencing? By what authority who do you think you are to ride on a colt as prophesied of the Messiah, to ride into town with palm branches, allowing people to recognize you as Messiah, saying, Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, who gives you the right to overthrow tables in the temple?

We have charge of the temple, not you, by what authority? Who do you think you are?

By what authority? The question is one of authority. Jesus responds to their question by another question. He responds in verse 4, was the baptism of John one of heaven or one from man?

There's no possible way that they could have responded to this question without getting themselves in trouble. They refused to answer the question. They claim ignorance, and they say, we don't know.

Jesus then says, well, then that's going to be my response. If you won't tell me, then neither will I tell you. By what authority, verse 8, I do these things.

[4 : 22] The question is one of authority. Jesus doesn't respond. Now that's just got to get under your skin. When you ask somebody a question, and they refuse to answer your question, that just has a way to not have one think pleasant thoughts.

We'll just leave it at that. But Jesus goes on. And so here's what I want us to understand. The topic in the air of conversation is what gives you this authority?

And so in response to that question that is in the conversation surrounding this, he tells a parable that is really going to answer their question by what authority.

And so this is the parable that he shares. And he shares, and this is going to be Scott's paraphrase, version of verses 9 through 18. But he tells them of a man who planted a vineyard, and then he goes off to a far country.

And he leaves these tenants in the vineyard to tend to his vineyard while he is away. And while he was away, he sends a servant. And the tenants in the land who are taking care of the vineyard, who are given charge of the vineyard, these servants were going to check on how much fruitfulness that had been bore because of the work that the tenants had were given, the responsibility the tenants had been given.

[5 : 53] And so the landowner sends the first tenant and they beat him. They beat the servant. They send the second servant and they mistreat the second servant.

The third one, they further abuse this servant. And so the landowner is then now thinking, well, surely, surely, if they won't respect my servants, maybe surely they'll respect my son.

And the landowner sends his son to the tenants of the vineyard and they kill him. And they kill him. Now, what is the topic that is surrounding in the air?

And then to conclude that, he says in verse 17, and they look directly at him, and what then is it that was written, the stone that the builders have rejected has become the cornerstone.

Everyone who falls on the stone will be broken to pieces and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him. The point is this, the vineyard in Isaiah chapter 5 is a depiction of Israel.

[7 : 07] And so the landowner, of course, is God the Father and he sends servants to the prophets to Israel to say, to call them back to the Lord.

But what happens when God sends prophets to the nation of Israel? They are often beaten and abused and mistreated. And so then God the Father says, certainly, the nation of Israel will receive my son.

And they end up killing him. And so what occurs then Jesus is communicating, hey, religious establishment, comprising of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the scribes, the chief priests, the Sanhedrin, that your treatment of Jesus is keeping, let me say it this way, you killed my son and it's a prophecy of Jesus' death.

And again, what is in the topic? What's the topic that he is answering? By what authority? And who has authority? The vineyard owner, God the Father, has authority over Israel.

What gives him the right to be doing these things? He's the Messiah, he's God incarnate in human flesh. That's what gives him authority.

[8 : 27] The power and authority, and so what is it that Jesus is communicating? The power and authority do not reside with the priesthood, the religious establishment, but it resides in Jesus, the precious rejected stone.

That's where authority lies. And in this conversation, he is the one who would take away the sins of the world, and in this conversation and on the heels of that conversation, we read in verse 9.

So today we're going to talk about Jesus' matchless authority, because that is the context in which our passage that we're going to look at today resides.

And so look with me in verse 19 now. The scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him at that very hour, for they perceived that he had told this parable against them, but they feared the people.

One of the things that I want to look at in this passage, and because Melissa has read it already, I'm not going to read through it again at this time, but I'm going to recall to our remembrance some things that were in this passage.

[9 : 54] So Jesus' matchless authority is the Son of God. What do we see in this text that it penetrates all hypocrisy, deception, and flattery?

Jesus' matchless authority as the Son of God penetrates all hypocrisy, deception, and flattery. Look with me, you can include in that list hatred. Look with me in verse 19, verse 1.

And the scribes and chief priests sought to lay hands on him. That is, they wanted to arrest him. Have Jesus arrested? It's interesting, in the Gospel of Matthew and in the Gospel of Luke, there's another two groups of people that are also involved in this passage or in this account.

We read the Sadducees in the Gospel of Matthew, and we read from the Gospel of Mark the Herodians. Now, you put scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees together and the Herodians together, and they all have distinct difference.

The Herodians, they were the Jews who supported the Herod dynasty. You have people who would not otherwise get along, but for one cause, they're going to put aside their differences, and that is their hatred of Jesus.

