

Mark 11:27-33

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Preacher: Billy Joe Calvert

[0 : 00] Amen. Take your Bibles and go with me to the Gospel according to Mark.! Mark chapter 11. The Gospel according to Mark. Mark chapter 11.

! Our text this morning will be Mark 11, starting in verse 27 and going to the end of the chapter, which gets us to verse 33. So Mark 11, verses 27 through 33.

For full context, we understand that this passage is directly connected to the events that follow it in the 12th chapter. But also, because I had an understanding of the day, I limited myself to these first few verses that would kind of introduce what's about to come up in the 12th chapter.

So we'll look at it kind of in two parts, if the Lord allows us to, but this morning we will be focusing on the end of Mark 11. If you're physically able and desire to do so, would you join with me as we stand together and we read the Word of God with one another.

We are in the midst, in the account of Mark, of Passion Week. We are in the midst of that time preceding the betrayal, trial, and ultimately crucifixion and death of Jesus on the Roman cross.

[1 : 11] And it tells us, And it tells us, And as he was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him and began saying to him, By what authority are you doing these things?

Or who gave you this authority to do these things? And Jesus said to them, I will ask you one question, and you answer me, and then I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

Let's pray once again.

Father, bless the reading of your Word. May it speak to our hearts and minds, and may it conform us to become more like your image. It's in your sweet name we ask these things.

Amen. You may be seated. I want you to see this morning, very briefly, we'll look at this passage before us, a questioned authority. A questioned authority.

[2 : 29] Something that is going on in the life of Christ in particular at this time, but something that is still really continuing to go on among us today. It is questioning the authority of Christ.

And the reality of, Does he really possess and have the authority to do the things and the matters which he is indeed doing? We do not use the word past tense.

We do not say in which he did, but rather in which he is doing, because we profess in the living Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He is fully alive.

He is fully in the presence of the Lord God Almighty on high, but he is also actively working, moving, and living out among his people for his glory.

And does he indeed possess the authority to do that which he is doing? It is a question that was open for inspection and something that was put before him on this particular event, but something that is still being asked today.

[3 : 29] And as we look at this, I want you to see just a few things. First of all, we notice that this is indeed a planned confrontation. Now, if we were to read back and we were to go back in this passage, you would know that the day prior to this, Christ has entered into the temple.

He has overturned the money changers' tables. He has ran out of the court of the Gentiles, those who are carrying wares back and forth. He has cleansed the temple for the second time more than likely, for John records for us that he does it at the beginning of his ministry, while Matthew, Mark, and Luke record for us a temple cleansing at the end of his ministry.

And rather than trying to reconcile them, saying that it was a single cleansing, it is almost becoming upon us to read the differences in the accounts and say, well, it probably happened twice.

And so we see that Christ now once again asserts his authority by removing from the court of the Gentiles within the temple those who were doing things that they ought not have done.

It is positioning himself as one who has the right to do so. And then he says, Have you not read that it is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer?

[4 : 35] And he refers to the temple as his house. Now, we know that in Jewish thought and even in the world that the temple was indeed the house of God, the house of the Lord God, who had declared his name to reside there.

And yet he has stood in this place and not only stated that it was his house, but also stated he had the right to dictate what took place in his house.

But in full context, we know that this had also happened after the triumphal entry, when he had went into the temple. And immediately upon entering into Jerusalem, when the palm branches were laid on the way, the coats were put there and the people were crowding out, Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

And he enters into the temple, that it was there that the Pharisees said, Do you not hear what they are saying? Command them to be quiet. And Jesus says, I tell you the truth, that if these were to remain silent, that even the rocks would cry out.

And we saw that a few weeks ago, because it declares there in Zechariah 9, that he would come in such a manner, but it also declares that he would be praised when he came in such a manner.

[5 : 43] Regardless if man had fulfilled that command, his praise was going to come. And we've seen this reality, that in this Passion Week, Jesus is positioning himself for inspection.

He is positioning himself for scrutiny, if you will, so that we would know that he is the spotless Lamb of God. If he is fully God and fully man as he is, and he knows fully well of all that is about to transpire, and he knows that his hour, to use the terminology of the Gospel of John, is indeed near at hand, that would not have been easier for Christ to kind of hang back in the background, to kind of live out his last few days in relative peace, to kind of isolate himself and to instruct his disciples, and then to go forward to the cross.

But no, he intentionally, so the first thing that we notice, is this is planned by the Lord himself. He positions himself in which man has the opportunity to confront him.

