

Mark 11.27-33 – Accept Jesus' authority

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Main Point – Trust and obey Jesus, the one with God's authority

In the 2011 Australian Census(**SLIDE**) 61% of Australians ticked the 'I am Christian' box when it comes to their religion.

10 years later in 2021 only 44% of Australians claimed to be Christian.

But for many they tick the 'Christian' box because they got baptized or christened; maybe they went to Sunday School, or their parent went to church.

But 44% of Australians are not in church every week.

Even if we grew up in a Christian family n' going to church, and you're still going to church, does that make you a Christian?

If you say, 'I'm a Christian', 'I believe in Jesus', or 'Jesus is Lord',(**SLIDE**) does it mean you're saved?-----

We can easily speak words but are they real?

Are you truly a Christian, a follower of Jesus?-----

Tonight in the words of the Bible, we meet the Lord Jesus who has all authority

And if you say 'Jesus is Lord', does it show?

Does your life match up with your words?

Really I'm asking, Does Jesus have supreme authority over your life and choices?

Tonight we're returning to a **series in Mark's Gospel.(SLIDE)**

And over the next 5 weeks we'll look 'Issues in the Christian life', from Mark 12 mostly.

We'll skip Mark 13 n' come back to that another time, and cover Mark 14-16 in the lead up to Easter.

But in Mark 11 & 12 we hope you'll be encouraged to know, believe and live-out the teaching of Jesus.

At Bundy we want to help you know and follow Christ, and we pray this series in Mark's Gospel will help you do that.-----

Because we can all learn from Jesus about how to navigate issues in the Christian life, in a complicated, messy and difficult world.

We were last in Mark's Gospel 12 months ago.

And I'm sure, even if you were here, that you've forgotten where we were up to, so let's **set the scene, with my first point(SLIDE), the King will die.**

In the first half of Mark's Gospel he is really answering the question, 'Who is Jesus?'

Peter answers rightly in **ch8 v29**, 'you are the Messiah/ the Christ'.

That is, the promised King and Rescuer of God's people.

And from that point on Jesus is explaining what it means to be the Messiah, and what it means to follow him.

In Mark's Gospel,(**SLIDE**) How many times did Jesus predict his death?-----

By the end of ch10, 3 times.

3 times, Mark 8(v31), 9(v31) and **10(v33-34)(SLIDE)** Jesus prophesied that he will die and rise on the 3rd day.

He is the King who will die.-----

At the start of Mark 11, it's the last week of Jesus' earthly life.

The Sunday before his death he entered Jerusalem on a donkey.(**SLIDE**)

Jesus knew he was the king, and it seems, so does the crowd, who praised him.

And the opposition to Jesus by the religious authorities is coming to its crescendo.

The next day, Monday, Jesus heads to Jerusalem again.

He curses the fig tree.

Not cos he's hangry. Not in a moment of impulsive frustration.

Jesus, and Mark's Gospel are making a point:

Israel and their temple look leafy & good on the outside, but they are not producing the fruit of righteousness.

The curse and death of the fruitless fig tree, is a symbol of the judgement to come on Israel, their leaders, their temple.-----

So Jesus cleanses the temple – kicking out all those money-makers buying and selling.

It's like a temple de-tox.(**SLIDE**)

The King cleans his Father's house.

For the house of the Lord should be a place of prayer.-----

Even non-Jews should be allowed to pray there.-----

And it's after this, in **11v18**, that the Jewish leaders look to kill Jesus.

But Jesus wasn't just 'killed', he's in control of what's to come.

As **Mark 10 v45 says**,(**SLIDE**) He will 'give his life as a ransom for many'.

That means Jesus gives up his life, sacrificing it, to free people from bondage.

Free all who trust in him.(**SLIDE**)

What does Jesus' death free us from?-----

He dies to free us from eternal death in the lake of fire,(**SLIDE**) the judgement we deserve.(**Rev 20.14-15**; Eph 1.7; Rom 8.2; Rom 5.8-11)

He dies to free us from the consequence of ignoring n' rebelling against God.----

He gets cursed, so we can escape it.(Gal 3.13-14)-----

And when you believe that, it moves you to thanks, and praise, doesn't it?---

The King will die.-----

Coming to **point 2, and our text, the King has authority**.(**SLIDE**)

In Mark's Gospel **v27** begins a new section, with 7 conflict stories with Jesus and the religious leaders.

Time and again we'll see questions and opposition from the religious authorities.

We'll see Jesus' authority, his incomparable wisdom.

And his words that speak to issues of our lives too.

V27 says, 'they came again to Jerusalem', likely the Tuesday before his death.