[11 : 12] We have to stop this man. He threatens our power base and our influence among the people. We have to stop him. They have a hatred.

But Jesus' matchless authority as the Son of God penetrates all hatred. Look with me in verse 19, verse B, the latter part of that verse, for they perceive that he had told this parable against them, but they feared the people.

Remember that parable about the evil tenants, the wicked tenants of the vineyard that was given to them. They perceive that Jesus was talking about, he told that parable about them.

They are not dim bulbs. They got it. And they rightly understood that Jesus spoke the previous parable against them.

They were losing the honor and respect they regularly fed on with their self-righteous egos. They sought places of honor at banquets.

[12 : 24] They sought respectful greetings in marketplaces and being called rabbi. They took pleasure in their ostentatious announcement of giving to the poor.

They loved to stand and pray in the synagogues in the street corners to be seen by men. These leaders of Israel were neither God-pleasers nor man-pleasers, but self-pleasers, who fed their proud souls on the accolades of those whom they intimidated and ultimately abused.

And they were filled with pride. Thirdly, we see another thing that Jesus' matchless authority as the Son of God, it penetrates all hypocrisy.

Look with me in verse 20. So they watched him and sent spies who pretended to be sincere, that they might catch him in something he said so as to deliver him up to the authority and the jurisdiction of the governor, who happens to be Pontius Pilate.

So they watched Jesus. They sent spies. The intention was to catch Jesus in something that he would say, that he might turn them over to be arrested.

[13 : 48] And that they just could catch Jesus articulating some challenge to Rome's authority. Rome has the authority of capital punishment. They could kill him. They could arrest him, and if possible, kill him.

If we could just paint him as some sort of revolutionary against Rome, then we will have him. And so they chose perhaps a very politically charged conversation revolving taxes, something we all enjoy, and by the way, we're less than a month away from your taxes being due.

So they chose this conversation, this politically charged conversation, to say, let's choose this topic of taxes, and then we'll get to that in a moment.

But notice that the matchless authority of the Son of God penetrates not just hatred, not just pride, not just hypocrisy. It also penetrates flattery.

Look with me in verse 21. And so they said to him, look at their approach to Jesus. Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly and show no partiality, but truly teach the way of God.

[15 : 10] They call him a teacher, this respectable title of rabbi. They tell him you speak and teach rightly. You don't even demonstrate partiality in one. You don't uphold one rabbi or one prophet as greater than the other.

You just teach fairly and rightly. You teach us the way of God, never anything else. You just have this way of telling it to us straight.

We like you. And in verse 22 through 25, not only does the matchless authority of the Son of God penetrate hypocrisy and pride and hatred and deception and flattery, but here we find deception in verses 22 through 25.

The question, this politically charged question, is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar or not? And it says, he perceived emptiness and said to them, show me a denarius.

Whose likeness and inscription does it have? And they said, Caesar's. And he said to them, then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's.

[16 : 28] One of the greatest forms of admiration that one could pay an esteemed teacher is to elevate that person by asking a difficult question.

Dr. Vreeland has a PhD in Old Testament and is well studied. And if you have the privilege of sitting in one of his classes, you benefit from all the years of study that he has given himself to in studying the Word of God.

But if I were to ask Dr. Vreeland, hey, Dr. Vreeland, have you heard of Adam and Eve? That is an insult. That is not a compliment.

Because every one of us could tell us something about Adam and Eve. But if I were to pay Dr. Vreeland a question, it would be a question that maybe not all of us have the information available or have studied.

Hence the question. And so it would be that question that would elevate him. And so this is in some ways a form of flattery, but it's also a form of deception because they give Jesus a difficult question.

[17 : 36] Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar or not? Well, they think...

And they... There were many taxes for Israel in this time. There were income taxes, land taxes, import taxes, transport taxes.

But perhaps the one the Jews hated the most would be called the poll tax. And it is this, is the one that they're referencing here in this text. And everyone had to pay it who lives under Roman authority.

It is particularly offensive to the Jews because it suggests that Caesar owned them while they passionately viewed themselves as a nation solely as God's possession.

So this taxation was a constant friction point for the nation of Israel. In fact, when Jesus was a little boy in around six to seven AD, there was a revolt by Judas of Gaul who led this revolt over one of the things that was a point of friction is this taxation.

[18 : 51] The leaders thought they had forced Jesus into an impossible dilemma because if he answered, either way, he would lose favor with the people of Israel or be turned over to the Roman authorities.

There's no possible way. If he affirmed or denied the lawfulness of this tax, there's no way he would lose favor or be turned over.

