

“The Examination of Jesus”

Mark 11:27-12:17

Introduction

- We are doing a study in the final week of Jesus life, the greatest seven-day period in human history.
 - Where man was redeemed, where my sin was paid for, and where Jesus had victory over death.
 - The greatest week ever.

And as you remember this week is taking place in the city of Jerusalem in Israel.

- The first day of the week – Jesus enters into Jerusalem riding on a donkey.
 - After Pastor Rob’s last’s week picture of me, I was very tempted to put our pastor’s picture on the face of a donkey with Jesus riding on his back into Jerusalem to illustrate that event to you.
 - But cooler heads prevailed – praise the Lord, so I have no such picture.

But Jesus enters Jerusalem, goes into the temple, see the corruption, see the religious leaders blocking the gentiles from really getting to see God.

- And what does Jesus do?
 - Well He slept on it.
 - He prays on it and the next day – with righteous anger – not fly off the handle anger, but I prayed on this, slept one night and now it is on.
 - Turning over tables, making a whip, whipping some of those boys.

That story by the way is one of the reasons I don’t believe those pictures you see of Jesus as an emaciated, Swedish man.

- No way – Jesus was powerful, spend His life working with his hands as a carpenter, and most an even more proper interpretation a stone mason.
 - Jesus was powerful – nobody put up a fight.

And Jesus then leaves that scene, walks into the temple courtyard and begins to preach and teach.

- And I point that out to you because that is what we do here at Calvary Chapel.
 - We love Jesus; we want to be like Jesus, we want to emulate Jesus – Simply Jesus.
 - So what did Jesus do when there was a multitude of people?
 - He taught the Word of God to them.

So if you can picture the scene – Jesus is standing on the temple Mount – huge Corinthian columns rising 40 feet above Him, the country side of Israel in the background.

- The city of Jerusalem, filled with millions of people and huge crowds are there to listen to him preach.
 - But there is another agenda at work here.
 - We are going to look in and study this and next week as Jesus is going to be examined by the religious leaders.

Now prophetically you have to understand how important this is?

“Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, “This month *shall be* your beginning of months; it *shall be* the first month of the year to you. Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of *his*

father, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take *it* according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take *it* from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.” – Exodus 12:1-6

- What Holiday is being celebrated in Jerusalem during Jesus last week – anyone??
 - Passover – right?
- Well back on that first Passover that the Jews ever celebrated, there in Egypt, when the death angel passed over those who had the blood of the lamb on the door, God laid out exactly how the process was to work.
 - You were to take a lamb without spot or blemish.
 - Unlike what we sometimes give to God – God didn't want this lamb to have 3 limbs, one eye, or some kind of mangy disease.
- They were to give a lamb that was without spot or blemish.
 - So you were to give this lamb. – **(Picture of cute lamb)**
 - Not this lamb. - **(Picture of bizarre lamb)** –
- We understand - not that guy –you were to bring a lamb that was to be without spot or blemish.
 - **(Back to the picture of the cute lamb)**

Now what you were to do according to Exodus is that you were to bring this lamb into your house on the 10th day of Nisan and that lamb was to stay in your house with you, until the 14th day.

- And two things were happening during this four-day period of time.

#1 – You were getting attached to the lamb.

- You can image, it's sitting with you on the couch, at your feet at the dinner table.
 - The kids give it a name.
 - You are growing attached.
 - And that was on purpose.
- Because when you offered the lamb for your sin, you had a better understanding of how ugly sin really was, costing the lives of the innocent.
 - Of course a picture of Jesus, the sinless lamb.
- But the only purpose was not just to get attached.
 - The other purpose?

#2 – Inspect the lamb

- You know out in the field a lamb may look perfect, but you get it in the house for a few days, and you notice the scab under the leg or on its stomach.
 - So you were inspecting the lamb, to make sure it really was without spot or blemish.

Well the reason I go over all this with you, is not to just put pictures of lambs on the screen, but so you will understand.

- This is Passover week.
 - Jesus enters Jerusalem 5 days before the Passover according to the gospel of John, on the 9th of Nisan, the Jewish first month.
- The story we are reading about today is the next day, the 10th of Nisan.

