

(Luke) 50 - Trinity Revelation-Patience-Image of God

by Ed Miller

Ed Miller explores the significant clashes Jesus faced during Passion Week, revealing deeper truths about authority and God's revelation.

Duration: 50:51

Scripture: Luke 20:1-44

Topics: "Gods Judgment", "Jesus Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the parable of the landowner and the vineyard, which represents the history of Israel. The parable teaches that Israel was chosen by God to be the custodians of the truth and the channels of redemption. However, Israel as a nation was unfaithful and rejected the blessing, leading to God taking it away and giving it to the Gentiles. The parable also foreshadows the judgment that will come upon those who reject Jesus, the cornerstone. The speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing Jesus as the cornerstone and not rejecting him, as it will lead to destruction.

Transcript

And for the privilege we have to gather here in this room, and in liberty and in freedom, to meditate on these precious things of God. We would ask you to guide our discussion and our meditation, and we just pray that our hearts would be focused upon the Lord. Thank you that you know every one of us.

You know where we are, meet us, we pray, and we pray because we see the Lord together, that we'll become more like Him. We commit our time unto you now, in the matchless name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

Okay, I'll ask you to open please to Luke chapter 20. We've come now to the last section of the book of Luke. We're looking at the Savior of all mankind.

We're in the victory section. And the fact is, when we come to Luke, actually it started before this, Luke 19, we're in the last week called, we call it, the church has called it Passion Week. We're in the last week of the life of our Savior before He went to the cross.

Luke introduces Passion Week by two great foundational stories. The first is in chapter 19, 28 to 44, which we just call Palm Sunday. It's the entrance into Jerusalem.

And that story answers the question, who is this on His way to the cross? And the answer is, this is the Lord of the universe. And we illustrated that by how the Lord had His need of that animal and just untied it. The Lord of the universe is on His way to the cross.

And then the second foundational story that introduces Passion Week, that we looked at last time, chapter 19, verses 45 to 48, the cleansing, the second cleansing of the temple. You see, Palm Sunday asks the question, who is this? And the answer is, the Lord of the universe. And the second story answers the question, what is He doing? Where is He going? And the answer is, He's going to cleanse His temple.

And we discussed that last time. If you missed that and would like the tapes, just ask Lillian and she'll make sure that you get that. Now at this point in the record, we are, as far as what we'll look at today, there's some discrepancy as to whether it's Tuesday or Wednesday of Passion Week.

Some look at Matthew and say for sure that it's Tuesday. I incline to the fact that we're now on Wednesday of Passion Week, but that's not important. We're very close to the cross at this point.

From this time on, the opposition becomes more and more severe and more and more open. Jesus faces His enemy and explains what's going to happen. He predicts it.

They get more violent and they try to plot against Him. And so you'll see as we go through this, increasingly how the tension increases. There's a real clash here.

Notice how chapter 19 ended, verse 47. He was teaching daily in the temple, but the chief priests and the scribes and the leading men among the people were trying to destroy Him. They could not find anything that they might do, for all of the people were hanging on every word that He said.

And so all of the people, now a host of His disciples, of course they're expecting Him to rise up, overthrow Rome and reestablish the Davidic kingdom. They have a wrong view of Messiah. Now we need to understand these final events in the light of the nearness of Jesus to the cross.

He's ready to die now. And in Luke chapter 20, we have five clashes right in a row in this chapter. Now let me just suggest those to you and then we'll develop them one by one.

First, there's the clash about His authority in chapter 20, 1 to 8. They come up and they say, by whose authority are you doing these things? And then in verses 9 to 19, there's the clash that was created by His parable. He told the parable of the vineyard. And then in chapter 20, verses 20 to 26, the clash about the taxes, the poll tax, the Roman tax.

And then in verses 27 to 40, the clash about the resurrection. And then the chapter ends, 41 to 44, a clash about the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so five times in this chapter, probably the Wednesday of Passion Week, there's the clash.

One about His authority. One about the vineyard parable. One about the Roman taxes.

One about the resurrection. And one about the deity of Christ. What we're going to do this morning is begin to look at those clashes.