There's no way for him to answer this question in their minds. And when we consider, I'm going to take a step back now and think, when we consider the motivation, the religious authorities had this hatred toward Jesus, this pride, this unwillingness to confess, this hypocrisy, the flattery, the deception toward Jesus.

When I think of why they were approaching Jesus like this, recognizing perhaps he might be the Messiah. What does this tell us in their approach to Jesus?

Perhaps they thought Jesus must be just like us. Jesus must be just like us. They love to be recognized in the markets. They love to be thought of as important.

[20 : 14] They enjoyed to be seen by others. Perhaps Jesus would give into our tactics because it works for us every single time.

Yet when we read Scripture, God is altogether unlike us. We read in Isaiah 46, with whom will you compare me or count as my equal? To whom will you liken me that I may be compared?

Little after that, we read in verse 8, remember this, keep it in mind and take it to heart, you rebels. Remember the former things those long ago, I am God and there is no other.

I am God and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning and the ancient times and yet those times still to come. I say my purpose will stand and I do whatever I please.

From the east I will summon a bird of prey and from a far off land a man to fulfill my purpose. What have I said that I will bring it about? What I have planned that I will do?

[21 : 27] I love that the Lord has no equal and has none to be compared. There is none like him. He is not like us.

In him there is no deceit, he cannot lie, he is holy, holy, holy. He is the Creator, we are the creature. He overflows with kindness and grace and yet he will not allow the guilty to go unpunished.

And what is so sad is they do not yield to Jesus' authority. Instead, they try to capture him.

So I wonder if every time I sin, what it may communicate to the Lord. Maybe Jesus is just like me. This perhaps root sin is maybe not altogether different from the first century as it is for us.

Secondly, Jesus' matchless authority is the Son of God. Not only does it penetrate all hypocrisy, deception, flattery, but it supersedes yet affirms our dual citizenship.

[22 : 44] He says, show me a denarius. And now a denarius is a silver coin. It was minted under the authority of the emperor. It is worth about a day's wage for a Roman soldier.

And in the first century, the denarius would have had Tiberius' face on it, on the front of the coin. And responding to Jesus without hesitation, he responds with, well, whose likeness and inscription does it have?

And the obvious answer is Caesar's. And the profundity of Jesus' next statement should not be lost in its simplicity.

Jesus does answer the question. And they do not capture him the way they thought they would. He simply says, then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's.

The word render here means giving back something that is owed. God himself had brought Israel under Roman's rule and Caesar was their earthly ruler.

[23 : 56] They were to support Caesar's rule because all government is ordained by God to protect the innocent, reward good, restrain evil, and punish evil.

We read that in Romans 13, 1-4. Consider what Rome had provided for Israel, a powerful military. They provided peace, security, protection, roads, shipping channels, the opportunity for commerce.

These things were the things that Rome had provided for Israel. And so it was legitimate for Rome to be expected to expect those valuable services to be supported by the benefit of its contingency through taxation.

But how does this, but what else is Jesus communicating here? Jesus' matchless authority is the Son of God.

He supersedes, yet affirms a dual citizenship. Our primary citizenship is one that is in heaven. Jesus said, His kingdom is not of this world.

[25 : 02] When we were born again and adopted into His family, we enter a new kingdom and submit to Him as King and having been delivered from the dominion of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of His beloved Son.

It is that kingdom that is most real and most true. Our citizenship will one day, our earthly citizenship, will one day give way to a heavenly one.

And that citizenship will be fully realized and the age to come. And our second citizenship, though, is in this present age, as citizens of this temporal world, under the delegated authority of human government.

Our earthly citizenship, while it is not ultimate, it does not mean it is unimportant. And let me illustrate.

I am grateful for good laws. I am grateful for good laws. Think with me, good laws cannot change hearts. Only God can do that. But good laws can mean the difference between life and death.

[26 : 15] It's important. So while our earthly citizenship is not ultimate, it is not mean it is unimportant. Another metaphor utilized in Scripture to talk about our citizenship here on earth is to be one of ambassadors.

That is, those of one nation who represent their king and nation to another. Believers are ambassadors of Christ. We are foreigners, but our exile here on earth is positive and purpose-filled.

We are sent into this world. We have been placed in families and in communities and in neighborhoods and places of employment to be his witnesses.

To testify to the reality of the king who died for sin and the kingdom that has no end. What a privilege. And so we are ambassadors.

Another way I like to think of it is we are exiles on purpose. We don't live in this world. I'm sorry, we don't have to live in this world that is continually becoming dark.

[27 : 24] We get to live in this world as ambassadors to bring light of the gospel to this present age. And that is our distinct privilege.