He goes back the next day to the same temple, which he has just created a stir in. He goes back to the same location, knowing that the priest and the scribes and the Levites were probably not very happy with him.

But he goes back. Why? Because he wants them to have the opportunity to confront him. He is not afraid of our questions. He's not afraid of our misunderstandings.

[7 : 20] He's not afraid of our miscalculations. And rather, he wants to show that he is indeed one with the authority, one with the ability, and one with the perfection to do such things.

But we all notice also that this is planned by the men, because it tells us that they came to him, the ones who came were the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders.

Now, if you know anything about Jewish culture, you would know that this would comprise probably the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was the leading body of the Jewish nation that made decisions and safeguarded the truth, if you will.

They were not necessarily the high priests, because the high priests in that day were Sadducees. The Sadducees were really in connection with the Roman Empire, and they kind of lived a little bit worldly, but they had a little bit more money so they could buy the position of the high priest.

But the Pharisees, and the scribes, and the Levites, these were the guardians of the truth. These were those who made sure everybody was walking according to the way. These were those that, if you bore your coffee cup too far on the Sabbath, would be sure to tell you.

[8 : 25] These were the ones who wanted to preserve the knowledge. And by the way, they had a right to do it, for the Lord God had called them to set the standard. So we don't judge them too quickly. He had called them by this law.

It is the Sanhedrin that will put Christ on trial. It is the Sanhedrin that will condemn him as a blasphemer. It is the Sanhedrin, not the fullness of it, but at least a majority of it, that would come and condemn him and lead him to Pilate.

But before they did that, they wanted to confront him. They had seen the events of the day before, and so they had spent the evening coming together saying, we have to deal with this Jesus problem.

And so now here we see that they are planning this confrontation. They're intentionally going to confront the authority that he seems to possess. By the way, I love this Passion Week, and I love

the way that it unfolds, for we know that the plans of men, man plans his ways, but the Lord directs his steps, right?

We know that as we read a little bit further, they planned to crucify him, they planned to do away with him, but they didn't want to do it during the feast unless they would cause an uproar. And the Lord kind of forced their hand because Judas Iscariot came to them.

[9 : 35] And then they all of a sudden had a willing compromise made with Judas, and then the timing was set, and it happened during the Passover when they didn't want to do it because they were planning to do away with him, but his plan all along was to fulfill the law.

And the Passover lamb had to be slain during the Passover, for he was the lamb slain before the foundation of the world. But all I want you to understand is that even today there are people who, when confronted with Christ and see the work that Christ does among them, take the time to intentionally confront him and say, what authority do you have?

I would dare say that each and every one of us have done that because the question must be asked, what authority does Christ have to change and to dictate your life? I fully believe that you cannot have him as Savior if you do not know him as Lord.

For the scripture said he is Lord and Savior. And as Lord, that means he has the right to dictate how you live, the right to dictate how you behave, the right to set the course of your life, and he can change your world, and he has the right to come into your courtroom and to clean out your temple. He has the right to overturn the tables in your life. He has the right to cast out those things in your world that you thought were pleasant. We call that sanctification. We looked at that briefly this morning.

[10 : 57] I remember when I came to Christ and I said, Lord, I give you my life. Little did I know how he would get into the depths of my heart and start rummaging around in things that I thought was safe and eventually put his finger on it and said, I want you to get rid of that.

I want you to get rid of that. And I want you to do away with that. And I'd say, but Lord, I really don't want to do with that. He said, well, am I Lord or am I not? And all of a sudden you have to say, does he indeed have the authority to do so?

And we think about this and we say, Lord, why do you have the authority to do that? If you just know him as your savior, you say, Lord, I want you to bring me into your paradise.

I want you to bring me into glory. Lord, would you help me to spend eternity with you? But leave me alone for the rest of my life. Well, friend, it doesn't work that way because we have to ask ourselves, does he indeed have the authority to dictate what goes on?

It is a planned confrontation. Secondly, we notice here that there is a posed question. They come to him and they say, by what authority or in what authority do you do these things?

[12 : 05] Now, you need to understand that they were not only upset because he overturned some tables and he ran out some merchants and he did all that. It tells us in Matthew and later in Luke, it says the same thing, referring to his account, that when Jesus went into the temple, it wasn't like he was just passively walking through.

We want to get the fullness of it. This is why we're thankful for four gospels. When Jesus went to the temple that morning, he was teaching and proclaiming the gospel while he was there. He was, those that were coming into contact with him, he was teaching.

