

## Why Are You Here? (Mk 11:27 - 12:12)

Sunday Morning – July 14, 2019

[Sleater-Kinney Road Baptist Church, Olympia, WA](#)

### INTRODUCTION:

- It's not unusual for organizations to lose focus, and forget their original mission:
  - o **(1) YMCA:**
    - started as a Christian outreach and resource for young men in inner cities, drawn to London during the beginning of the industrial revolution
    - Now, it's gym with lots of youth activities and programs<sup>1</sup>
  - o **(2) YWCA** has a similar story and trajectory<sup>2</sup>
  - o **(3) Baptist fundamentalism** post-1948;<sup>3</sup> neo-evangelical vs. historic fundamentalist focus
- The OC system had lost its focus by Jesus day
  - o **Why were they there?** They'd apparently forgotten!
  - o **Why are you here?** Have we forgotten!?

### TEXT:

The religious leaders have their own agenda (11:27 - 33)

And they came again to Jerusalem. And as he was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him, and they said to him, "By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do them?" (Mk 11:27 – 28).

- It's Tuesday in Passion Week
- Luke says Jesus is teaching in the temple and preaching the Gospel (Lk 20:1)

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the [website for an Olympia-area YMCA](#).

<sup>2</sup> See the [website for the Olympia YWCA](#).

<sup>3</sup> One could pick any number of dates. Harold Ockenga declared the neo-evangelical movement began in 1948 with an address he gave. You chose also Billy Graham's 1957 New York crusade, because this was the decisive event that split the broader fundamentalist movement. In the end, any date is arbitrary because events don't occur in isolation.

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- The Court of the Gentiles doubled as the “church foyer” for the temple; a favorite spot for Jesus (and later the church) was under a covered portico
- A delegation from the Sanhedrin come to question Jesus
  - chief priests + scribes + elders = delegation
- This isn't a friendly visit; they have questions:
  - (1) “who do you think you are?”
  - (2) “what's your authority to say all this?”
  - (3) “what's your authority to do all this?”
- **To do what? What did Jesus do?**
  - (1) He caused a commotion in the temple the day before
  - (2) He said the whole system had lost its way, because it was more concerned with money than welcoming Gentiles who had a relationship with God
  - (3) Now, He's in the temple teaching anyone who'll listen that He's the Son of God and the promised Messiah
- The Sanhedrin is upset:
  - representative body of various Jewish interests<sup>4</sup>
  - given limited autonomy
  - a political body
  - **read Mk 11:18**
  - Pharisees from up north, in Capernaum, have been trying to find a way to charge Jesus with blasphemy and kill him for a long time (Mk 3:6)
- Now, the last week of His incarnate life, Jesus is openly challenging the whole system inside the symbolic stronghold of the Jerusalem temple – **it's time for a showdown!**

Jesus said to them, “I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man? Answer me,” (Mk 11:29-30).

- Jesus: “do you agree with what John was doing, or not!?”

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<sup>4</sup> “The most common opinion is that the Judaeen Sanhedrin consisted of the elders of various sociopolitical Jewish classes, both priestly and nonpriestly,” (Douglas Mangum and Vasile Babota, “Sanhedrin,” in *Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. [Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2016]).

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- **What was John's baptism about?**
  - o (1) **"proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Mk 1:4)**
  - o (2) He told people to repent and return to God, because the Messiah was coming (Lk 3:1-22)
  - o (3) He told people who said they were believers to start acting like it
  - o (4) He told them the Messiah was coming,
  - o (5) and that he (John) was the guy with the loudspeaker who God had sent to tell everyone about it
  - o (6) Luke says **"he preached good news to the people," (Lk 3:18)**
- **So, does this delegation from the Sanhedrin agree with this message?**
  - o (1) Do they think it's a good idea to tell people, *"the Messiah is coming, the kingdom of God is at hand, so turn back and love God for real, and stop faking it!"*
  - o (2) Do they think it's a good idea for people to dedicate themselves to God by baptism, to show they love God with everything they have?
- **Do they think this message is from heaven, or just made up?**
  - o (1) Work your way to heaven by good works, or accept the offer of mercy and grace?
  - o (2) Turn the OC system into a money-making scheme for corrupt politician/priests, or love God with everything you have and serve Him because you love Him?
  - o (3) Whose message is more tied to the OT; Jesus' or theirs?

And they discussed it with one another, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But shall we say, 'From man?'"—they were afraid of the people, for they all held that John really was a prophet. So they answered Jesus, "We do not know," (Mk 11:31-33).

- **Do they want to answer the question?**
  - o No!
- **Why not?**
  - o Because all they want is to retain power
  - o Pharisees: religious motivations
  - o Sadducees: political considerations
- **Where is their loyalty?**

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- To themselves, not to God
- God isn't their God; they are

And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things," (Mk 11:33).

