

Luke 20:1-19

The Authority of Jesus Questioned

¹ One day as he was teaching the people in the temple courts and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, together with the elders, came up to him. ² “Tell us by what authority you are doing these things,” they said.

“Who gave you this authority?”

³ He replied, “I will also ask you a question. Tell me, ⁴ John’s baptism—was it from heaven, or from men?”

⁵ They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Why didn’t you believe him?’ ⁶ But if we say, ‘From men,’ all the people will stone us, because they are persuaded that John was a prophet.”

⁷ So they answered, “We don’t know where it was from.”

⁸ Jesus said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.”

The Parable of the Tenants

⁹ He went on to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard, rented it to some farmers and went away for a long time. ¹⁰ At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants so they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ¹¹ He sent another servant, but that one also they beat and treated shamefully and sent away empty-handed. ¹² He sent still a third, and they wounded him and threw him out.

¹³ “Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my son, whom I love; perhaps they will respect him.’

¹⁴ “But when the tenants saw him, they talked the matter over. ‘This is the heir,’ they said. ‘Let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ ¹⁵ So 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 kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.” When the people heard this, they said, “May this never be!”

¹⁷ Jesus looked directly at them and asked, “Then what is the meaning of that which is written:

“ ‘The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone’? ¹⁸ Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed.”

¹⁹ The teachers of the law and the chief priests looked for a way to arrest him immediately, because they knew he had spoken this parable against them. But they were afraid of the people.

Luke 20:1-19

1. Have you ever been questioned about authority that was rightfully yours? When? Why? How did you react?
2. How were the Pharisees trying to trap Jesus with their question in 20:2?
3. In what ways were the actions of the religious leaders hypocritical? Are you ever hypocritical? How can you guard against that?
4. Why did Jesus answer them with another question? How did his question stump the religious leaders? How did they finally respond to Jesus?
5. When have you questioned God's authority in a particular area of your life?
6. Why did Jesus choose to tell a parable in this situation?
7. Let's sort out the players in the parable: who does the vineyard owner represent? The servants the owner sent to the vineyard? The tenants? The son of the vineyard owner?
8. What are the main points of the parable?
9. What does the parable tell us about the fate that awaits those who reject Jesus as the Messiah or as the son of God?
10. How did the people respond to the parable? (20:16) How did the religious leaders respond? (20:19)
11. What is the meaning of the scripture that Jesus quoted in 20:17-18? (Psalm 118:22)
12. How can we avoid letting the crowd (or our friends and peers) from making decisions for us?