



MATTHEW

The Savior-King and His Kingdom

The King's Authority!

Matthew 21:23-46

Message #60 of 80 – S1095

Sermon given on May 5, 2024



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The King's Authority!

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Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Matthew 21**
- Today, we continue a series through the gospel of Matthew – **The Savior-King and His Kingdom**
- Let's open this time in our service with a word of prayer. - **Pray**

Teaching

- **The King's Authority!**
- Being in an election year (2024) we are all familiar with polls.
- If polls had been conducted right before today's text about who was the Messiah, Jesus would have been the dominant frontrunner of every poll.
- And just like in our own culture, sometimes the leaders disagree with the polls and reject the will of the people.
- **Matthew 21:23**
- The chief priests and elders were the spiritual authority of the temple and the religious system of the Jews.
- Sadly, they had wandered from a pure worship of God and had devolved into political preservation of their position, power, and influence over others.
- Their worship became more about themselves than about God and His will.
- They are confronting Jesus because He threatens those things.
- They had the power to destroy Jesus, but Jesus had the power and authority to save them and make them right with God.
- What are the 'these things' the chief priests are referring to?
- Most likely it was His actions inside the temple of chasing out those who were doing business inside the temple areas.
- In their view, Jesus had no authority.
- This is another attempt to trap Jesus. It won't work.
- **Matthew 21:24-26**
- Jesus is not evading the question.

- Jesus knew that any answer He gave would be twisted into a reason to have Him arrested and silenced.
 - His question is the answer to their question.
 - To admit that John was a prophet would force them to admit that he was the promised forerunner of the Messiah.
 - And by doing that, they would have to admit that Jesus was the Messiah.
 - That was something they were unwilling to do.
 - **Matthew 21:27**
 - Because they refused to answer the question Jesus knew they would be unwilling to hear the truth.
 - If someone is unwilling to hear the truth, then no amount of truth spoken to them is going to get through to them.
 - Jesus then launches into a series of three parables directed at the religious and spiritual leaders of Israel.
 - We will look at the first two this morning and the third next week.
 - A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly message.
 - The first is about a man with two sons.
 - **Matthew 21:28-31**
 - The first son, who at first refused to go to work are the sinners, the tax collectors, and harlots.
 - The second son is symbolic of the religious people who make a show of doing the will of the father but are not.
 - To the religious Jews, the tax collectors and harlots would be the last ones to get into heaven if it was even possible.
 - They presumed they were automatically going to heaven based upon their religion and standing in the religious community.
 - Jesus was trying to help them see that they were not on the right path (**Matthew 7:21-23**).
- Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’**
- Self-righteous people have a hard time getting into heaven because they have determined their own way of getting there.

- It is hard to make self-righteous people righteous.
- Sinners know they are not righteous and can more easily be brought to a place of repentance.
- This is a word of great hope and encouragement for sinners.
- You are closer to heaven than the self-righteous religious people who look down on you.
- It doesn't matter how bad of a sinner someone was in the past.
- If they repent of their sins they are going to be forgiven and are heaven-bound.
- Nothing in anyone's past can keep them out of heaven if they repent.
- **Matthew 21:32**
- 'you did not relent...believe' – The religious people could see tax collectors and harlots repenting of their sins and being baptized publicly.
- That should have caused them to pause and reflect upon what that meant.
- None are so blind as those who are unwilling to see.
- Jesus has another parable for them.
- **Matthew 21:33-39**
- Considering the Old Testament this parable is very clear.
- The Landowner is God.
- Isaiah 5 teaches us that the vineyard is Israel.
- The vinedressers are the religious leaders who were appointed to bring spiritual fruit of righteousness from the vineyard – Israel.
- The servants are prophets God sent to call Israel to a right worship of God, starting with Moses and ending with John the Baptist.
- And the landowner's son is Christ Jesus.
- Mark's gospel describes the landowner's son and his beloved only son.
- The religious leaders had asked for proof of His authority.
- Jesus is claiming the authority as the Son of the Landowner.
- This parable is most expressive of Christ's purpose in coming as the Suffering Servant Messiah.
- Even describing His death outside the city of Jerusalem.

- Jesus asks them a very pointed question.
- **Matthew 21:40-41**
- ‘destroy those men miserably’ – Without realizing it, they confess what they deserve from God for their hypocritical religious arrogance and rejection of Jesus as the promised Savior-King of Israel.
- Jesus then quotes from Psalm 118.
- **Matthew 21:42-43**
- Both parables were directed at religious leaders of Israel.
- God chose Abram out of all the people on earth and determined to make a great nation from him and his descendants.
- They would become the people we know as the Jews.
- They are God’s Chosen People. They always have been, and they always will be the Chosen People of God.
- God chose them on purpose and with a purpose.
- Their purpose was to lead people to the One True God by their faith, obedience, and worship of Him and Him alone.
- By corrupting their worship and rejecting the Messiah, they have abandoned their God-ordained purpose.
- God would give that purpose to another ‘nation’.
- That ‘nation’ is the Gentile church.
- This does not mean that the church has replaced Israel as God’s Chosen People. God has a plan to restore and redeem his people.
- Until He does that, the church exists to make God known through faith, obedience, and worship of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and in the name of God’s only Son, Christ Jesus.
- Jesus then interprets the quote from Psalm 118.
- **Matthew 21:44**
- To those who have been exposed to the grace of God and rejected it, only judgment remains.
- In just a few decades after Jesus said this, the Romans came and destroyed Jerusalem and the temple and ended the Jew’s ability to practice their religion the way they had for thousands of years.
- Some amount of clarity dawns on the religious leaders.
- **Matthew 21:45-46**

- They hear words of truth directly from the mouth of the Author of Truth and reject it.

- Jesus said (**John 14:6**).

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

- Rejecting God’s grace is an eternally dangerous thing.
- The apostle Paul quoting Isaiah said (**2 Corinthians 6:1-2**).

We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ² For He says: “In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

- Jesus will continue this encounter with the Jewish religious leaders with another parable in the next chapter.
- The parable of the two sons challenges us to examine our faith.
- Am I depending on my religion or my good works to get to heaven?
- Or am I trusting solely in the finished work of Christ on the cross to cleanse me of my sins and to bring me to heaven.
- Only Christ provides a way to heaven (John 14:6).
- The parable of the landowner and His vineyard is a call to examine our service to God.
- Everyone is called to serve God in some way.
- Are you doing it for self-gain or are you humbly serving others for God’s glory.
- We are the church! God has given us the purpose of making Christ Jesus known to an unbelieving world (**Matthew 28:18-20**).

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

- After seeing what happened to the Jews for forsaking that great purpose, we should ask ourselves, “Am I doing my part?”
- I don’t know about you but knowing that I have been called to play a part in God’s plan to save the lost is very exciting to me.
- Let’s pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us to be faithful and obedient in our service and Spirit-filled in our worship.
- **Pray!** Worship Team plays the last song!