

One of the keys to being a successful professional wrestler is having a great entrance. Because the entrance needs to let everyone know who you are as a performer. And it usually begins when the music hits. And a particular song plays that's catchy people will know it's you within a few seconds. And even the way that you walk down to the ring and the poses you make and the things you say need to let someone who's never seen you before figure out who this is. That's one of my favorite entrances are the ones that the crowd gets really into and responds and by singing along or shouting to catchphrases back.

Now last week Jesus had one of those kind of entrances at the triumphal entry. The music played in Jesus came into town and the crowd responded. It introduced Jesus's Messiah who's coming to Jerusalem to save his people.

This week the crowd is not going to respond. This is the less triumphal entry where we will see who people didn't receive Jesus with praise but instead opposed him.

And we need to read he's not just this things and mistakes that people made long ago. But we need to see them as warnings. Because we are also tempted to reject Jesus and many of the same ways.

Turn to Luke 19:41-20:8

Point 1: Don't miss Jesus' peace (v. 41-44).

What we see in these four verses is the city of Jerusalem misses Jesus. Jesus was praised outside of its gates, but will die inside its walls. Jerusalem as a whole will miss out on the peace that Jesus offers.

We talked about the peace of Christ this Advent.

We went through the themes and spent a whole Sunday on the peace Christ offers.

He offers us not just internal peace within ourselves.

He offers us peace with God.

He offers us to have salvation and a right relationship with the Creator of the universe.

But Jerusalem did not want Christ's peace.

And their rejection of this peace makes Christ weep.

Verse 41, **"And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it,"**

This is one of the few times we see Jesus weep.

We see Him weep at the funeral of Lazarus.

Hebrews 5:7 tells us that Jesus wept during prayer.

Here we see Jesus weep over the city.

Verse 42 tells us why Jesus wept. **"Saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes."**

Jesus rode into town to offer them peace with God.

He came to bring salvation through His body and blood.

But Jesus already knows they will not accept them.

In a few days they will call out for His death.

And He laments.

He wishes that they would have recognized the peace He offered.

On this very day, Jesus is making true peace.

But it is hidden from their eyes.

They do not see it.

They cannot understand what Jesus is trying to accomplish.

But what moves me is how Jesus responds.

Because Jesus does not act how any of us would.

Jerusalem is a wicked city.

It is a city that has God Himself walk into town.

Preaching not condemnation, but offering salvation and forgiveness to every sinner.

Jesus offers redemption and new life to even those who think they are way to far gone.

And Jerusalem responds by nailing Him to a piece of wood.

Their rejection of God will lead to judgment and justice.

They will face punishment because of their sin.

Now any of us when we see wicked people get what they deserve we cheer.

It's the most satisfying part of movie when the villain finally gets killed.

When the wicked are finally caught and thrown in jail.

If I told you that a city you think is full of wicked people was about to face the wrath of God and get what they deserve you would probably say "good!"

But that's not what Jesus does.

Jesus does not celebrate.

He does not say, "I told you so."

He does not gloat and dance.

Jesus weeps.

Because this is the heart of God.

He does not delight in bringing justice.

He does not delight in punishing the wicked.

He weeps.

He laments.

He wishes Jerusalem would have made a different choice.

But their sin has blinded them.

"But now they are hidden from your eyes."

You will not always have chances to repent.

Some think they can live however they want and maybe repent and turn to Christ when they feel like it down the road.

Now there is always grace for those who ask for it in faith.

And you can turn to Jesus even on your death bed.

But the problem is that sin blinds us to faith.

The further away from God you walk, the harder it is to turn back.

And there are consequences for those who miss out on Jesus peace.

For Jerusalem those consequences will be harsh.

Verse 43, **"For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side."**

Jesus is describing the judgment that will come.

And He is describing a siege of the city.

There have been many sieges throughout Jerusalem's history.

During many of them God miraculously delivered and saved His people.

But not this time.