We'll look at, not quite three, two and some of the third one. And just to get it before you. What I want to do is look at each of these clashes in two ways.

First, on the level of earth. In other words, if someone comes and reads the Bible, what do they see? The facts. On the level of earth, here's the clash.

But behind the scenes, there is a spiritual reality. So each one of these not only shows the level of earth, but then behind the scenes, it shows the heart of God. So we'll look at each one of these both ways.

On the level of earth, and then we'll go upstairs and see it from the point of view of the Lord. One shows the deepening rejection from the human side. And the other shows the heart of God and his passion, his love on the other side.

Turn then, if you would, to chapter 21 to 8. This question on the authority of Jesus. Now, don't read this la-la-la, because these religious leaders had the right to question the authority of the teacher. And so now they're going to question Jesus.

Don't forget, he has just gone into their temple, turned over the tables and the chairs, and drove out the animals and so on. And they're saying, who is this? And what's he doing? Of course, they didn't really want to know. They had asked the same question in John chapter 2, almost three and a half years ago.

And they had plenty of time to learn the answer, if they really wanted to know it. Anyway, let's begin in verse 1. On one of the days while he was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders confronted him. And they spoke, saying to him, tell us by what authority you're doing these things.

Or, who's the one who gave you this authority? Jesus answered and said to them, I will also ask you a question. You tell me, was the baptism of John from heaven or from men? They reasoned among themselves, saying, if we say from heaven, he will say, why then did you not believe him? If we say from men, then the people will stone us to death. For they're convinced that John was a prophet.

And so they answered that they did not know where it came from. Jesus said to them, nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things. On the level of earth, as you just come to these verses, the issue is authority.

The issue is the authority question. Tell us by what authority you do these things. Or, who gave you the authority to do these things? In the minds of the religious leaders, this question had bothered them for three and a half years.

Where did this man get his education? What right does he have to tell us? And you remember that all the people now were following him. And the Greek is very powerful. It says they latched on to every word.

And you can just picture these people latching on to every word. He goes into the temple, he upsets it. Where did he get that authority? Now in those days, as in these days, people put a lot of stock in the schools.

We have in our educational system, of course this is very generally speaking, but we have a system of degrees. You go to the first couple of years and you get your bachelor's. And then you go on and you get your master's degree.

And then you go on and get some kind of a doctor's. According to Alfred Edersheim, who is a great scholar about the Bible times, he tells us that they had their degrees back then too. They had a degree

that roughly corresponded to the bachelor's called Rab, R-A-B.

They had the degree that corresponded to the master, Rabbi. And they had the Ph.D., which was Rabboni. And so as you go through and see some of these controversies, it's very interesting because there's this play on the word.

Nicodemus came and said to Jesus, We know that you're a rabbi. You got your master's degree. We know that.

And then Jesus said, Are you a Rabboni? And you don't know these things? See there's this little behind the scenes play. You're a doctor and you're asking someone with a master's degree? And you can see that in between the lines. Jesus was a teacher and he had captured the ears of all of the masses.

He had exposed these teachers as religious hypocrites. And now they're asking him, Who are you? What school did you go to? As I said, then like today, there was very little regard for what can be called the commission of God. In other words, everyone was looking for papers and everyone was looking for degrees.

What school did you go to? Who are your endorsements? Who backs you up on this? Where is your board? What are the names? What seminary did you go to? And so on. If a person back then or today had only God's approval, if they were gifted by the Lord, called by the Lord, anointed by the Lord, commissioned by the Lord, they probably wouldn't get a hearing. And that's true today.

Without man's credential. Don't answer, but just think today. If someone doesn't have the right credential today, do you think they could get on the mission field? Some do, but it's not easy because you have to go through a board.

I remember what one missionary said, I'd rather have a rock under my feet than a board behind my back any day. And it's a great truth. But if someone doesn't go to the right school or seminary, you think they'd be allowed to pastor a church or be invited to teach in a Bible school or in a seminary or qualified to counsel someone or to instruct someone? That was the question on their mind.

