

Sunday, November 20, 2016

**Introduction to Mark 11:27-12:12** Pastor Don Denyes

Everyone lives by some authority. At work, we are under the authority of the boss. At school, we were under the authority of teachers. In our family of origin, we were under the authority of our parents. In public life, we are under the authority of the government. And in every area of life, we are under the authority of God.

The question is, do the “authorities” recognize their ultimate Authority? See, the boss usually has another boss. The teacher is under the authority of the administration. The government is supposed to act in accordance with the will of the people. All human authority is ultimately subject to God.

But what happens when human authority fails to recognize or even purposely dismisses the authority of God? Jesus knew this first hand on earth when He was here...

**Context**

Jesus and His disciples have arrived in Jerusalem. Now He offers His final teaching to the disciples and enters His last confrontation with the Jewish leaders. In chapter 11, Jesus uses the fig tree and the cleansing of the temple as object lessons to demonstrate His authority and the will of God for His people. Later in chapter 12, His authority will be questioned by lawyers who also question Rome’s authority. Here, Jesus alludes to His true authority—the authority given Him from Heaven, even from God the Father.

**Structure**

- I. Jesus debates with the Jewish leaders on the question of authority (11:27-33)
- II. Jesus tells the parable of the tenants (12:1-12)

**Read and Reflect** *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read Mark 11:27-12:12

“Jesus: Rejected by Men; Authorized by God”

Who is really in charge? (v. 27)

I. Penetrating Question (11:27-33)

- Where do you get your authority?
- Where did the prophet (John the Baptist) get his?

II. Powerful Story (12:1-12)

- It's about God and Israel's leaders
- It's about God and us!

## Discuss

- 1) What different kinds of authority do you live under? What level of obedience do those authorities require? Have you ever seen them abuse their power?
- 2) The people who questioned Jesus knew that God was rightfully in authority over them (see Isaiah 5:1-7), but they preferred to live as though He was not. In what ways do we fail to recognize God's authority in our lives? Do you think it's more by doing what we know is wrong, or failing to do what we know is right?
- 3) Read Matthew 11:25-30. According to this passage, what is it like to live under Jesus' authority? Has that been your experience of the Christian life? If so, describe how Jesus has given you rest for your soul. If not, why do you think that is the case?
- 4) If we hope to effectively communicate the gospel to those who do not follow Christ, we must understand something of where they are coming from. Why would people not want to follow Him? Like the tenants of the vineyard who didn't want to give up the owner's portion of the harvest (12:1-12), what might be their motivation?
- 5) One day, every knee will bow and every tongue confess Jesus' rightful authority. That will happen when God gives us resurrected bodies on a new Earth apart from the curse, apart from Satan, sin, and death. What will life be like then? How does that give us hope for the "here and now?"

**Go Deeper** *(This section is especially for leaders to consider as they prepare for the Growth Group meeting)*

Gospel Connections: At the heart of the gospel is recognition of Jesus' divinely-given authority. If Jesus was acting on His own authority, we are still dead in our sins, because would not have been raised from the dead. So we must recognize that Jesus came from God—being, in fact, fully God Himself—and that He is the One who rightfully rules over us. But the gospel teaches that we are unable to come to this recognition ourselves, so the truth is, God must choose to reveal Himself to us. So not only is it a good-news gift that we can live under our rightful authority (God) but also that in His authority, He has chosen to reveal that to us when we did nothing to deserve it. This is the meaning of grace.

Whole Bible Connections: The parable of the tenants is one of the clearest presentations of the connection between the Old and New Testaments (cf. 12:12). Not only was Israel's history a grand narrative through which the people of Israel found their identity. They were actually living in the narrative! God was not finished with His vineyard at the exile, or at the return, or because of the rule of Rome. God was going to continue to pursue the harvest among them for which He invested so much. So if the national leaders were not willing to recognize God's sovereignty over the people and seek to obey Him and rule in righteousness, then God was going to come down and rule Himself (through Jesus) over not only His chosen ethnic people (Israel) but over people from every Gentile nation and tribe and tongue.

Theological Connections: In some sense, God has already established His rule and reign over the world. Everywhere that His word is preached and His people obey could be called "territory" of God's kingdom. All those who bow the knee to Jesus are ultimately resting in the citizenship that is found in heaven (Phil. 3:20), but there is often a demand by the kingdoms of this world for total obedience to them. This is the great dilemma that Christians face. But since Jesus has ultimate authority over the earth and everything in it (Matt. 28:18), whenever the will of a human government contradicts the will of God, Jesus must prevail.