There's a line that I love to say from the movie Hoosiers. Maybe you haven't seen the movie Hoosiers and maybe it's been a long time. And this line may not seem very appealing to you until you think about it for just a moment, okay?

And it's a line when they're kind of confronting the coach. They say, you know, there's a big difference in the man who wants to run around in his own front yard and dance naked and the man who wants to do the same thing in my front yard. The first man, I don't have any right to say anything to him.

If he wants to run around naked in his own yard, that's his business. But the second one, I'm kind of forced to deal with because the moment you run around naked in my yard, I have to deal with it. I love that line. Because that means you can do what you want to do over there, but the moment you bring it into my world, I am forced to deal with it.

[13 : 16] And what Jesus did is he brought his teaching into the Sanhedrin's world. And they were forced to deal with it. And he forced them to deal with it the same way he interrupts your life and makes you deal with it so that he can pose the question to you.

You ever met people that when you ask them a question, they answer it with a question? My mentor was that way. I didn't like it. I read something this morning that said, be an individual of deep questioning.

I love that. Seek to be someone who asks deep questions of others. Make them think. And when they ask Jesus this, he says, I'm going to ask you one question, and if you answer it, I will tell you what authority I have.

Was the baptism from John, or the baptism of John from man or from heaven? That's it. That's the question. But friend, everything hinges on that question.

Was the baptism of John from man or from heaven? And the reason everything hindered on that question is because the Old Testament had declared that he would send a forerunner before the Messiah.

[14 : 29] And the forerunner would come and prepare the way, calling the hearts of the children to repent and to turn back to the hearts of the fathers and the fathers to turn back. And he would provide the way, and he would come declaring the coming day of the Lord.

And John the Baptist had come, baptism, a baptism of repentance, of turning over the hearts back to the children and turning over the hearts of the fathers back to their families and calling people to repent and acknowledge their sins.

And the whole time he was saying, there's one coming after me. There's one coming after me. There's one coming after me. And then Jesus walks across the scene and he says, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

So the baptism of John does nothing but point to Jesus. That's all it does. It is pointing over and over and over again to who Christ is.

And it had to be that way for the Word of God said that it would be that way. When John is conceived, you remember Zechariah is in the temple and he is told that his wife would have a child.

[15 : 28] Zechariah is a little bit caught off guard. He doubts the angel. The angel says he's gonna be mute until his son is born. You remember that? And it's because he was a man who should have known that his prayers were heard.

And when the angel said, your prayers are heard, he said, there's no way my prayers are heard.

The one to whom much was given, much was expected. And Zechariah is now mute. And then his wife gives birth to a son and they wanna name him after his father's name, Zechariah.

You remember this, right? And he says, no, he gets a stone tablet and he writes upon it, his name is John. And when he writes that name, all of a sudden his lips are loose and he can speak. And what does Zechariah do?

He praises the Lord God Almighty for the coming sun, S-O-N, that will rise in the sky. And he says, this, my son, is the forerunner who's providing the way. He doesn't glory, hallelujah, father, you've given me a boy.

No, he says, you've given me a boy who's pointing to one greater than him. He's praising Christ. So the whole ministry of John does nothing but point to Jesus.

[16 : 29] And so now the question, was that just of man? Or was that from heaven? For if this is just man's idea, then we don't have anything to do with it.

It's okay. Well, man comes up with all kinds of schemes and plans and all kinds of things. But if it's of the Lord, if heaven has declared, if John is heaven's messenger since to point the way to Jesus, then that means Jesus' authority comes from the same place.

Now all of a sudden it dictates, see what is being said here is, is the word of God true or not? Did God indeed send a forerunner before me?

And if he did, then it is your responsibility to heed the message declared. Friend, when we gather in times in our minds, we question his authority.

All we have to ask ourselves is, is the revelation of heaven true or not? And here he poses the question. Third and finally, friends, look at this.

[17 : 35] There is the pride that hindered them. There is this pride that hindered them. Jesus asked the question, verse 31 is very telling. They began reasoning among themselves.

Pay attention to that. They began reasoning among themselves. Let me just give you a cautionary warning.

Be careful with always and only reasoning with people just like you. Be careful if all of your advice and all of your input and all of your thoughts are dictated by your entourage who's just like you.

For we have a habit as mankind to surround ourselves with people just like us. Now, I'm not saying go off the deep end and get so far out there that you start reading things that make you doubt and make you question.

There are things I've told people that will ask me books and I'll be quite honest with them. I'll say, you're not ready for that book yet. Don't read it. Or you're not ready to talk to that person yet. Don't go there. And they say, what do you mean?