Where is this man coming from? What school did he go to? Where did he get his credential? What right does he have? That's the human side. You read it, it's a problem of authority. But behind the scenes, don't forget Jesus is on his way to the cross.

He's on his way to accomplish redemption. And there's something bigger than authority on his mind. And that is revelation.

Revelation. Let me illustrate. Why did Jesus raise the ghost of John the baptizer in this story? Verse 3. I will ask you a question, you tell me.

Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men? Was Jesus just trying to embarrass them? Was our Lord Jesus just trying to be clever? To outmaneuver them? Was he trying to make them look silly in front of others? You know better and I know better, that's not the heart of our Savior. It's true that he did turn their own words against them. And he was able to trap them.

But this is more than the fox becoming the owl. The Lord Jesus is laying down a great principle here. He wasn't trying to be smart.

He wasn't trying to be clever. And he was not trying to dodge their question. It would have been easy for him to answer that.

But by placing them in this dilemma, he exposed their heart. When he asked if John's baptism was from heaven or earth. From God or from man.

It was an easy question. It put them in a pickle, but it was an easy question. It was a multiple choice.

I loved that when I was in school. They would give multiple choice. This or that.

You got a 50-50 shot. Getting it right. If they said this was from heaven, then they concluded, Jesus would say, how come you didn't believe him? If it's from heaven, why didn't you believe him? If they said from earth, don't read verse 6, la la la, either.

They were afraid of being stoned, literally. There were plenty of stones around too. Because Herod was in the process of enlarging and beautifying the temple at the time.

There were plenty of stones. And they had Old Testament, forgot the word. They could do it.

They had permission to stone a false prophet. And so that was all there. In verse 7, they concluded, we do not know.

We have a word for that. Someone who doesn't know. We won't use the Latin word for it.

We'll just use the English word. We call them agnostics. Not ignoramus, which is what it comes from.

An atheist is one who claims he doesn't believe in God. An agnostic is someone who claims he doesn't know. Maybe he has.

Maybe not. These religious leaders at this point claim to be agnostic. We don't know.

We don't know if it's from heaven. We don't know if it's from earth. The key to the passage is verse 8. Jesus said to them, Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

In other words, behind the thing. The issue is not authority. The issue is revelation and the silence of Christ.

The silence of God. That he would not answer. No word.

No revelation. No answer. That's the point of this passage.

Why didn't Jesus answer the question? Would have been easy. He could have said, My authority is from God. It's over.

Why didn't he do that? I think for two reasons. Number one, according to the record, these were not only agnostics, but they were dishonest agnostics. I think there might be such a thing as an honest agnostic.

Someone who just says, I don't know. And really doesn't know. God would not be silent to an honest agnostic.

He would never discourage faith. The whole record of the truth, the whole balance of scripture, teaches us that he wouldn't do that. But in this case, their backdoor deliberations over John shows they did not want

to know the truth.

They knew very well who John was and what John taught. The question about John was designed to prove that they weren't interested in knowing the truth. Here's the sad truth of the whole Bible.

God will never reveal himself to someone who does not want to know the truth. He just will not do it. And it's wonderfully illustrated here.

That's why this is bigger than authority. It's the principle of revelation. They had said no to John's ministry.

And by saying no to John's ministry, they had cut themselves off from being candidates of further life. In other words, they already said no. You've got to remember there that our Lord Jesus is looking face to face, eyeball to eyeball, at his murderers.

In two days, three at the most, they're going to put him on the cross. They know he knows. And he keeps bringing it out and they keep trying to cover it up.

And you've got to see that conflict in here. And this connection, I love John 7, 17. That is a verse.

That should be a plaque on a wall. John 7, 17 says, If any man is willing, then he shall know. Isn't that interesting? God is making knowledge a matter of the will and not of the mind.

If any man is willing, then he shall know. These people were unwilling. If I really want to know, God will not be silent.

As I said, I'm quite sure there are honest agnostics as well, but not these men. So the first reason Jesus was silent, they didn't want to know. They didn't want to know the truth.

And here's the second reason he was silent. Not only they didn't want to know, but they already knew. That's the second reason he was silent.

They were playing games. They didn't really have this question. Their point was to trick him and to get him in a spot.

