

The Lord Jesus Confronting His Enemies

by Alan Redpath

Alan Redpath's sermon explores how Jesus confronted various groups during Passion Week, revealing profound truths about authority, love, and his identity as the Messiah.

Duration: 23:21

Scripture: Psalm 110:1, Mark 10:45, Mark 12:13-37, John 3:16, Romans 8:39, Philippians 2:7-8

Topics: "Enemies", "Love and Obedience", "Confrontation"

Description

Alan Redpath explores the confrontation of Jesus with his enemies during the Passion Week, emphasizing the various challenges posed by the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes. He highlights how Jesus, through masterful responses, silenced their questions of unbelief, skepticism, and obligation, revealing the deeper truths of faith and love. Redpath underscores that while Jesus faced rejection and loneliness, he remained committed to his mission, ultimately demonstrating that love for God and neighbor is paramount. The sermon calls believers to reflect on their own responses to Jesus and the essence of their faith in light of his teachings.

Transcript

May we just look to God for a moment of prayer together as we turn to his word. Lord Jesus, we can ask for nothing less than a fresh glimpse of thy lovely face and a word from thy heart of love that shall speak to us today and send us out from this place to be different just because we've met with thee. Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.

Speak just now some message to meet my need which thou only dost know. Speak now through thy holy word and make me see some wonderful truth thou hast to show to me. For Jesus' sake.

Amen. Will you please turn in your New Testament this morning to the Gospel of Mark and part of the twelfth chapter, the Gospel of Mark chapter 12. As I am sure most of you know, the four Gospels present a different aspect of the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ and here especially Mark presents him to us as the perfect servant of Jehovah.

It is not my intention or purpose that these studies should be exhaustive but I want to uplift the one of whom Paul writes in his letter to the Philippian church and says in the second chapter concerning the Lord Jesus that he thought it not robbery to be equal with God but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man he

humbled himself and became obedient unto death even the death of the cross. And it is our purpose that we should catch a fresh glimpse of our Lord Jesus in these weeks as we study some aspects of this Gospel record and so in doing discover some new purpose for our lives as his followers. The Gospel of Mark you may recall begins with these words the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God and almost at its conclusion in the 15th chapter in the 39th verse we have the testimony of the Roman centurion who said as he saw our Lord hanging upon the cross truly this man was the Son of God and in between these two verses there is the key verse to the whole Gospel the 10th chapter and verse 45 where Jesus says of himself even the Son of Man is come not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many.

The Son became the servant that he might be the Savior. Now because of the season of the year this time of Lent I am commencing with four studies from this Gospel taken from records that occurred during the closing week of our Lord's earthly life. The portion of scripture which is our study and for our consideration this morning covers events which took place on the Tuesday of Passion Week.

Sunday the Palm Sunday the events of which are recorded in the previous chapter Sunday was the day of acclamation but not everybody who acclaims Christ follows or accepts Christ. It's always easier to shout than to obey. The Monday was the day of authority.

The day when as our Lord passed between Bethany and Jerusalem he saw the fig tree without fruit and condemned it and it withered away. The day when he went into his temple and took a whip and drove out the money changers and overturned the tables of those who were there making gain out of their religion. Oh the wrath of the Lamb of God.

But the Tuesday was the day of conflict. The day when Jesus faced his enemies and a barrage of questions. First of all there was a subtle combination between the Pharisee and the Herodian with their question of unbelief recorded for us in verses 13 to 17 of Mark chapter 12.

Then there came the Sadducees with their question of skepticism recorded for us in verses 18 through 27. And then there's the question of the scribe with his question of obligation recorded for us in verses 28 through 34. And the following all of this you have the statement in the 34th verse, no man after that durst answer him any question.

All his enemies were silenced and then he turns upon them and asks them a question in verse 35 to which they could give no reply. It was a day of fierce conflict. It was a day if I read between the lines of intense loneliness.

It was a day of keen disappointment. Could it be that this was all that his ministry had accomplished and this was only the success? Ah no. For though on the one scale he found nothing but rebuke and rejection, on the other he saw the travail of his soul and was satisfied in the life of one poor lonely widow woman who gave all that she had.

And with that lovely story told by Mark in his typical typical straight incisive manner in about 70 words the chapter concludes. This then is the summary of that which we are about to consider for a few moments. Alas we shall not have time to do more than merely give it a consideration.

