



The Gospel According to Luke Wk. 96 “Problems with Authority” By Pastor Jody May

Luke 20:1-18 ESV

The Authority of Jesus Challenged

20 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 ² and said to him, “Tell us by what authority you do these things, or who it is that gave you this authority.” 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?” ⁵ And they discussed it with one another, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why did you not believe him?’ ⁶ But if we say, ‘From man,’ all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet.” ⁷ So they answered that they did not know where it came from. ⁸ And Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

The Parable of the Wicked Tenants

⁹ 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. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ And he sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. ¹² And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out. ¹³ Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.’ ¹⁴ 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.’ ¹⁵ And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? ¹⁶ He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others.” When they heard this, they said, “Surely not!” ¹⁷ 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’?”

¹⁸ Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”



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Two weeks ago, Mike talked about the first day of Holy week, Jesus went through a coronation event on a Sunday as He entered into Jerusalem. It was a lowly coronation event; it missed the mark of truly recognizing who Jesus was. He was *The Messiah*, and the fact that people laid palm fronds and their cloaks before Jesus’ colt, was a form of surrender, meaning they recognized this as well. This was a victorious King that was entering into Jerusalem to take His throne.

His fame had grown over three years; **along** with the claims to the throne of David there had been signs: miracles, healings, and demon exorcisms. This had been accompanied by a preaching ministry that taught that the Kingdom of God had come, and Salvation could be had by those who repented and believed in Him. At the same time, He condemned the false teachers, the Scribes, the Pharisees, and Sadducees that sought to keep all Jews in check by ritualistic rule following and temple worship that was now dead.

He rode in on a Sunday, wept over Jerusalem on a Monday, and pronounced a curse because of her stubbornness to accept Him, condemning them to spiritual blindness which lead to Jerusalem’s destruction in 70AD. He then went straight on to the temple where He proceeded to show them why exactly their destruction was imminent. They had made a mockery of His house, where His Father was to be made known to the world.

It had become a place of an illegal money scam, stealing from the very people that actually wanted to be right with God while making rich those that were supposed to help people get to God. Jesus cleans out the temple, people, money, and animals and then proceeds to teach and no one lays a hand on Him. Not the Romans, not the Jewish temple guards, no one, for all the people were hanging on every word He said. If they had, you would have seen what a true riot would have looked like. The ponsy scheme was over!

He leaves for the night and returns Tuesday because He is a conquering King, full of compassion and sympathy for His people. He is going to work all the way up to the final moments before His time of ultimate sacrifice. He wants to spend this time proclaiming the Gospel, the good news that the Kingdom of God had arrived.



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He wants to save as many as He can from destruction of Jerusalem and a life devoid of God.

It is at this point in the story that the Scribes and Sadducees had gotten up the courage to confront Him publicly. You have to wonder, and it makes sense in light of what happened this last week, **if they don't do something**, if they don't act, **Jesus is taking over**. Three days away from Passover and He owns the Temple now, He can shut down the sacrifices, throw out the Levites, and dismiss the Priests. **He had the majority & electoral vote now!** He had ridden into town, and went into their house, threw them out, and now was preaching about God the Father as if He was the only way to get to Him.

This is why they had to make the murder pact and trap Him outside at night outside the city, to bribe one of His own (Judas), to catch Him separated from His followers, for there was no way they could do it now in front of people. And even more interesting, **Jesus is helping this happen** for He chooses to lay down His life for His sheep, no one take's it from Him (John 10: 15 & 18), no one has that authority, except Him. But before He lets that happen, He is going to make an example of them.

This scene reminds me of the classic fight in schoolyard. You may have even been in an altercation like this (**Possible Illustration**). This reminds me of when the crowd gathers because someone yells “fight, fight!” This is what you are seeing here in our story. You are about to see that no one is a match for Jesus for He is a divine King that has authority to do whatever He wants, He's the UFC champ of all time!