The whole question was rude. It was an evasion of the truth. Now this is a terrible sign.

On man's side, these proud men say, We demand to know your authority. And on God's side, I cannot speak to you because you don't want to know and you already know. And it's just this tremendous silence of God.

It's just a terrible thing. Let me make a couple applications from this to make it intensely practical in our own lives. If you've ever called upon the Lord and God is silent, if you've ever called upon the Lord and there's no answer from heaven, I think before you go any further, you ought to at least honestly before God answer these two questions.

Do you really want to know the truth? That's an important question. If you call on the Lord and He's silent, answer this question. Are you serious about really wanting to know? Remember, the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

Here's the second question. Do you already know the answer? Sometimes we come to the Lord asking Him something and we're just sort of wanting Him to change His mind. Like that little child went to his

mother and said, can I do such and such? Oh, ask your father.

I know what he'll say. Sometimes we already know and we come hoping God will change His mind or hoping to ask one of God's children and then they'll back us up and let us do what we want to do anyway. God will never answer the person who doesn't really want to know and God will never answer the person who already knows.

And so that's important. One other little application on that. I know we can't judge hearts and I'm not suggesting you try to judge hearts, but don't waste a lot of time with dishonest agnostics.

Sometimes you don't know if they're dishonest or not, but sometimes you can tell by the tone in their voice. They'll just come along and say, well, prove it. If there's a God, you got the attitude already, and you already know where they're coming from.

If there's really a God, how come He allows all this suffering and violence and tragedy on the earth? Someone came to me one time and said, if you answer this, I'll believe in God. Can God make a stone large enough that He can't lift it? That's a dishonest agnostic. They don't really want to know.

Where did Cain get his wife? And so on. If you come to somebody like that, do what Jesus did. Just zip your list.

He didn't answer. Because they don't want to know. Or they already know.

And it's not going to help to argue, to debate, to go back and forth. Those convinced against their will are of the same opinion still. And they're not going to change.

They're not going to change. And so I would suggest that you just, if they're honest, don't be afraid to answer honest questions. Even if they're hard.

God never turned down an honest question. And some of the honest questions, when you go through the Bible, it's amazing. You study Jeremiah.

Jeremiah cried out to God, you duped me. And he cried out to God and asked honest questions. Habakkuk, the prophet.

Jonah, the prophet. God never turned down an honest question. But this dishonest question, the heaven is silent.

And so God's silence is designed to reveal man's heart. You look at this, you say, it's a section on authority. Oh, beyond that.

He's on his way to the cross. And he's saying, they are rejecters. And now I must be silent.

I cannot reveal myself to those who don't really want to know. The second confrontational event is this wonderful parable of the vineyard. Notice the end of the parable, verse 19.

The scribes and the chief priests tried to lay hands on him from that very hour. They feared the people. They understood that he spoke this parable against them.

We may not understand this parable, but they did. They knew it was against them. So what I'd like to do is read the parable and do the same thing.

On the level of earth, it means this. But behind the scenes, what is the heart of God? I want us to see that. Glance, if you would, from verse 9. He began to tell the people a parable.

A man planted a vineyard and rented it out to vine growers and went on a journey for a long time. At the harvest time, he sent a slave to the vine growers so that they would give him some of the produce of the field. But the vine growers beat him, sent him away empty-handed, and he proceeded to send another slave.

They beat him also and treated him shamefully and sent him away empty-handed. He proceeded to send a third, and this one also they wounded and cast out. The owner of the vineyard said, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son.

Perhaps they will respect him. But when the vine growers saw him, they reasoned with one another saying, This is the heir. Let us kill him so that the inheritance will be ours.

So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy these vine growers and give the vineyard to others. When they heard it, they said, May it never be.

But Jesus looked at them and said, What then is this which is written? The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief cornerstone. Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but on whomever it falls, it shall scatter him like the dust. On the level of earth, as far as the historical record is concerned, this is really a parable of the whole history of Israel in a compendium, in a nutshell.

Let me give you four truths that this parable teaches. Everyone who studies this agrees on these four things. Four things that they knew, and this is the level of earth.

