


2024.9.29



A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Suggested Starter Question

- 1 What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you?
...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why**?

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

Observation—*What do I see?*

- 2 Proverbs 26:4-5 gives two precautions for responding to foolish, dishonest discussions. What are they?
- 3 Now read Mark 11:27-33. How do you see Jesus applying the wisdom found in Proverbs 26?
- 4 Now imagine a script in which Jesus **did** allow himself to be drawn into their foolish, dishonest convo.

Interpretation—*What does it mean?*

- 5
 - The risk of engaging in a foolish discussion (Proverbs 26:4b) is that we end up foolish as well. Read the fifth definition of "foolish" found at <WebstersDictionary1828.com>. What do you learn?
 - Do you think that the chief priests, scribes and elders of Israel qualified as "fools"? Why or why not?
- 6 The risk of **not** engaging wisely with a fool (Proverbs 26:5b) is that they don't learn that they are fools. Do you think Jesus was being loving when he showed them that they were wicked and deceptive? How is it unloving to allow a fool to continue in his ways?

Application—*What do I do with this?*

- 7 What are some of the foolish, unbiblical assertions you are confronted with in your daily life?
- 8
 - In past discussions, how have you seen yourself being drawn into foolishness yourself (Proverbs 26:4)?
 - Tell about a time when you think you did a pretty good job "answering a fool as his folly deserves".
- 9 Choose one of the real-life, foolish, unbiblical assertions several of your group members encounter. Together develop a wise line of questioning/discussing based on God's authoritative Word. Role play having such a discussion.

- 1 Pastor Doug had a bunch of complex reasoning in this message, so folks may have found some of it confusing. Just use this question to get the ball rolling. If there's too much confusion you can read the Sermon Summary aloud as a group...or you can just move onto the next question. Use your judgment.
- 2 v. 4 essentially means, "Don't get drawn into a foolish argument, or you'll end up saying foolish stuff."
v. 5 essentially means, "Don't let a fool impress himself—try to show him how he's being dishonest."
- 3 This was a morally dishonest discussion. They asked by what authority he taught. Jesus countered with a question of their assessment of the source of John's authority. They did the mental calculus: "*If we say, 'from heaven', we'll be in trouble for not obeying him. But if we say, 'from men', the people may stone us. Um, we don't know.*" Jesus **knew that they knew** that John spoke with heavenly authority (as Jesus himself did), and so he answered, "**Neither will I** tell you." (ie, "You **know** the answer; you're just **not willing** to voice it." He showed them their dishonesty (Proverbs 26:5).
- 4 Envision your kids arguing over who spilled the grape juice on the carpet and you have a good idea of how poorly it would have gone if Jesus would have assumed that the Pharisees question were an honest one! They weren't really seeking truth.
- 5 Webster's 1828 Dictionary: definition #5. "*In Scripture, wicked; sinful; acting without regard to the divine law and glory, or to one's own eternal happiness.*" Notice that foolishness is **not** a lack of IQ or of education—foolishness is a **moral** category! It is wicked, sinful disregard of God's authority.

Discuss the immoral nature of foolishness, and then see if group members think that the Pharisees were guilty of wickedly disregarding God's authority, or if they were mentally deficient.
- 6 Proverbs 10:21 says "*The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of understanding.*" and Proverbs 24:11-12 command us to rescue those who are perishing. That's exactly what Jesus was attempting to do—but the religious leaders preferred their delusions of righteousness.
- 7 Pastor Doug gave multiple examples of unbiblical thinking in our world today (most of it sexual). You likely will need to "prime the pump", so be prepared with your own answer to this question. (But wait for others to think and answer. Check your watch—20 seconds feels like an eternity!)
- 8 ditto—be ready with examples from your own life, if need be.
- 9 Choose one of the issues shared in 7, and then brainstorm wise responses.

Sermon Summary Mark 11:27-33

In our study of Mark's gospel we have come to the last week of Jesus' life. He is in Jerusalem with his disciples for the Feast of Passover. In just a few days He will be arrested, condemned, flogged and crucified. Recently Jesus had entered the temple complex and what he saw upset him: the Jewish religious leaders had turned the temple into a commercial marketplace. Jesus overturned their tables and ran everyone out. He didn't ask permission from the temple officials, he just took matters into his own hands. At this, the religious leaders began seeking a way to destroy him (v. 18). But they also were afraid of him because of his popularity with the common people. The religious leaders basked in their popularity and wanted to maintain it. But Jesus was threatening all that. He had come on their turf in their temple during the holy week of Passover, and condemned what the leaders were doing.

As a result, they got together to decide on a course of action (v. 27). This was not an informal chat; the Sanhedrin was the Supreme Court of Israel. This council wielded tremendous power, both politically and spiritually. They decided how the Mosaic Laws would be interpreted and enforced. They made decisions on legal moral matters, much like our courts do today. This was a powerful body; when its representatives came knocking on your door, it was a big deal! If this were a movie, tense music would be playing in the background. It would be a bit like the FBI showing up at your door with a warrant. It was all business. You have no right, no power.