1. Challenges to Jesus' Authority (vs.1-2)

20 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 ² and said to him, “Tell us by what **authority** you do these things, or who it is that gave you this **authority**.”



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Authority Exousia – means “the power of authority (influence) and or right (privilege)”. **Wow, Jesus is being accused of Privilege, not because He’s in the elite populace but because He came from lowly stock.** The Temple elite came to Jesus, after the takeover, and demanded He tell them, who powers your *influence* if not us, who said you could do this, why do you think you have this *privilege* to act as you want, speaking out against us, for he had been calling them out on their fake gospel (news) 😊. They don’t like how He’s acting for to them there is no way He can claim that He has the right to do any of this based on His stance in their society.

This past week, we remembered William Tyndale, who on Oct. 6, 1536 (486 years ago) at the age of 41, was strangled to death and burned at the stake, procured over by the Church of England. His crime? He printed the Bible into English (NT & Pentateuch) using Martin Luther’s German version of the Bible as a model. He used the printing press to mass produce his work upon which he shipped into England in 1526. Nine years later he is apprehended and held for 16 months in deplorable conditions before sentencing. The day they came to execute him his prayer was “*Open the eyes of the King of England.*” One year after his death his prayer was answered, and King Henry authorized the English version of the Bible. This led to the KJV in 1611 mostly comprised of Tyndale’s original works.

Tyndale’s earthly problem was that he did not recognize man’s authority over his life. It had started with him not seeing the Catholic Church as the one “true church”. That stance also carried over to the Church of England as he would not listen to the Bishop of London when he had told him to not to print that Bible. Based upon the work of earlier reformers like Luther, Tyndale developed the sense that God’s Word was the ultimate authority and therefore needed to be shared with all men. He was fighting the same fight that Jesus had fought. The church in his day, like Judaism, had become corrupt and had misused the authority they had been given by God.

Challenge for today: Family, there may come a day where you and I may have to stand up for the authority that is derived from God’s Word alone. Are you willing to go through the unfair treatment that Jesus endured, that our reforming father’s shouldered, for it may be the church’s turn in America to lead the way in



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the next fight! Are you willing to face friends in bigger and more popular churches that are too friendly and concerned with what the world thinks about them? Would you let them know if it came to it, that God’s truth in the scripture is not about promoting the Social Justice Movements, LGBTQ rights, and consenting politicians that have no problem with killing the unborn? It may make you unpopular but are you willing to stand up to people that try to yell you down with group mob mentalities and say you have no right to talk?

Before you get too quick to answer that let’s first study today how Jesus handled this problem. What did He do when His day’s Big Evangelical came at Him looking for a fight.

2. Jesus’ Counter Punch Combination (vs.3-18)

A. First Punch – Exposing the **HEART** of the attackers. (vs.3-8)

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?” ⁵ And they discussed it with one another, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why did you not believe him?’ ⁶ But if we say, ‘From man,’ all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet.” ⁷ So they answered that they did not know where it came from. ⁸ And Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

This was a sparring technique that had been around forever; answer a question by asking a question. Jesus is not dodging anything, but He exposes the heart of His attackers with his first counter strike.

First when you have authority you never have to rush and defend that which is right. Jesus has already been given authority and it was recognized, that means people were already responding to it, remember the centurion in chapter 7? He saw Jesus’ authority and said just tell me the word and I know she will be healed! **Friends never be in a rush to crush but rather be quick hear with your ears.**

James 1:19-20 ESV



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¹⁹ Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰ for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Anger never justifies your quick tongue, and neither does it mean you are righteous. Remember Jesus counter punch in this story is to listen to their accusations and then ask a confounding question.