Number one, they knew that the Jewish nation had been appointed as the custodians and the guardians of the truth. That's what this parable says. God had chosen the nation of Israel, His promised people, to be the channels of redemption to bring God's salvation to the whole world.

Matthew's record of this in chapter 21 and verse 43 calls the vineyard the kingdom of God. And so they were given the truth of the kingdom, the kingdom of God. The way Jesus tells the parable, it's a little bit bigger than the whole nation.

It is Israel, but especially the leadership, those in charge of the vineyard. And this is focusing on the leadership. The second truth, not only was Israel chosen as the custodians of the truth, but the Jewish nation was unfaithful to their trust.

...of the Lord. God kept sending prophets. Luke mentions three times.

They sent the first one, he gets all beat up and goes home. And then they send another one and he gets his head knocked in and he gets home. Another one is shamefully treated.

Matthew, in his account, he doesn't say three men, but three waves. They sent many servants and they all came back beat up or killed or stoned or shamed. And finally, the beloved son.

The landowner says, they all accept my prophets, my messengers, my slaves. I'll send my beloved son. And the record shows in the parable that they threw him outside the city, outside the vineyard, and they killed him, thinking that they could then take over.

The leadership knew. They had been planning his death. They knew who he claimed to be.

And when he told this parable, and he said, then they killed the son. They knew that they were talking about him. So the first fact, Israel had been given the blessings, the kingdom of God.

Second fact, they were unfaithful through the years. God sent prophet after prophet, messenger after messenger, and they rejected. And now they were within two or three days of rejecting the beloved son.

The third fact, that they knew from this parable, and they said, God forbid, they were going to lose their privilege as the channel of redemption, and God was going to take it from them and give it to another group. The group is called the Gentiles. Listen as I quote Matthew on this.

Matthew 21, 40, Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to the vine growers? They said to him, he'll bring those wretches to a wretched end. They'll rent out the vineyard to other vine growers who will pay the proceeds at the proper season. And then in Luke chapter 20, verse 43, Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing the fruit of it.

That's Matthew, I may have mistaken. Matthew 21. So the prophecy is that Israel is going to lose its place as a channel of redemption.

God will take the truth from them and give it to us, to the church, to the Gentiles. Many think in verse 16, when they heard that, Luke 20, verse 16, they said may it never be. And what they meant by that is may we never be set aside.

God's chosen people set aside. This was an amazing thing to them. And they said never.

And so they understood that the Jews had the blessing. They understood that the nation had been unfaithful and rejecting all God's messengers. They understood that the trust was going to be taken from them and given to someone else.

And then finally, they understood at the end, certain judgment was going to come because they rejected the beloved son. Verse 17 and 18, Jesus looked at them and said, what then is this which is written? The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. They had already quoted this psalm on Palm Sunday when they said, Hosanna to the son of David.

Psalms 118. Now they're quoting it again. The rejected stone will become the exalted stone.

Glance at verse 18 if you would. This is so graphic. You see, they kept running against the stone through all of those prophets.

You know what happens when you run against the stone? You break yourself. You know what happens when the stone falls on you? You're crushed to powder. And that's what he's saying here over and over again.

You butt heads with the stone. You've gone against the stone. I've got a stone in my yard.

I hate it. It's in my garden. When we moved there, there was this big old stone and I wanted to get rid of it.

So I called up somebody who I was recommended would take it out of there. They said it would cost me \$1,500 just to bring in the equipment to get rid of that stone. So we got the family together and said let's be creative.

What can we do to make that stone attractive? So we put a lighthouse on it. Now there's a lighthouse on our stone in our garden. Imagine if I decided I'm going to get rid of that stone and I just went across the yard and I ran full force against the stone.

What would happen? What if I did it over and over and over again? I'll tell you what would happen. Nothing to the stone. But I'd be broken.

However I hit the stone, I'd be broken. That's a big stone. I can't imagine if someone lifted the stone and dropped it on me.

That's exactly what Jesus is saying. When you reject, you're only hurting yourself. You're running against the stone over and over and over again.