And for the 3rd time in 3 days Jesus walks into the temple.

Remember the **temple** was the heart of the Jews religious life.(**SLIDE**)

Herod the Great had expanded and beautified the temple in 20 BC.

It was the place where God especially dwelt, in the Most Holy Place.

It was the place Jews would approach God in prayer.

It was the place they would bring their offerings and sacrifices, in obedience to Old Testament law.

Soon the temple will not only be obsolete, but be destroyed (13.2).----

But now it becomes the stage for the challenge to Jesus' authority.

Jesus enters the temple and the Jewish leaders come to him.

It's like they've been waiting to confront him, like some bullies wait for their victim outside the school gate.

But will they outsmart him?-----

The chief priests, scribes or teachers of the law, and elders, were those who made up the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council.

They are powerful and influential people.

Who come to Jesus and ask, 'By what authority are you doing these things?'

'These things' likely refers to the day before, when Jesus had gone into the temple and turned the tables, literally, and threw out all those buying and selling.

And they're asking, **What right do you have?** (**SLIDE**)

In 2019 a US social worker and educator, **Jessica Nobile** wrote online:

"What right do I have to judge you? What right do you have to judge me?"

What right does anyone have to judge any other living being? None. No one has the right to judge."

Jessica says that, 'to judge is to dictate what is right or wrong for another person'.----

And she claims that people should not be, and she should not be judged for the mistakes she made in her past.-----

I'm not saying it is our place to be judgemental and condemn people, but we see Jesus in the temple did judge.

And he had the right to judge.-----

They ask, **Who gave you this authority?**

In Mark's Gospel the question of Jesus' authority has been a repeated question.

Way back in ch2 Jesus said to a paralysed man, 'Son, your sins are forgiven' (2.5), and he was rebuked – Who can forgive sins but God alone?

And Jesus responded with, 'so that you may know that the SoM has authority on earth to forgive sins' he tells the paralytic to get up and walk.

Since then Jesus claimed authority to welcome and eat with sinners (2.15-17), do good on the Sabbath (2.28), and reject oral traditions (7.1-13).

And the clearing of the temple was like the last straw.

In all of these actions it is the authority of God that he acts upon.

God has given Jesus this authority, for he is the Messiah, the Promised King

Yet he's also the Son of God, God in the flesh.

Jesus HAS the authority of God in himself.

He determines what is right and wrong, consistent with God's word.

He has the right, to say what's right n' wrong, and to judge people.

But he doesn't say that openly, does he?

Instead, Jesus responds to their question with a question.

A common rabbinical teaching tool.

'Was John's baptism from heaven or from men/ of human origin? Answer me'

Jesus stakes his authority on **John the Baptist**, and on connection with John.

John and Jesus linked themselves with each other, and are both against those who reject God's word & God's will.

Remember back in **Mark ch1,(SLIDE)** John the Baptist spoke of 'the one more powerful than I who will come after me', who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.

Both men were identified as prophets.

Both speak God's words and act with God's authority.

But Jesus wont give them an answer that satisfies their blood lust.

The Jews don't know how to answer Jesus' question in v31.

If they say John's baptism was from heaven, from God, they know Jesus will say – 'why didn't you believe him?'

For John had called people to confess and repent of their sins, n' be baptized, but the Jewish leaders had rejected him.

Oh how better off they would have been if they'd have turned from their sins, and looked to Jesus.

But you see, a decision about John was a decision about Jesus.

Listening to John and accepting Jesus' greater authority wasn't an option for them.

But the leaders saying John's baptism was from men, of human origin, will discredit them in the eyes of the people, even enrage the crowd.

They know they are stuck between a rock and hard place, so they don't answer.

Jesus can't be messed with, and out-smarted, can he?

They confess their ignorance, 'we don't know', but really, they were unwilling to know.

Isn't it true **many today** are unwillingly to know about, let alone accept Jesus' authority?

People who know that there's a God who made the world.

People who hear that Jesus died for sinners and rose again as the conqueror of death, but they wont accept and yield to his lordship?

Aren't their people who have heard the Gospel time and again, but keep living as the boss of their own lives, and ruler of their own choices?

Maybe you have loved ones like this; stuck in sin.-----

Maybe it's you?-----

V33 finishes with Jesus saying, "Well if you wont answer", 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.'

This tells us, if you really want to know and have a relationship with Jesus, you need to accept his authority. That he is Lord.

I hope you can see from this interaction that you can't just 'keep an open mind' with Jesus.

If you avoid making a decision about him, you make a decision to reject him.----

What's your response to Jesus?-----

He has God's commission and authority.