The story explains the dilemma to you. If they say JB baptizes for Heaven, then why were they not baptized by him!? And if they say he doesn't work for God then they go against Jesus' opinion of JB, which is the **popular opinion** and that is that JB did speak as a prophet for God. Even if they answer 'yes' or 'no' their answer would show that Jesus had all the authority at that moment for it would come from Him being **right about JB all along**. That would show that Jesus was the right one to judge whether a man came from God **not the temple elite** nor the Pharisees! **Jesus has the ultimate authority to judge because He's always right!**

It also shows that any authority they had would now have has to come from Jesus, the new King, so they refused to answer. BUT in refusing to answer they showed **they didn't know who was from God** which negates their position as religious authorities in the lives of the people for their whole system was built on them telling people what was right and wrong and who was of God and who wasn't. **They loose either way by either answering or not answering!** Listening first so that you can ask clarifying questions goes a long way with speaking out against those that attack the Truths of God.

Friends when someone ask you, “Why do you believe the Bible?” ask them, “What do you use that is better to live by?” That leads you to see their world view which will have major holes in it.

When someone asks you, “Wouldn't God want them to be happy?” ask them to “Why yes, so please pay my bills, cut my grass, by me a new car?” because these things are a path to happiness for you, wouldn't they want you to be happy? This shows you what they worship; pleasure.



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When someone asks you, “Wouldn’t Jesus fight for Justice of the oppressed?” Ask them to explain, “What sin wasn’t big enough to be paid for by His blood the first time, by which He said it was finished?” It shows that they may believe Salvation by works instead of Salvation by Grace.

Asking questions and listening well will show you the true hearts in people. But first we all must become comfortable with this fact, that if the Bible says it, you’re ok with it, because no matter what someone else says you are under its’ authority. When you trust God’s Word like Jesus did you will not be afraid to confront attackers.

B. Second Punch – Exposing the **MOTIVES of the attackers. (vs.9-16)**

⁹And 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. ¹⁰When 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. ¹¹And he sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. ¹²And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out. ¹³Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.’ ¹⁴But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.’ ¹⁵And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? ¹⁶He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others.” When they heard this, they said, “Surely not!”

The vineyard has always been a symbol for Israel in the OT. We see here in Psalm 80 just one place that shows God ‘s perception of Israel:

Psalm 80:8-9 ESV

⁸You brought a vine out of Egypt;
you drove out the nations and
planted it.

⁹You cleared the ground for it;
it took deep root and filled the land.



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In Jesus’ parable He explains that the Vineyard was to produce fruit for God. But all the servants were either maimed or killed (see other synoptic gospels) these **servants are the prophets in the OT**. Then the heir of the estate is sent, and they seek to kill Him. It is important to know here that their law states that once the only heir is dead there is a short waiting period and unless it is claimed by a family member it falls to the servants. The Vineyard though was to be sold off, and this time it meant to the Gentiles for good. The people knew that the Vineyard meant Israel which is why they say in vs. 16 **“Surely Not!”**

But again, all Jesus is doing is going **back to scripture for His authority** comes from that which God has already declared.

Isaiah 5:5-7 ESV

⁵And now I will tell you
what I will do to my vineyard.
I will remove its hedge,
and it shall be devoured;
I will break down its wall,
and it shall be trampled down.
⁶I will make it a waste;
it shall not be pruned or hoed,
and briars and thorns shall grow
up;

I will also command the clouds
that they rain no rain upon it.
⁷For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts
is the house of Israel,
and the men of Judah
are his pleasant planting;
and he looked for justice,
but behold, bloodshed;
for righteousness,
but behold, an outcry!

The **motives, of the Temple Elite were exposed**, they wanted to use the Vineyard for themselves, what it could produce, what it could gain them. Jesus exposes the ruling class and what it was about to cost all of Israel. The vineyard could still produce but it was going to need new caretakers, Gentiles, from which would come the church, in order for those vines to produce fruit.