By asking Jesus questions about his authority they were trying to intimidate him. Intimidation doesn't work on Jesus. He is God. Intimidation is very familiar to many of our brothers and sisters around the world. In many countries, the police have nearly unlimited power. They can bring false charges against you. They can plant evidence, and they do. They may use torture or reprisals against your family to get what they want from you. The underground church around the world experiences this kind of intimidation on a daily basis. We should be in constant prayer for our brothers and sisters in these closed countries. This confrontation in v. 27-28 was a big deal; they weren't happy with Jesus, and they had come to accuse and challenge him. Up until the last few months of his life, Jesus had tried to maintain a low profile with the Jewish authorities. Jesus would heal someone and say, "Don't tell anyone. Keep it to yourself." Jesus was on a divine timetable. He had disciples to train and teaching to do. There were things He needed to accomplish before going to the cross. But as the cross drew near, Jesus became more open about his mission and divine identity.

In v. 28-29 they approach Jesus in a way that displays both cowardice and cunning. Because of Jesus' popularity, they were afraid to directly oppose him. That is the cowardice part. They sought to attack him on the one ground on which he seemed most vulnerable—his lack of credentialed authority. They wanted the people to think that their beef with Jesus was strictly legal. Nothing personal. In ancient Judaism it was all about preserving and passing down established tradition. Authorized teaching was handed down from one rabbi to another, from teacher to student, from generation to generation. The ultimate appeal in cases under discussion was always to some great recognized authority, whether an individual teacher like the great Gamaliel, or a decree from the Sanhedrin. To decide something that was contrary to recognized authority was considered to be either a mark of ignorant assumption or of daring rebellion. Jesus refused to answer their question about his authority until they answered his question to them about the source of John the Baptist's authority. For you see, Jesus knew that both his and John the Baptist's authority came from heaven. It didn't come from the Sanhedrin. It didn't come from some famous Jewish rabbi.

So before answering their question, Jesus wisely asked them to commit themselves on the question of John's authority (v. 30). If they responded, "John received his authority from heaven," Jesus would say, "Then why haven't you submitted to his authority and brought forth fruits fitting with repentance. Why haven't you received me as your Messiah King? That's who John said that I was." If, on the other hand, they denied the divine authority behind John's ministry, they would jeopardize their favor with the people, since the people were convinced that John was God's prophet. In v. 33, Jesus wasn't denying his divine authority, he was just withholding evidence they might try to use against him. God incarnate was in their midst, and yet they failed to recognize Him. How tragic!

Now let's consider some implications of this passage for us. Where does our spiritual authority ultimately come from? Our authority, if legitimate, must come from God—and he has spoken in the Bible. Bible teachers must seek to ground our authority in what God Himself has authorized as true. Any teaching which is at odds with biblically-revealed truth is to be rejected. The Bible is infallible—we are not—and we need to humbly admit that. None of us have perfect theology, but by using proper hermeneutical principles of interpretation we can overcome most interpretive obstacles. Most of what the Bible teaches is very clear. It is hard to misunderstand. Yes, there are some things which godly and intelligent people struggle to understand. But again, that's a minor part of the main message of the Bible.

But some Bible teachers call what the Bible reveals to be good evil, and what the Bible reveals to be evil good (Isaiah 5:20). Their erroneous teaching typically seeks to accommodate our culture's sexual sins (abortion, homosexuality, adultery, premarital sex, and transsexuality). Our culture demands: "My body, my call." But God, not we, determines what is moral and immoral. Our natural inclinations are unreliable indicators of what is moral. It should be obvious to all of us that what comes naturally often does not promote human flourishing. If you call yourself a Christian, the Bible is our authority on matters of faith and morality. The argument today is that if two people mutually consent to sex, it is moral. That is not a biblical view; it grounds moral authority in human desires rather than in God's Word. And when those we care about reject biblical morality, our moral vision becomes clouded by our love and relationship with them. It's one thing to believe in the abstract that abortion is wrong—but then when your unmarried daughter gets pregnant, you start to equivocate. But we don't get to decide what is moral and what is immoral; we are not God. One may call good evil and evil good, but we don't have the authority to make it so. Other examples of improperly claiming authority include adding requirements to salvation beyond the call to believe in Christ (Galatians 1:6-9), claiming (as Mormons, Muslims and others do) that extra-biblical writings are inspired by God, or by replacing the Bible with other ideas (as Buddhism and Hinduism, secularism, Marxism and as Gender and Queer Theory do). Unbiblical systems may include some elements of truth, but they do not subject themselves to the ultimate authority of the Bible—and that's a problem. Instead, they appeal to human authority. Faithful followers of Jesus must ground our spiritual authority in Scriptures alone. The Bible is under attack—and we shouldn't be surprised (2 Peter 2:1-3, 14-15).

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

Jesus used his authority to achieve godly outcomes. We . . . well, "not so much"! Let's use the "Five Question Bible Study" method to learn about godly use of authority...

Monday— Matthew 7:24-29

Tuesday— Matthew 9:1-8

Wednesday— Matthew 21-23-27

Thursday— Romans 9:14-21

Friday— Matthew 10:1-4

Saturday— 2 Corinthians 10:8 & 13:10

Do you chafe under God's authority?

For free, confidential help, write to:
BiblicalHopeAndHelp@gmail.com

Five Question Bible Study

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would *this text* answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]