[18 : 57] They say, you better have a good foundation before you do it. Know who you are. Lay the foundation of Jesus Christ. Build on that foundation of Christ. But if all you ever do is surround yourself with yes men and yes women, people that are in complete agreement with you, then you're never challenged to think through what you genuinely and truly believe.

If all we do is reason among ourselves, reason with the people who are confronting the Savior with us, reason with those who think just like us, reason with those who vote just like us, reason with those who have opinions just like us, then friend, we're not reasoning at all.

All we're doing is repeating the same refrain to one another. You are always limited by your scope of those around you. That's just the truth.

Always. Don't overextend yourself. I'm just giving you a little pastorally counsel here. Know who you are in Christ. Know your foundation.

But listen to people and reason with people. Why? I have been challenged by more people in more places at more times than I ever thought possible. It is the challenge that comes from other people and other places that made me work out what I genuinely believe so that when I talked to them, I could say, this is what I believe and this is why.

[20 : 22] I've been able to give a defense. I've told you that before. I've had people question me at times that made me look like a fool. And at the moment, I thought I shouldn't have opened my mouth. But in hindsight, I said, boy, I'm so glad I did because if I never did, then I never would have been pushed to work it out.

I've had people tell me that I was wrong more times than they told me I was right. I've had people tell me that I misunderstood or misquoted things and that's okay. But I need to be big enough and strong enough to hold on to that because you'll never know what you believe.

I mean, really believe to the core of your being until you can reason outside of yourself. But they reasoned among themselves.

Why? Because it is pride that only puts people around us that are just like us. I don't want to be challenged. I want to be comforted. Tell me I'm okay.

Don't ever tell me I'm doing anything wrong and we'll get along. No, that's not growth. But they didn't do it. And their reasoning went something like this.

[21 : 27] How are we going to answer this? If we say from heaven, he's going to say, well, why didn't you listen to him? But if we say from him, shall we say from him? For they were afraid, this ought to be a cautionary tale, by the way, this should have been a flag waving around them because they knew full well all men consider him to be a true prophet.

By the way, if you're in a small circle and everybody else sees differently than your small circle, then maybe you need to look outside your small circle. If everybody else considered him to be a true prophet, but those that were reasoning among themselves.

And they thought, it was so strong, it tells us in Luke, it says if we say that, they'll stone us. These other people are so convinced he's a true prophet, they'll stone us, they'll kill us if we say that he wasn't.

These people had a conviction that John the Baptist, but not those who were reasoning among themselves. But it was pride that kept them from adhering because pride did not want to acknowledge that John the Baptist had called them a brood of vipers.

Pride did not want to acknowledge they had faults and failures they needed to repent of. Pride did not want to step out of the comfort of their own circle. And so they said, we do not know.

[22 : 39] That's a wrong answer. And the reason that's a wrong answer is because they did know, they just didn't want to answer. Don't say you don't know when their true answer is you don't want to say.

They knew, but they didn't want to say. Because the moment they acknowledged it, responsibility followed. What God has been clear about, don't be vague on.

Because I'll show you the outcome of pride. If you're not humble enough to say, Lord, it was from heaven but I was wrong. If in your pride you say, I don't know, this is what happens.

Jesus says, neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. Pride hindered them from further revelation. If we will not accept the revelation that's already been given, then we will not receive any further revelation of what he's doing.

It is pride that kept them from humbly saying, Lord, we don't fully know. We think it could have been this. I'm sure that the Lord could have worked with us but in pride they refused the answer to the question and pride hindered them from knowing anything else.

[23 : 57] It is the proud man who thinks he knows it all. What does the word of God say? The one who says he has all knowledge has none. I'm thankful.

I read that verse earlier in the week. I was driving down the car. I actually believe I read that verse yesterday morning. My wife and I were in the car and son in the back and we were talking to him and he kept saying, I know, I know, I know, and I know, and I know, and everything we were saying, he said, I know, I know, I know.

I said, well, I just read this morning the Bible says the one who says I know it all has no knowledge. He said, oh. So be careful what you say you know because that is pride.

And if we say we know it all, then we're not positioned to be taught anything else. And all we leave ourselves with is questioning the authority before us.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the day. We thank you for your word and Lord, we come before you with all humility saying you are the sole possessor of all authority.

[25 : 11] We want to be your servants for your glory and honor. Lord, if there be any here today who do not know you, would you impress it upon their hearts and minds? Would you lead them as only you see fit?

We ask it in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.