What we are learning: Perhaps in our own struggles with religious leaders that do not recognize the authority of scripture we need to think like Jesus thinks. Perhaps we need to know our church history a little better, our world political history more in depth, and how the philosophies of today work in our



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governments. WHY? **BECAUSE, people are in danger of being used and destroyed by those that want to use the church for themselves.**

For us personally today, are there motives in our lives as to why we don't speak out more on religious and political issues? Are our motives to make peace not war, for Jesus said He did not come to make peace (Mat. 10:34)? Are we looking to get by with the least amount of splash and wake in this world? Friends if we are NOT willing to **mix it up** some with our friends and family **about what we really believe and what really matters** then we risk losing them to a world that **wants to use them**. I am not down with that how about you?

So, in review to a counter-attack, of false teachers - First, Jesus strikes at the **heart**, second hit in the combo, He shows and we discover the **motives** and now here comes the third hit, the knock-out punch!

C. Third Punch – Exposing the FUTILITY of the attackers. (vs.17-18)

¹⁷ 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’?”

¹⁸ Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”

Jesus is referring to Himself He is declaring to all present in front of His attackers He is the Messiah, **my authority comes from me**. We know this because Jesus is quoting Psalm 118 directly, which is held by Bible scholars, in that day, to be a Psalm that is written about the Messiah, it is a *Messianic Psalm*.

Psalm 118:22-24 ESV

²² The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.

²³ This is the Lord's doing;

it is marvelous in our eyes.

²⁴ This is the day that the Lord has
made;

let us rejoice and be glad in it.



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Isaiah confirms this prophecy as he watches the Northern Kingdom fall under the Assyrian empire as he watches Judah, the Southern Kingdom, start down the same path of apostasy.

Isaiah 8:14-125 ESV

¹⁴ And he will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ¹⁵ And many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken."

Daniel again, as last week with His prophecy on the timing of the Messiah, he adds to the prophecy found in Psalm 118. He is now sitting in Babylon after Judah's fall and declares that not only will the Messiah be the King of the Jews but He is the King of the world.

Daniel 2:34, 44-45 ESV

³⁴ As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.

⁴⁴ And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, ⁴⁵ just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.

Jesus, well aware of all this scripture, as well as the scribes who study the OT, looks at His attackers and goes for the knockout. In case you didn't get it, I AM He, I am the stone, I am the one that will crush you and all the nations of the world will be dashed to pieces by my work. The knock-out punch is when Jesus states to them, **Resistance is Futile, 'I AM'** pre-ordained.



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Jesus has exposed the hearts and motives of His attackers and their **fate has been sealed by the authority that is in scripture which, Jesus relies on Himself**. He trusts God Word and that is why He endured all the way through the Cross.

Family here's the good news for us today. It can be scary confronting our own false teachers in the world. But I want to share with you a verse that has always brought me comfort:

2 Corinthians 2:14-16 ESV

¹⁴ But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. ¹⁵ For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, ¹⁶ to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?

Friends we are not the cornerstones that need **to do the dashing**, we don't have to beat back the attackers, we don't have to prove to the world that God's Word is true, **Jesus did all that!**

What we have the privilege to do though, is as we are led through this world triumphantly, **we get to endure the attacks as Jesus did**, and all we are called to do is share the Gospel! The Fragrance of God's Word will bring life to those it is supposed to bring life to and it will condemn those that reject it.

So **First**, let's all show the authority of Jesus by listening to the commands of scripture, obey it, and share His Word with the World whether they like it or not. **Secondly**, commit to knowing and reading your Bible and history a little better to expose the hearts and motives of men.

Thirdly, don't worry about landing a knock-out punch Jesus did that already 2,000 years ago.

And if you don't know Him, then again today is an offer to come under His authority, ask for forgiveness of sins, and repent and follow Him for in that action you show the world His authority over you...



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PRAYER

COMMUNION

BENEDICTION

Go in the name of the Father, that has given all authority to His Son who now reigns at His right hand.

Go in the name of the Son, that has all authority and by believing in the authority of scripture has already won the fight for us, His people.

Go in the name and power of the HS, that empowers us with Jesus' authority to live and preach the Gospel.