- And all over Jerusalem, spotless lambs are being brought inside to be examined and looked at closely to see if they really are without spot or blemish.
- And on this same day – Jesus is beginning to be examined, to see if He is without spot or blemish.
 - An amazing prophetic picture.

I also think it would be helpful for us to understand who is inspecting Jesus.

- The story today and the rest of chapter 12 that we will look at next week have different groups of religious leaders asking Jesus questions, inspecting Jesus.
 - And it helps to understand who the different groups are.
 - And where they are coming from in their different attacks.
- So first of all we are going to see the:

The Sanhedrin – (with picture)

- This group was made up of chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of Israel just like it says in verse 27.
 - These were 71 men whose job it was to protect the law and oversee all of Judaism.
 - Anyone who was having authority of the Jews it was there job to inspect such a man.
- A little later we are going to see another two groups of leaders in Israel come together to attack Jesus and that was the...

The Herodians – (with picture)

- They wanted submission to Rome; they favored their taxes and control of the Roman Empire.
 - Their name comes from their allegiance to the Roman appointed governor of Israel at this time - Herod and his family.
- Now teamed up with them in chapter 12:13-17 as we will see were the...

The Pharisees – (with picture)

- They couldn't have been more different.
 - They wanted nothing to do with Rome, Roman Taxes, or Roman oppression.
 - And they couldn't stand Herod and his family – the Pharisees consider Herod to be a usurper of the throne of David because he was an Idomian.

Next week we are also going to meet the Sadducees and the Scribes.

- The Sadducees were the liberal scholars of the day and the scribes were the experts in the Jewish law.

So this whole group of religious and political leaders comes to start examining Jesus.

- But in reality it is them and their hearts that are on trial with each question.
 - There will be five questions, two of them this morning, 3 next week, if you are taking notes...

The Examination of Jesus

#1 – A Question of Authority – Mark 11:27-33

- As I already mentioned, these chief priests, scribes and elders were together called The Sanhedrin.
 - And it was their job to question authority.
 - To examine those who claim to have spiritual authority in Israel.
 - This was there job.

- But we see from the question Jesus asks them that they were not really interested in the truth to protect the nation of Israel.
 - No, they wanted to get Jesus.
 - So they ask – on what authority to you teach and do these things?

And no doubt, they had worked so hard on developing in their minds the unanswerable question.

- They knew that if He said, I do this in my own authority.
 - The people would have called for the straight jackets, what do you mean it is your own authority?

But if Jesus would have said, I am working under God's authority - They would have called Him a blasphemer because the multitudes were there, yet Jesus simply puts to them a question that reveals where their hearts are.

- He asks them if John the Baptist's ministry was of man or God?
 - And from the ensuing debate we see where their heart was.
- No doubt they had a little staff meeting – what do we say???
- Oh they wanted to answer, from men – because they didn't have time for that crazy preacher in the desert.

But they knew the people loved John the Baptist.

- For most of Jesus' ministry we learn from the Jewish historian Josephus that John was way more popular than Jesus.
 - The people loved him - He was poor like them, from a rural background like them – he told it straight to the religious leaders – he ate bugs, he was like a super hero.
- So because of the people's love there was no way they could say John was of man.
 - They knew there were no good answers.

If we say from men, the people will raise up.

- But if we say from God.
 - Well John told us to repent.
 - John told us – Jesus was the Lamb of God, the Messiah.
- If we keep the people happy and say John was from God then Jesus is going to ask us, why we didn't listen to him.
 - They knew there was no good answer to this question.
 - So they say – we don't know – today's political leaders would say – I do not recall.
- Depends of what "is, is" – if you remember mid 90's.
- I bet the crowd chuckled.
 - Here are these super smart guys coming to find fault in Jesus – we have a question, by what authority to you speak?
 - I will answer if you do – was John from man or God?
- We don't know.
 - Then I'm not telling you – and the crowds must have loved it.
 - Instead of Jesus coming out looking conflicted and confused, these elders of Israel are the ones who looked foolish.

Jesus goes on in chapter 12 to teach a parable that shows where the leaders of Israel's hearts were really at – [Mark 12:1-12](#)

They knew this parable was about them, for the vineyard was the national symbol of Israel – carved into the very side of the temple by which Jesus stood.