This time they will have to face the consequences of their choice.

They rejected Christ's peace, so now they can see what life without peace is like.

Verse 44, **"And tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."**

All of this happened in 70 AD.

This is likely what Christ is referring to.

The Jews revolted against the Roman Empire and tried to gain independence.

They failed.

Jerusalem was surrounded by the Roman army and under siege for seven months.

Anyone who tried to escape was crucified.

After seven-months the Romans attacked and destroyed the city.

The temple itself was completely destroyed and still has yet to be rebuilt.

All of this judgement happened because they did not accept Christ's peace.

They did not receive the Messiah.

They wanted independence on their own terms.

And they did not realize or recognize the Messiah had already come.

Do you know the time of your visitation?

There are many who do not know and do not recognize that Christ has already come.

We just finished celebrating the birth and coming of Christ.

Many came to church and heard the gospel preached.

It is not simply a cute story.

It is not optional and only for those who want to believe and if you don't that is fine.

Receiving the peace of Christ.

Accepting Him as your Savior is an absolute necessity.

You must recognize that Jesus has come to visit.

Every single time the world is preached.

Every time the gospel is proclaimed,

Every time a Christian is baptized.

Every time the communion is eaten and drank,

Jesus visits again.

And everyone has a chance to accept His peace.

Those who don't will face terrible consequences.

Have you received Jesus?

Those of you who have received Christ.

Those who have not missed His peace.

For you I want to know when was the last time someone not being a Christian made you weep?

When was the last time seeing someone reject the gospel made you cry?

Because the reality of hell and judgment should not make us proud.

It should not make us want to stand up and say I told you so.

It should make us follow the example of our Savior.

It should make us weep with Jesus for those who miss His peace.

Point 2: Don't misuse Jesus' name for selfish gain (v. 45-48).

There are far too many who do this.

There are far too many people who claim to be Christians.

There are far too many people who claim to follow God.

Yet, they only use the name of Christ for themselves.

This is part of why this is the less triumphal entry.

Because there are many who claim to praise God.

They claim to be religious.

They claim to be longing for the Messiah.

But when the Messiah actually comes, they are not pleased.

Verse 45, "And he entered the temple"

Most of us know the story of Christ cleansing the temple.

But my fear is that when we come to stories we know well.

Or at least stories that are very familiar to us, is that we don't study them anymore.

We assume that we understand it all.

And we can miss things.

Jesus enters the temple.

This should be the climax of the triumphal entry.

The Messiah is finally entering the Holy City.

The King that was promised has entered the royal city.

The prophet has come to the capital.

The true and final high priest is coming to the temple.

If the songs and praise were what happened outside of the gates,

What should inside the temple be like?

They should be breaking out the red carpet.

The best worship service that has ever happened should be under way.

God in flesh is finally coming into His temple.

Not in a cloud.

Not in the Ark or box as a symbol of His presence.

Not behind a curtain where only the High Priest can see once a year.

The perfect lamb of God has come to the place of sacrifice.

But these people in the temple are in sin.

Instead?

"And began to drive out those who sold"

Jesus comes into the temple and starts kicking people out.

He does this as the Messiah.

He comes to clean up His Father's house.

He kicks those out of the holy place who are misusing God's name.

There are a particular kind of people Jesus kicks out.

He gets rid of **"those who sold."**

There are people in the temple not to worship, but to make money.

Because those who come to the temple must make sacrifices.

People may need to purchase the right animals to give.

Or they may need to exchange their money for one that would be acceptable to give for the temple tax.

There are plenty of things worshippers would need.

So some are happy to provide this service, for a small fee.

And there is little doubt that they are overcharging and seeking to profit off of those who just want to worship God rightly.

Now this story is not about churches that might have coffee shops or bookstores in their buildings.

Though, it seems to imply that isn't wise and probably shouldn't happen.

On a larger scale this is about those who are misusing God.

There is a much more serious danger that people are using God to make money.