And if you do it long enough, then finally the stone is going to have to judge you. And the stone will be dropped on you. So that's the outside view.

Those four things the parable teaches. Israel as a nation had a blessing. They were the channel of redemption.

Israel as a nation was unfaithful. They rejected the blessing. God was going to take the blessing from them and give it to the Gentiles and ultimately, because of the rejection of the stone, there would be this awful judgment.

But there's a higher look. Let's look at the parable again, not with those facts. Those facts won't go away.

But what's behind it? Jesus is two days from the cross. Now if you're honest, when you read the parable or when I read the parable with you, you must have wondered about this landowner. Did you? I want to speak reverently, but I want to speak plainly.

When I'm finished with any message, I don't always expect everyone to agree with me. You know, we have room for disagreement. But I hope when I'm done, you at least know what I mean.

I hope it's clear. You may not agree with it, but at least I know what he said. I know what he means.

And so I speak reverently, but when I read this, and I know it's a picture of the Lord, but in the parable, the landowner didn't come across too swift to me. As I read this, I said, what is wrong with this landowner? First of all, he leaves the land unattended for a long while while he goes on a journey. And he's an absentee landlord.

It's one thing to leave the land unattended, but what kind of a landowner would subject his interest after repeated abuses over and over and over again? If you had some property, and you sent someone to collect the rent, and he came back all beat up, and his nose was bleeding, and his head was caved in, would you say, oh, I think I'll send someone else? And then you sent another one, and he came back with a broken leg, and he came back all beat up, and then you say, I think I'll send somebody else. And then you send another one, and another one, and another one. Would you keep doing that? If I was a landowner, I think I'd send the police, or an army, or my own band of thugs.

I'd do something. And then, to top it all off, look at verse 13. After all his servants got killed, the owner of the vineyard said, what shall I do? I'll send my beloved son.

Perhaps they'll respect him. Now, I understand this is talking about the Lord, but the very difficulty of the parable is the key to the parable. You see, they thought this guy was a pushover.

That's why they said in verse 14, let's kill the son, then we'll inherit the land. How foolish is that? Of course, I'm sure what they thought was, we've been working the land, if the heir shows up dead, those closest to the land will inherit the land, and so on. Don't read this parable, la, la, la.

The landowner is God. Look at his heart. You say, this is a parable on the rejection of Israel.

Yes, on the level of earth. On the level of heaven. It's a parable on the patience of God.

The long suffering of the Lord. The patience of God towards Israel's ruler is unparalleled in all the history of the world. It is the most amazing thing.

To drive God's patience home to the heart, an illustration must be invented to picture it. And that illustration must be so unreal that nobody on the level of earth would ever act this way. This is a parable on the amazing long suffering of God.

If all you see is the rejection of Israel in this parable, you have not understood the parable. This is a parable on the patience of God. God, in order to reach them, sends prophet after prophet after prophet.

They say no, they reject. He sends another and another, messenger after messenger. God tolerates rejection over and over and over and over.

If I were Jesus, again I speak as a fool, I would have told this parable after I rose from the dead. I would rise from the dead and say, let me tell you a parable. You're dead.

And the rock's going to fall on you and pulverize you to powder. And that's when I would have done it. Why did he do it before the resurrection? Why did he do it two days before the cross? The answer is, he's trying to win these religious leaders.

He's warning them. He's doing the same thing he did to Judas. Right up to the end.

When Judas kissed him, he said, friend, what are you doing? Right to the end, he's trying to win them. And he does this before the cross so that they'll have time to repent. Don't forget.

See, we sort of slap on our own expense. These were killers. Cold-blooded killers.

They had already plotted it. It was already laid out. In two days, they were going to murder him.

And he tells them face to face, cryptically, to be sure, to hide it from the people. But they knew. And he said, and then, they killed the son.

And they threw him out. They were planning that. They had talked about it the day before.

They knew. And he was warning them. And the thing that he warned them about, that prophecy there of the rejected stone.

You see, they killed the prophet. And he didn't come back. They killed the next messenger.

He didn't come back. Jesus said, you better be careful. Because you say, well, kill the son, it's over.

Kill the son, it's not over. Because the son's coming back. The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner.