In the parable you see the progression of the history of the nation of Israel.

- When they were young, God saw them as a new vineyard and He was excitedly waiting for them to produce fruit – God was the vinedresser.
 - God appointed men like the Sanhedrin, to care for and protect the vineyard of God, the nation of Israel – they were the hired workers.

But when it was time to receive fruit, the men who had been hired to work didn't want to do what they had been hired to do.

- We learn from our studies in Leviticus that the fruit in a new field was not to be collected until the 5th year.

Meaning these hired men had 5 years to begin to see the land they were working as their own.

- But the landowner, God, sent many servants (who were the prophets) to them and they beat some and killed some.
 - When you look at the history of Israel you see this is so.
 - Elijah was driven from the land by an Israeli king.
 - Isaiah by tradition was sawn in two.
 - Zechariah was stoned to death.

And as Jesus moved from retelling of their obvious history to their prophetic future, He was revealing their true intentions.

- They didn't just want to ask Him questions; they wanted Him dead and out of the way.

A few days from this encounter on the temple mount – these men would reject Jesus and kill Jesus – and Jesus speaks of the ramifications by quoting Psalm 118.

- Which by the way was one of the Hallel Psalms, that 's important because the Hallel Psalms would traditionally be sung at Passover.
 - So Jesus picks up on a current ditty they were just singing and says.
- And even though by His death He was going to save man and that is why the death of Christ is “marvelous in God's eyes”.
 - Even though that is true – these religious leaders decided this is what they were going to do and there were going to be consequences.
- The National judgment came just a few years later in 70 AD as Jerusalem was leveled by the Roman Empire.

Jesus had reviewed their history; past, present and future but they had missed the warning.

- But they got mad instead of getting right.

God gave them the Sanhedrin the job to protect Israel, but instead the only thing they were doing was beating and killing God's men and God's son.

- Jesus in the parable clearly puts Himself in the place of the Son of God.
 - Some people teach Jesus never claimed to be God's son.
 - Well the religious leaders sure thought he did, and they continued to plot Jesus' death.

After the Sanhedrin tried to trip Jesus up with their question on authority – the next group to move in were Herodians and the Pharisees.

- Remember from earlier in our study these guys could not have been more different than one another.

- The Herodians loved Rome, they loved their leadership in Israel – they took their name from the Roman appointed leader of Israel – Herod.
- And on the other side you had the Pharisees.
 - Who could not stand Roman occupation of Israel, they couldn't stand paying money to them in taxes and they couldn't stand Herod.
- These two groups couldn't be more different, but they both hated Jesus.
 - And their hatred for Jesus united them to come and ask our second question, and the last one we will consider today...

The Examination of Jesus

#1 – A Question of Authority – Mark 11:27-33

#2 – A Question of Responsibility – Mark 12:13-17

- Their examination, their questioning of Jesus could not have been more disingenuous.
 - These two groups didn't agree on the answer.

The Herodians would have answered – yes pay your taxes.

- The Pharisees would have – never!!!!

But again, the point was to learn from Jesus, the point was to trap Jesus – they thought they had Him.

- If He answers “Yes” – then the People who hate the Romans and want nothing to do with their taxes are going to want nothing to do with Him.
 - If He answers “No” – then they would call over the Roman soldiers and say, “this man is teaching the people not to pay taxes.”
 - They thought they had him.

But of course Jesus' answer is brilliant and it teaches us a very important truth on what our responsibility is as believers.

- Jesus tells them to hand Him a coin.
 - Now this is so revealing to me.
 - Some teach a prosperity gospel, say things like “we are King's kids, God wants you to be rich like Jesus” – you got to say ahh.
- Really rich like Jesus????
 - I tell you, I don't really want to be rich like Jesus where He has to ask others for a coin.
 - Hey I don't even have a denarius – does anyone have one?

The Denarius (Picture of Denarius) was a small silver coin, weighing about 3.8 grams. One side bore the head of Caesar and on the other side was the phrase in Latin “Potifex Maximus” which basically means Chief Priest.

- And Jesus takes this coin and asks these Pharisees and Herodians – whose image is this, whose picture is this on this coin?