"saying to them, It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of robbers."

These people have taken a house of worship and prayer.

A place where the weak should be able to come pleading for God to heal them.

A place where sinners should come able to beg for mercy.

But instead it is a place where the Mafia gathers.

It is a place for crooks and criminals to set up shop.

Jesus is quoting from Isaiah 56 here.

It's a beautiful chapter I want to encourage you to read and study more.

Because it ties in well with what Jesus does here.

The first half of the chapter is about the blessing God will bring.

That those who keep the Sabbath.

Those who worship God rightly and obey His commands,

They will be accepted and blessed before God.

Even the foreigners, Eunuchs, and those who seem far off.

They will be welcome to come and pray in the temple.

It will be a place they can be accepted.

The second half of the chapter is a warning to Israel's leaders.

Those who are only seeking their own gain instead of God's glory.

And that is just what is happening now.

Those who should be spiritual leaders just use God.

They don't care about God at all.

They only care about themselves.

Which is why Jesus drives them out.

But this still happens today doesn't it?

There are still plenty of people who use the name of for selfish reasons.

All over the world there are those who stand up behind pulpits to preach.

And they don't preach so that the gospel will be proclaimed and God will be glorified,

They preach because they want to gain fame.

There are pastors who write books not to help believers but to get rich.
There are plenty of men who become pastors because they want a position of authority so they can abuse women and children.
There are pastors who only want power and control.
They want all the decisions to be made by them.
There are those who use the name of Jesus and quote Scripture only to gain political power.
They show up on Sunday to gain votes.

These people.
These who use the name of Jesus for their own gain.
These are the people Christ throws out of the temple.
Because they have no place in Christ's kingdom.

And the damage these people do to the witness of the church.
The damage they do to the kingdom of God is heartbreaking and infuriating.
We should not tolerate those who would use Jesus for their own gain.
Because now often when unbelievers hear of Jesus, they can't hear the gospel.
They don't want to hear what we believe, because they only see the evil done in Christ's name.

Verse 47, **"And he was teaching daily in the temple."**

But after Christ kicks them out, what does He do?
He does not set up His own booth to make money.
He just comes to teach day after day.
Because Jesus is not out for His own gain.
Jesus came to teach us.
Jesus came to proclaim the kingdom and help us find it.

"the chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him."

These are all of the powerful people in Jerusalem.

All of the most powerful spiritual leaders.
All of those influential in the temple.
And really just anybody who's anybody has had it with Jesus.

And their response should show us who has been using God's name for their own gain.

It is the powerful the rich and the influential.
It is them that Jesus rebukes is them that Jesus calls to repent.

And we need to recognize who Jesus did this to.
Because I so often hear people use the story to mean that they can kind of do whatever they want.
They'll say things like well Jesus overturned the temple so I can go and harass unbelievers.
Or now I can behave in any kind of belligerent manner.
Because Jesus did this so therefore I can act however I want.

But we need to see that Jesus did this in God's house.
He did this in a holy place that should be filled with worship of God.
Where people should and do know better.
And he did this to those who were supposed to be the religious powerful leaders in charge of making sure worship happens rightly.
Jesus cleanses the temple from those who misuse the name of God for their own gain.

Now I don't think we should make cleansing temples and throwing people out of churches a normal practice in our daily Ministry and life.
After all Jesus only did it once.
But this should tell us how God feels about those who use his name to profit themselves.

But instead of repenting they want to get rid of Jesus.
Instead of turning to God for salvation they will turn to Rome to kill their competition.

Verse 48, **"But they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words."**

They want to destroy Jesus.

They want to kill him.

But they can't yet cuz everyone's listening to him and everyone seems to like him.

But instead of listening to Jesus's words that quietly see and begin to plot.

Don't be like these people.

Don't be like those who misuse the name of Jesus for our own gain.

And don't be like people who in Jesus rebukes them decide they want to get rid of Him.