But I am praying and I hope that every one of us is here today eagerly expecting God to speak and with a heart that is set free from the distractions and cares of the life that we live and of the pressures of these

days even the pressures of Christian work and that our eyes may be turned upon him. Oh that this church might be still and know that he is God. Let me ask you to notice then for a few moments my dear listener our Lord silencing his enemies.

First of all in verses 13 through 17 and I am counting upon you having your Bible with you because I cannot possibly take time to read these verses and I am hoping that those who listen have access to the New Testament. Notice in these verses the attack of the Pharisees. As a matter of fact it began it began on this particular day this Tuesday of Passion Week in the 28th verse of the previous chapter when they gathered together in the temple and said to him now on what authority doest thou these things.

They had been greatly disturbed by his action in the temple by his cleansing power and by his boldness in sweeping out all that was discreditable and distasteful. They were afraid to do anything about it themselves because of his popularity at that moment with the crowd and you recall the counter question of our Lord which you have recorded in the closing verses of the 11th chapter. You want to know by what authority I do this then let me ask you another question.

The baptism of John was this from heaven or was it from men? And they thought a bit and said well now if we say it was from heaven he will say well why didn't you believe him? If we say it was from men well we're afraid of the people because they all knew that John was a prophet so they could answer him nothing. But they weren't content with their silence and now now you have in these few verses a subtle coalition between the Herodian and the Pharisee. Perhaps it's hardly necessary for me to remind you that the Pharisees were those who rejected the rule of Rome, resented it.

The Herodians were those who had accepted it and these two were bitterly opposed to each other and yet here they find themselves united in an attack upon our Lord. That is not the first time that that has happened, not the last time that that has happened either. You find it a little later in the story between Herod and Pilate.

You find it all through history that people who have had bitter, bitter animosity between each other will line up to attack the cause of Jesus Christ. Will you notice their motive? Verse 13, they sought to catch him with their words. Will you notice their flattery in verse 14? Master we know that thou art true and carest for no man.

Thou regardest not the person of men but teachest the way of truth in God. The way of God in truth. Is it lawful was their question to give tribute to Caesar or no? Now that's a very cunning question.

If the Lord says yes it is lawful then immediately the Pharisee acclaimed the fact that he could never be the Messiah of the Jew if he agrees to Roman authority. If he says no it is not lawful then the Herodians would arrest him for treason. So apparently he is caught in the horns of a dilemma.

You notice his answer in the 15th verse? He asked for the coin to be given to him. Matthew tells us he asked for the tribute money. That was, may I say it reverently, a masterstroke of strategy.

He didn't ask for a Jewish coin, he asked for a Roman coin. And they gave it to him, these Jewish people. And they said to him now, he said to them, now whose image and superscription is this? And they said Caesar's.

All right. You are using Caesar's carnage. You are having the benefit, though you might not think it, of Caesar's oversight and rule.

Therefore render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's. In other words as a Christian you have a duty to the state no matter who may be in authority. You have a loyalty, but you have a higher obligation to Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

And so Jesus faces these Pharisees and these Herodians, this coalition, this subtle coalition, and by a masterly answer silences them. And Matthew tells us that they went away. They're immediately followed by an attack upon him from the Sadducee, the skeptic, the arrogant, self-sufficient, clever pagan.

And he comes, they come with their skeptical question, which you find recorded in verses 19 through 27. A question that was hardly a delicate one. And they said to him, Master, there's a woman and she's married.

And she died. Rather her husband died. So she marries his brother, then he dies.

And seven men have this woman, and there are no children to any of these marriages. Master, who's she going to belong to in heaven? You know there's a self-confident, cynical tone to a question like that. But being wrong in their supposition about heaven, they're wrong in their conclusions.

Their real problem was, their real attempt was to trap the Lord Jesus Christ. Again, they didn't believe in the resurrection. That's why my good friend Sidler Baxter says, that's why they were sad, you see.

They just didn't believe in a resurrection. But their supposed cleverness, you see, is betrayed by our Lord as being absolute ignorance. And you notice his answer in the 24th verse.

Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God? You think you're so clever. Don't you know that there will be no sex relationship in heaven? That that will no longer exist? There being no more death, there will be no more need of marriage. As Paul said in his lovely resurrection chapter, we shall all be changed.

And oh my, what a change. And he says, as touching the resurrection from the in verse 26, this was their real problem. Don't you know that God said, I am the God of Abraham? And he said this to Moses, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

He's not the God of the dead, he's the God of the living. These people are not dead, they're alive. Once a man is brought to believe, beloved, in the immortality of the soul, he's got no problem about believing in the resurrection of the body.