You see each Caesar would mint coins with his picture on it. – Showing whom the money really belonged to. – This money is mine.

- Whose picture is this? – It is Caesars.

So Jesus says, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.”

- The coin was made by Caesar and God has ordained government to watch over people. That was funded by taxes, which meant the tax was something due to do him for the use and running of the government.
 - This stuff is Caesar's and he was to be given what was due him, which was right.

- No one could argue with that.

But this concept speaks to our responsibility.

- The term **“render’ means to pay back or to pay a debt** – Jesus, who has the authority to speak into our lives saw taxes as a debt citizens owe to their government for duties performed.
 - That duty includes fire and police, as well as national defense, the salaries of those who manage our country and programs that help the poor.

Now you might not like the way your tax money is being spent, and the good news for you is that, that was not true for disciples in Jesus day. You live in the United States of America - you have the right to express yourself with your voice and your vote.

- Less than half of people who consider themselves Christians voted in the last election, less than half – 46 percent.
 - And again, I am going to be a little tough on you – but if you don’t like the way the country is being run my question for you is – did you vote?

Because if you didn’t then can I say I think you have no right to complain.

- Men and women have bled and died to give us the freedoms we have in this country and you have a responsibility to vote.
 - And not just because of the sacrifice of men and women – but you should vote because God says you have a responsibility to pay taxes.
- So if God says, I am suppose to give to Caesar the things that are Caesars then I need to participate in shaping who Caesar is in our country and what Caesar is going to do with my money that God says I have a responsibility to pay.
 - I know I will get some email on that, but I believe it’s true.

We have a responsibility to give to Caesar the things that are Caesars.

- But far more importantly is what Jesus said next...
 - We are also to render to God the things are His.

You see the money was Caesar’s because it bore the image of Caesar

- But you bare the image of God.

“So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” – Genesis 1:27

- You bear the image of God.
 - And more than that – the Lord purchased you.

“You are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” - I Corinthians 6:20

- Your life belongs to Him.
 - So often we live like our lives belong to us.
 - But I want to render to God what belongs to God.
- My life, my resources – Lord they are yours to do with what you desire for the Kingdom of God.

We are his.

- And we need to apply this to our lives.
 - It is one thing to sit back and learn about conversations that happened 2,000 years ago.
 - But how does this apply to us.
- We have questions concerning God’s Authority and our responsibility.

We have here a question of God’s authority.

- The point of the question for us is do you believe Jesus has the authority?

- These religious leaders came to Jesus and asked – who gives you the right to speak into our lives.
- And that is not just a question for him – but a question we need to ask ourselves as well.

Do we really believe Jesus has the authority to speak into our lives?

- If you have been following us on Wednesday night we are going through the book of Leviticus – the Holy Calendar this week.
 - But in chapter 18, God is speaking on the sensitive subject of intimacy and He says 13 times in that one chapter “I am the Lord.”
- In other words God is saying this is how I feel this area of your life needs to be regulated and just so you know what credentials I bring to the table – I am the Lord – so unless you can trump that – you need to listen up.

We say, well this is what Doctor Phil or my Daddy believe or worse yet – this is what my heart is telling me is true.

- Listen if you want to trust Doctor Phil, your Daddy, or your wicked heart, you go ahead.
 - But God says this is how I feel – and I am the Lord your God.
 - He has the authority! – That is the not the question.

The question is do we believe it, and do we honor it?

- Do we let God by His Word speak into our marriage, do we let God by His Word speak into our singleness – we should be.
 - Do we let God speak into how we handle our jobs, our money, and our kids?
 - Hey you are getting a little personal pastor.
- Listen precious church – either God knows what He is talking about or He doesn’t – either God has authority or He doesn’t.
 - We have fooled ourselves into thinking – if I live anyway I want, with me as the captain of my own ship, well then I will truly be happy.
 - But how has that type of thinking worked out for you?

Our culture is addicted to so many things to dull the pain of disappointment in our lives.

- Maybe we should try another way.
 - Maybe happiness doesn’t follow hedonism, but maybe, just maybe, happiness follows holiness.
 - Maybe real life follows living life the way God says it should be done.
- I know that is a racial concept – but let us not forget – He is the Lord!!! – He has the authority and He should.