Point 3: Don't question Jesus' authority (20:1-8).

Our last section this morning shows us that people question Jesus.

They questioned Jesus's authority to tell him what to do.

And particularly these religious leaders are angry that Jesus would tell them to stop being corrupt.

The high priests are angry then Jesus would stop them from profiting off of the poor.

Verse 1, **"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"**

The same people that we just saw Jesus anger.

The same people who have been using Jesus's name for their own gain.

The same people who are seeking to destroy Jesus.

These people come up to Jesus and they have questions.

They do not come to listen to Jesus, they come to tell Jesus what they have to say.

Verse 2, **"And said to him, 'tells us by what authority you do these things, or who it is that gave you this authority.'"**

On the surface this seems like a good question.

It would be a good thing to ask who is Christ?

Who gives him the authority over the temple?

Who decided that he would be the Messiah?

Because this question gets so hard of who is Jesus?

Is Jesus just a great teacher?

Is Jesus just a prophet?

Or is Jesus God?

Because the answer to this question determines a lot.

The problem is that they will not accept any answer.

It does not matter what Jesus says.

They have already decided what they believe.

This is much like any of our debates.

Maybe you had some of these at Christmas time or over the holidays.

Someone mentions a heated topic and you start to question one another.

And the questions are being asked because you're really interested in the answer.

The question isn't being asked because you want to learn what the other person's perspective is or why they think what they think.

You don't ask because you're curious and you might change your mind depending on how they answer.

The question is asked because they want to trap that person.

The question is asked because they want to win the argument.

The question is asked because we want to prove that they are wrong and they are just an idiot.

Verse 3, **"He answered them, 'I also will ask you a question. Now tell me, 4 was the baptism of John from heaven or from man?'"**

So Jesus responds with this His own question.

He wants to know if John was really a prophet or not?
If John had the authority from God to baptize people.
And Jesus question is a trap as well.
For Jesus's question is a better trap.

You would think people would learn by now but they haven't and they won't.

You cannot trap God.

You cannot ask him a better question.

Anyone who comes up to God and thinks that they have a question to prove why he's wrong finds out that they are also unable to answer some questions.

Verse 5, **"And they discussed it with one another, saying, 'If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why did you not believe him?'"**

See they have to get together and have a little huddle.

They have to vote and decide on how are we going to answer this one.

It's kind of a simple question.

But they understand what Jesus is doing.

They understand the implications of their answer.

If they say John baptized people with authority from heaven,

Then John baptized Jesus.

And John declared with the authority of Heaven that Jesus is the beloved Son of God.

And if John was from heaven then they need to believe Jesus and they need to stop questioning him.

Verse 6, **"But if we say, 'from man,' all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet."**

And if they say John was crazy.

Look at me living out of the desert he wore camel hair and he ate bugs.

The guy obviously wasn't a prophet he was loony.

If they say that that they are going to lose out on their position as religious leaders.

Because everyone in Israel knows and believes that John really was a prophet.

There's also some irony here that they don't want to answer in a way that will get them killed but they want Jesus to answer in a way that will get him killed.

It also seems like they won't say what they believe.

They don't believe that John was really a prophet.

And their concern here isn't an answering honestly.

Their concern is not getting to the truth of who Jesus is.

Their concern is keeping their own hold of power and getting Jesus to leave them alone.

Verse 7, **"So they answered they did not know where it came from."**

So they take the coward's way out and they say, "we don't know."

All these religious leaders and they can't tell you if somebody is a prophet.

This is their job.

But they don't answer.

Verse 8, **"And Jesus said to them, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.'"**

It seems like Jesus says, "You won't answer me?" then I will not answer you.

Jesus does not answer the religious leaders' question.

But I don't want you to think that this means we're not allowed to question Jesus.

This doesn't mean that we are allowed to doubt or to wonder if Jesus really is God.

It doesn't mean that we're not allowed to ask good questions about if Jesus does have authority from God is He truly God?