And so there are threats, though. There are threats to ambassadors living as purposeful exiles. And so what are some of those threats that I spent some time considering this week?

One I would refer, and what do I mean by threats to ambassadors? Threats to ambassadors that keep them from remaining on mission to make disciples. What is that threat?

What are some threats that ambassadors have today that keep us from remaining on mission? What I would call is retrenchment. That is struggling to regain ground or control that we have once lost in the past.

And this is often through Christian engagement in what I call culture wars. Our mission is not primarily here on this earth to work toward cultural reform.

[28 : 25] Our mission is to be his witnesses and to make disciples. We also have what is another threat that ambassadors living in this world that keeps us from remaining on mission is one thing I would call a homesickness, which is propagated sometimes by nostalgia.

I call nostalgia half remembered past. So we all would like to go back to the days where kids rode bicycles through neighborhoods without regard, without supervision, and we just trusted our neighbors.

We all want to go back to the day where we had one-room schoolhouses and all of this. But it's nostalgia is the half remembered past.

My great grandmother was raped and had as a result of that sexual assault a child that my grandmother did not even have the privilege of knowing because that child was sent to a sister living in Canada and that was so shameful back in that time that even that child's relationship to my grandmother was kept a secret.

Only until my great grandmother had died did my grandmother realize that her cousin living in Canada was actually her half sister.

[29 : 54] Do you see how nostalgia is just the half remembered past? Sin has existed from Adam. But that nostalgia can kind of threaten us living as ambassadors and remaining on mission.

What's another one? Just simply the pursuit of ease and comfort, making this world our home, forgetting that we are exiles on purpose. Another one would be assimilation, that we capitulate to social pressures.

This world's sexual ethics becomes ours. This world's work ethic becomes ours. This world's means of relief, of gambling and alcohol and other forms of addiction become ours.

This world's means of raising children's becomes our way of raising children. This world's all-consuming pursuit of happiness becomes our all-consuming pursuit. This world's sense of right and wrong becomes our sense of right and wrong and this assimilation becomes a threat to ambassadors of us living as exiles on purpose.

The opposite of assimilation can be withdrawal, just the avoidance of culture entirely. We huddle in our homes and we essentially just go out for spiritual events.

[31 : 08] We go to church, we go to Bible studies and we watch the news in our homes with disgust. But we neglect entirely to engage our neighbors, our coworkers, our mission with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We neglect our responsibility. And we have functionally forgotten why we are even here. And these are all threats to us living as ambassadors, living as purposeful exiles in this world.

That is why I don't think sometimes the distinction between sacred and secular is helpful. I think a better distinction perhaps is sacred and that which is wicked.

Because I don't have a sacred... I have a sacred task as a pastor.

You have a sacred task in your workplace. You have a sacred task of being a husband or a wife or a single person.

[32 : 17] You have a sacred task of being someone who might be retired. You have a sacred task of being a boiler maker, a school board member, a school teacher, a custodian, a politician, a civil servant.

Blue collar, white collar, it makes no difference. These are sacred tasks as exiles who live on purpose.

And this summer we have the opportunity on good confidence. I think summer is coming.

And with summer comes good weather in the Pacific Northwest. And how is it that we might use the summer weather to be utilized in the sacred tasks that we have been given as dual citizens?

Our heavenly citizenship, but also as citizens on this earth. How are we utilizing our privileged purpose as exiles who live on purpose and perhaps use this great weather that we're coming into?

[33 : 31] Backyard neighborhood things to get to know our neighbors. Taking a women's day out at the lake with other moms and children and inviting those who may not know Christ and to come along and spend time together for the purpose of the gospel.

How might we do that? Well, Jesus' matchless authority as the Son of God not only penetrates all hypocrisy, deception, flattery, it supersedes yet affirms our dual citizenship.

But what else does it do? The last thing that we find in our text is that it requires worship, not stubbornness.

When Jesus said render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's, what is he communicating?

And then in verse 26, we read, and they were not able in the presence of the people to catch him what he said, but marveling at his answer, they became silent.

[34 : 41] Notice what Jesus is communicating to these religious leaders. Remember, you have been given charge over this vineyard.

You are God's people. You belong to God. So you who, yes, pay your tax, render to Caesar what he's, to Caesar, but you are created in God's image.

You are his people. You belong to God. Render to God your life. That should be your response. And, but they did not choose to respond that way.

And what is interesting is they marveled at his answer. Remember, they thought this question about the taxes was a surefire. If Jesus affirmed the taxes, he would have lost. If he denied the tax, he would have lost.