And that expression, has become the head of the corner, is a reference to the resurrection. If you don't believe it, read the sermon in Acts chapter 4, where that's quoted again, and applied to the resurrection. And so Jesus is willing, God is willing, to look foolish.

Because of his great heart toward us and them. God is willing to look ridiculous and reckless because of his patience toward us. Like Israel, things haven't really much changed.

People are colliding with the rock all the time. How? Don't answer. But how many times have you crashed heads with God, run into the rock, and who was hurt? You.

You're the one that got broken. How many people do you know right now? People you love and are praying for. And they're just constantly running into the rock.

Running into the rock. And they're the ones getting hurt. And you know someday if they don't turn and trust the Lord, it's inevitable someday, if they don't respond, then the rock's gonna have to fall on them.

I mean, that's the sad bottom line. But how patient God is to allow us to continually be broken. The parable ends in this wonderful note of victory, verse 17, the stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner.

So on the level of earth, it looks like Israel's rejection. But the reality is the patience, the long-suffering of God. Let me introduce this one and I'll give you the heart of it and we'll close.

Verse 22 to 25. They come again. Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not? He detected their trickery and said to them, Show me a denarius.

Whose inscription and likeness does it have? They said, Caesar's. He said to them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, to God the things that are God's. See, once again, they were trying to trap him.

And the idea was, they thought, oh, here's a good question. Is it lawful to pay taxes? Well, they had some zealous Jews there. They hated Rome.

And if Jesus said, pay taxes to Rome, the Jews would say, he's not on our side. He's against us. And the people would go against him.

If they said, don't pay taxes to Rome, then he'd be handed over as seditious and trying to cause a riot against Rome. And so they thought they had him. In the first story, the human side is authority.

The divine side is revelation. In the second story, the human side is the rejection of Israel. The divine side is the patience of God.

In the third story, it looks like the issue is separation of church and state. Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. Render to God the things that are God's.

Certainly Jesus was saying that there's a responsibility for us to submit to government. He's saying that. But what's behind the scenes? Get this picture in your heart.

Bring me a coin. And they brought a denarius. On the front of it, Tiberius Caesar.

And his picture was stamped right on the coin. On the other side, his mother, Leba. The goddess of peace was stamped.

And here's this coin. And they said, by the way, they took it out of their pocket. They were spending it all right.

They could use it as a medium of exchange. They just didn't want to pay Rome. Whose image is on this coin? They said, Caesar! Is it Caesar's image? Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's.

Imply what image is on your life. Imply whose image were you stamped in. Whose image were you minted in.

Render to God the things that are God's. It was the most amazing illustration. As he began to contrast, the image of Caesar is on this coin.

Then give it to Caesar. The image of God is on your life. Give it to God.

Render to the Lord the things that are the Lord's. And so it's always bigger than what it looks like. It's not just separation of church and state, and the Christian's responsibility to submit to human authority.

That's there. But it's bigger than that. As he's on his way to the cross, his heart is beating.

I want to reveal myself. I can't. I must be silent.

They don't want to know. As he's on his way to the cross, they're rejecting, rejecting, rejecting. And he's been so patient.

His heart's so long suffered. That's the issue. That's what we're talking about here.

And finally they're arguing over this little bit. What's our responsibility to Roman and heathen authority? He said it's bigger than that. Whose image were you made in? Whose likeness is stamped on your life? Render to the Lord that which belongs to the Lord.

And we're going to see that all the way through each of these things. That there's this human side. And some people never get beyond that.

That's all they see. The facts. But underneath this great heart of God is beating in love as he goes toward the cross.

He doesn't want to be silent. He wants to reveal himself. He doesn't want to end his patience.

He wants to constantly... He's doing... God can't do more than give his beloved son. That's what he's doing. And he wants them to see that they were created in the image of God.

Well, the controversy will go on and we'll touch on that a little more. We'll end there now. Comments or questions? Oh, yes, yes.

I didn't know that. Thank you. But the Lord has a way to use his anointed even without... Feed his people in secret.

Other comments? Oh, yes. Well, that's about it. Sure.

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