Because there are likely some of you in this room who have questions about Jesus.

You're unsure about what you really believe.
You're unsure if everything that I've said about Jesus really is true or not.

It's okay to doubt.

It's okay to wonder and to seek out the truth.

But there is a difference between those who ask Jesus a question because they are seeking the truth,

And those who ask Jesus a question because they're not going to believe Him no matter what he says.

There are some of you who are questioning and you really are searching.

That's good keep asking Jesus questions.

But you need to be sure that you're listening to his answers.

You need to be sure that you're willing to accept that Jesus could be right.

Because those who ask Jesus questions.

Those who doubt and question Jesus's Authority and will not be persuaded no matter what Jesus says no matter what the Bible says.

Those are the people that God will not answer.

The people who stand up and challenge God because they're trying to beat him in a debate will not hear an answer.

But those who ask Jesus questions because they are really seeking after what's true,

They will get an answer.

Because of the Pharisees had dared to be honest in their answer.

If they had actually said what they thought then Jesus would have answered them.

And so if you want an honest answer from God you've got to be honest with him yourself.

The problem with the Pharisees and the leaders questions is that they question Jesus's authority to tell them what to do.

And there is nothing that Jesus could say that would change their minds.

There is no miracle that Jesus could work that would change their minds. Even when Jesus dies is buried and then comes back from the dead they do not change their minds.

They refuse to submit to the authority of Jesus.

They refuse to bow.

And so the question I have to ask is do you believe Jesus?

Do you believe that Jesus has the authority over us?

Do you believe that Jesus really is God?

And if you don't believe why not?

Is there anything that Jesus could do that would change your mind?

Because he has spoken to us.

He has worked signs and wonders.

And his voice still speaks through his word to us today.

Do you hear him?

Now those of you who are already Christians might think that you're off the hook. You are not.

I think we too can question Jesus's Authority.

Now we might not question the authority of Jesus with our words like these leaders,

But we do question His authority with our actions.

We question the authority of Jesus when we don't do what he asks us to do.

I have young children.

And they act like young children.

Which is great but sometimes it can be frustrating.

There can be some moments when I ask my children to do something, or I tell them to do something and they don't do it.

So I can call them over and say hey look me in the eyes I want you to put on your shoes.

And then they say yes sir and they run away far away from their shoes as they can.

And there's been a few times in exasperation of just asked him am I the daddy?

Am I your parent?

Do I have authority to tell you to put on your shoes or not?

And they'll laugh and say oh of course you're the daddy.

That's well then why don't you do what I ask?

Sometimes we act just like those children with God.

We coming on Sunday we raise our hands we sing his praises and worship.

We read his word and we listen Maybe we even take notes.

And then when we walk out we ignore what He commands and we do what we want.

We don't care what Jesus says about how we should love our enemies because we want to do what we want to do.

We don't care that Jesus tells us to not fear this world because we see some stuff that's really scary.

We don't care what Jesus tells us about sexuality because we might know better.

We don't care about how Jesus tells us to treat the poor because we just don't like them.

I could go on and on and on.

But there are a lot of ways that people and I don't mean people outside of there I mean us in here.

There are lots of ways that we question God's Authority when we don't obey and submit.

Don't question Jesus's Authority.

We should submit and obey.

Don't miss Jesus' peace.

Don't misuse Jesus' name for selfish gain.

Don't question Jesus' authority.

And why should we not do these things?

Because Jesus is worth all of our honor and glory and praise.

We should give Jesus all the way we have because he gave everything to us when he died on the cross for our sins.

He came down to earth out of love for you and for me.

He does not stand up on a soapbox and throw things at us and give us cruel and nonsense commands.

He only wants what is truly best for us.

And we should receive Jesus like the crowds last week at the triumphal entry who praised Him.

Instead of like the people that the less triumphal entry who missed and misused and questioned him.

How will you respond to Jesus?