God, who long ago created man in his own image, and that man became a living soul dwelling in a mortal body. It is not difficult for a man who accepts the truth of the immortality of the soul to believe in the resurrection of the body, that Jesus our Lord, our God, our creator, without whom nothing is made, that it was made, that he who did it once will do it again. And though it will be a different body, yet it will be fashioned out of this body.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. Ye do greatly err, for ye know not the scripture, nor the power of God. And so the Pharisee, with his question of unbelief, is silent.

And the Sadducee, with his skeptical rationalism, is also silent. And then comes a scribe, in verse 28, and this man comes and asks a question of the Lord. And he says, Master, which is the greatest of the

commandments? He's not asking which of the ten, as we knew them and know them, are the greatest.

Oh no. He's asking this, which of the 613 precepts that the Pharisees teach, and the scribes teach, which they've read into the Pentateuch, which of these 613 precepts are vital? It seems to me he would be saying it's impossible to keep them all. Which of them has priority? In other words, what's the essential principle in religion? What's the thing that matters most? That's a straightforward, sincere question.

It wasn't asked in animosity. And so the Lord replies, quietly but firmly, and you notice his answer. It's in effect to say to him, just this, the first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.

This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

In other words, he's saying to this man who comes with his honest question, the principle behind every law that ever comes to us from heaven is a principle of love. A principle of love. And every sin is a violation of that principle of love.

And all our being, all our personality, not just a bit of it, but all of our being must worship him and love him. And if we fulfill this, then inevitably we will love our neighbor. And the word that our Lord uses for love here is not the word which, well, it's rather like our English word philanthropy, not that kind of thing.

It's a word, agape, which is the word agony, and which is exactly the same word as is used in John 3, 16, that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. And it's the same word in which the apostle Paul says the love of God, the agony of God, Romans 8, is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Now, says Jesus, that agony, that agape, that passion, that concern, that adoration, that love is to be sent back from our grateful, humble hearts into heaven.

It's the same quality of love. And that's the love that he gives us in order that we might love him and that we might love each other, says the Lord to this scribe, there's nothing greater than this. And I think of the way that Christians pick faults in each other.

And I think of the way that we explode in our conversation to each other. And I think of the way we're always looking for the thing that's wrong and never thanking God for what we see of Jesus Christ. And I wonder where we stand alongside this scribe today who asked this sincere question.

And that scribe answered him intelligently. And he, and Jesus, when he saw that his answer was intelligent, Master, he said, thou hast heard the truth, for there is but one God. To love him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself is more than burnt offerings and sacrifices.

And then Jesus saw, and he answered discreetly, and he said, thou art not far from the kingdom. And that man looked right inside, and he went right away. The question of obligation was answered and silent.

Now do you notice this, friend? Oh, I want you to get hold of this as we go along this morning. There's been this, this united, concerted approach and attack upon Jesus from these cultures, first with unbelief, second with skepticism, rationalism, third with a question of obligation. What is my duty? What is my obligation? And he has answered them all, and he hasn't found the answer to them in any of the people

who asked them the questions, and he's left alone in the temple.

I think they're still in the distance as he turns upon them and asks them a question to which they had no reply. I think they were still there rebuked, rebuffed, abashed, and as he stood there not having won one of them, without a friend, alone, on this Tuesday of Passion Week, the effect of his ministry merely to silence an argument, he turns upon them and he says, what's your idea about a Messiah? Whose son is he? The answer, well, of course, we know the answer to that one, David's son. Very well, says Jesus, how is it then that David called his son, his Lord? You are following me, aren't you? In the reading of these verses, in verses 35 and 36, you notice that Christ is quoting from the 110th Psalm.

He says that David wrote it, and he wrote it by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that Psalm is specifically messianic in its character. It refers to the Messiah. Modern scholarship denies all of that.

Either David was mistaken, and Jesus was merely human, either that, or David was inspired as Jesus said he was inspired, and Christ is not only the seed of David according to the flesh, but the eternal Son of God, and that's where I take my stand. You think of the Messiah, says Jesus, as coming from David's line, but he is also David's Lord. If you can account for that, he would say to them, if you can account for that, all your problems will be solved.

You've come to me with this problem of belief. By what authority do you these things? Account for David's Son being David's Lord. Account from the one in the midst of you being the Christ of God.

That'll scatter your unbelief. It'll deal with your skepticism too about eternity, about hereafter, about the resurrection, and it'll deal with your obligation and your sense of what is right and what is wrong, for here standing in your very midst is the eternal Son of God.

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