- A system that isn't based on Jesus, the *real* Jesus, isn't from God
- A system that uses a false version of Jesus is fake
  - (1) the gnostic Jesus (e.g. 1, 2 John) *is a fake*
  - (2) the Americanized, Republican Jesus *is a fake*
  - (3) the Jesus that's like a prostitute because He'll be whoever you want Him to be, *is a fake*
  - (4) the Jesus who's terrified of hurting your feelings *is a fake*
  - (5) the Jesus who isn't willing and eager to change you to look like him, *is a fake*
  - (6) the Jesus who says you're perfect just the way you are *is a fake*
  - (7) the Jesus who says all He wants is for you "just be you" *is a fake*
  - (8) the Jesus who reflects your own image, not the Father's, *is a fake*
- The real Jesus is:
  - (1) the one who *reveals* the truth
  - (2) the one who *reconciles* people to Himself
  - (3) the one who will *rule* over all creation
  - (4) Mark opens and closes with Jesus as the Son of God (1:1, 11; 15:39); co-equal, co-eternal, King, Master and Lord
- These men on the Sanhedrin agreed the Messiah was going to come:
  - (1) but they didn't want Him when He came
  - (2) they wanted a fake Jesus
  - (3) they wanted their own Jesus
  - (4) they wanted a Jesus who would affirm them as they were
  - (5) they wanted a Jesus who fit their preconceived, extra-biblical ideas
- They'd twisted the OT system into a pretzel and made themselves their own god
  - Jesus says: "I don't even have time for you – this conversation is over!"
- Instead, Jesus starts a *new* conversation:

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The parable of the bad tenants (12:1-12)

- **Read Mk 12:1-9**
- **What does this parable mean?** In light of what we've just seen, I don't think anyone here needs too much help:
  - o **(1) Man with vineyard:** God
    - He's in charge of the whole thing
  - o **(2) Vineyard:** His people
    - God didn't have to plant the vineyard, but He did
  - o **(3) Tenants:** leadership to watch over His people
    - Position of responsibility – will they honor it and respect the landlord's instructions?
  - o **(4) Man's servants:** prophets
    - Killed, imprisoned and/or ridiculed and ignored for centuries
  - o **(5) Man's son:** Jesus
    - Tenants murdered Him, and tossed Him outside the fence like garbage
- **What do you think the owner is going to do to these tenants now?**
  - o He's going to kill them
  - o He's going to punish them
  - o He's going to abolish the old system, and make a new system for His people to be under – a better system, built on better promises
- Just to make sure this delegation from the Sanhedrin gets what He's saying (which is taking place in broad daylight, inside the temple, in public, as people are staring at them!), Jesus asks them this question:

Have you not read this Scripture:

“The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone;  
this was the Lord's doing,  
and it is marvelous in our eyes?” (Mk 12:10-11).

- It's from Psalm 118 - **what's it mean?**
  - o **There**, it meant that Israel, the nation that the world rejected, was a nation of God's people who had survived and were still standing

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- Now, Jesus says:
  - (1) “that’s me, I’m that stone
  - (2) and you’re the people who rejected me,
  - (3) and I’m here,
  - (4) and I’m going to be here,
  - (5) and I’m going to be the chief cornerstone of this new thing, the church
  - (6) and there’s nothing you can do about it
  - (7) and it’s the Lord’s doing
  - (7) and it’s marvelous, isn’t it!?”

And they were seeking to arrest him but feared the people, for they perceived that he had told the parable against them. So, they left him and went away (Mk 12:12).

- Humiliated and out maneuvered, they leave

### CONCLUSION

- They’d forgotten why they were there:
  - (1) They had a mission (Ex 19:5-6)
    - but, they were over in left field doing their own thing
  - (2) They had a responsibility
    - but, they’d forgotten their place
  - (3) They had the Scriptures that spoke about Jesus
    - but, they preferred their own fake Messiah to the real one
  - (4) They did a lot of stuff, and had a lot of impressive window dressing
    - but, God wasn’t their God – they were
- **What is our congregation here for?**
  - (1) What’s our mission?
    - The same as the Israelites had (1 Pet 2:10-11)
  - (2) What’s our responsibility?
    - to carry out the mission
    - everything is about the mission
    - repeat mission elements
  - (3) Do we have the real Jesus?

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- Is He king?
- Is He Lord?
- Is He Master?
- Is He the Son of God?
- Does He tell us, “I’ll be whoever you want me to be ...”
  - or, do we tell Him, “Lord, change me to be who you want me to be”
- Does He tell us, “Not my will, but yours be done?”
  - or, do we tell Him, “not our will, but yours be done!”
- (4) Have we forgotten what we’re here for, as a congregation?
- (5) Have you forgotten what you’re here for, as an individual?
- (6) Do you even know why you’re here in the first place?
- Apostle Paul said Jesus **“gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen,” (Gal 1:4).**
  - Our mission is to be about that message
  - Let’s work together to make that happen more and more