But in answering the way he did, it surprised them. And they marveled at his answer. And instead of, remember what Jesus said to in the previous parable, they, the, the tenants said, this is the air.

[35 : 54] Let us kill him so that the inheritance may be ours. In some ways, Jesus is tipping the hat saying, I know you recognize who I am, but you're refusing to do so.

And in their amazement of their answer, it gave evidence that they perhaps knew who he was.

And it should have caused them to worship, but instead they dug their heels in an unbelief and refused to worship him and refused to believe in him.

It, it's quite shocking to me, their response. Instead of worship, they, they, their response was one of stubbornness, a staunch unbelief and recognition of who he is.

Today, perhaps there is someone here who has never believed in Christ for the forgiveness of sin and believing in Jesus's condescension to earth, taking on human flesh, being born of a virgin.

[37 : 13] I appreciated the Apostles Creed that we mentioned earlier. He lived a sinless life and he died for sin.

Three days later rose from the grave overcoming sin and death, having paid the penalty for sin. That all who might believe may have eternal life.

And if you are here and you have never made that decision, you have never believed in the life, death and resurrection of Christ for the forgiveness of sin. I encourage that you do that today and that your response to Jesus's matchless authority as a son of God would be to worship him and trust him for the forgiveness of sin.

And I think about rendering to the Lord that which is the Lord's. For those in Christ here today, he paid the ultimate price for sin.

And we read in 1 Corinthians that you are not your own, for you have been bought with a price, so glorify God in your body. What does this look like? I think of Romans 12 1.

[38 : 30] I appeal to you therefore brothers by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Jesus's matchless authority as a son of God requires worship. So I think about application for us today.

Perhaps I want us to consider how it is perhaps the Lord has been already speaking to you perhaps for weeks about a particular area of sin.

Perhaps you have been harboring resentment. And today I would encourage you worship God, forgive. His matchless authority as a son of God requires that we worship him.

Perhaps today you are given to grumbling and complaining. Confess that as sinful. And allow gratitude, the words of gratitude to replace those words of complaining.

[39 : 36] Perhaps you have been feeling indifferent and pretty apathetic about your faith for a while. I encourage you to begin the spiritual disciplines of reading God's word, praying.

And they say, Scott, I've tried many times. If I could ask one more thing for you is this. Find a friend to read God's word and to pray together.

In college I would go to the library at the university attended and I would just sit down with a friend and we would read God's word together. I wasn't of the habit to be able to do that on my own.

And so I asked a friend, would you just let's meet every morning at this time at the library and let's just read scripture together. He would read a passage then I would read and we would read and we would read through the New Testament in the course of a semester.

And then we would pray together. It was so good. But it helped replace some indifference and some apathy that I saw growing in my heart. Perhaps today it requires worship.

[40 : 42] Magicals authority is the son of God. It requires worship. Perhaps worship. There may be some in here who have an addiction, whether it be an online form of pornography or something of that nature of substance abuse or gambling.

Confess, repent, seek help. Your citizenship is in heaven. I don't know what it is.

That perhaps the Lord has been speaking to you about. But I pray our response would not be like this of the religious leaders. They marveled at his answer, but they were silent in their indignation and in their stubbornness and in their unbelief.

They did not have the appropriate response that was necessary that Jesus gave. He expected them, he expects a worshipful response.

Jesus' matchless authority as the son of God requires worship. So think with me. Going back to the first text, by what, the question was by what authority do you do these things?

[41 : 55] And then he tells them, I will not answer you and I won't tell you by what authority I did these things because you refuse to answer. Then he tells this parable that he's telling them by what authority he does these things and he's proving to them over and over and over again.

I have matchless authority. I am the son of God and that response to that reality of who I am requires one to worship and you didn't give me that response.

And that's what I think is so tragic about this account of the religious leaders and I pray our response would be that one of worship. So would you pray with me?

Lord, I thank you for the opportunity to look at your word. Lord, I pray that, Lord, I pray that, given your matchless authority, we would be a people who worship you with every thought, word, action, deed, motivation, that we would be a people who walk intimately with you and worship you in every aspect of our life.

Help us to be continually transformed, to look more and more like you. Lord, thank you for allowing us the privilege to have dual citizenship.

[43 : 42] Yes, our citizenship in heaven is ultimate, but thank you and one day this earthly life will give way to that which is eternal.

And thank you for giving us the opportunity to live as exiles on purpose here on this earth. I pray that we would be a people who are diligent this week, this summer, to live for you, to proclaim and represent our King and our Kingdom's purpose here on earth.

We love you and it's in your name, Jesus, we pray. Amen.