When Jesus was with his disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration, Mark 9, God's voice came from the cloud,(**SLIDE**) "This is my beloved Son; listen to him".(Mk 9.7)

Jesus has the authority of God himself.

And if that is true, if Jesus HAS God's authority, what does that mean for us? What should we do in response?

The third point, The King to be obeyed.(SLIDE)

To apply the truth of our passage to us I want to go back to what Jesus had been teaching earlier.

3 applications under 3 headings, **3 'F's'.**(**SLIDE**)

Please have your bible open at Mark 10.

How should you and I respond to the Jesus with all authority?

Firstly, Faith

In **Mark 10.47** a blind Bartimaeus cried out, "Jesus Son of David/ King, have mercy of me'.

He called to the Lord Jesus, and trusted his compassion and power to heal.

Yet Jesus responds with (**v52**), 'Your faith has saved you'.

Not only could the blind man see, but his faith in Christ saved him.-----

Have you put your faith and dependent trust in Jesus to save you?-----

And this faith that saves, is also seen in faith in the face of challenges.

Faith is what Jesus calls for in **11v22**.

When you look at the difficult verses **v23-24** you might wonder:

Is this a blank check? For Whatever you want, as long as you truly believe then God will give it to you

And if God doesn't answer the way you want, Well it's just because you didn't have enough faith. No.

As Andy said on this passage last Feb, the context is about 'this mountain', the temple on Mt Zion being destroyed (cf John 2.19-21).

But we can have amazing confidence to come to God in prayer, because of Jesus.

And we can 100% believe that what God has said will happen, will happen.

Like back in **10.29,(SLIDE)** that if you give up family or fields, relationships or wealth for Christ, you'll get more than enough now, and eternal life to come.

Trusting Jesus is worth it.-----

We are to trust God with our needs, and when facing impossible things.

Will you trust your good Father and Lord Jesus in whatever you face this week?

And one thing we need God's help with, is forgiving people who have hurt us.

Second F, Forgiveness.

Having called people to faith and a prayerful reliance on God, Jesus says, **11.25**,

'whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven will also forgive you your wrongdoing.'

'Forgive' here(**SLIDE**) is to cancel whatever they did, as a debt they owe you, and issue between you.

It's to choose to let go of the hurt or anger, or desire to get even.

Where someone has wronged you and they have apologized and repented, we must forgive them.

We are not commanded to forgive someone who refuses to repent.
Not even God does that.

We forgive because God, in Christ has forgiven us.(Eph 4.32)

It's like we pray in the Lord's Prayer, 'forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.(Matt 6.12)

So has someone sought your forgiveness that you still haven't forgiven?----

I know when the hurt is great, the forgiveness is harder.

And you may have to forgive again and again.

But we forgive because our Father forgives us through Jesus, and our King Jesus commands us to do the same.

Third, F, Fruit.

In **v13** Jesus found no fruit on the fig tree, and it was cursed.

Fruit will be a theme in the next parable.

But what fruit, what obedience to King Jesus, does God want us to display?

I mention just one - say no to selfishness and yes to service.

In **ch10v35**, the disciples came to Jesus seeking positions of power and authority for themselves – we wanna sit at your right and left in glory.

But Jesus rebukes their selfishness and calls them to follow his example.-----

Narcissus was a character in Greek mythology who fell in love with his own reflection in a pool.(**SLIDE**)

Narcissistic people, are self-absorbed people.

And social psychologists are reporting(**SLIDE**) that young people now are more obsessed with themselves, compared with people of earlier generations

(<https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/the-human-beast/202402/why-narcissism-is-rising>)

I know a lot of self-obsessed older people too, but it seems that social media has had a particular impact.

Narcissistic tendencies are making many obsessed with what others think of them, from selfies to FOMO.

And it's linked with unprecedented levels of anxiety, depression and loneliness.

A big issue in the Christian life, is how we can be freed from caring so much about ourselves, and what others think of us.

Like the Jewish leaders in v32, are you too afraid of the crowd, what others think?

Whereas it's what Jesus thinks that matters.-----

Christ calls us to something different, something better.-----

In Mk 10.43, Jesus says,

Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant.(**SLIDE**)

For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Jesus used his power and authority to serve others, to serve us.

When you think about that, does it affect you, and make you truly thankful?-----

If you know Jesus used his power to seek your good, how will you respond?

Will you serve others?-----

When you think about what you'll commit to this year, will you serve and seek the good of others before yourself?-----

A servant heart is seen even in informal ways.

Next time you're chatting after church or at a SNAC event, will you go out of your way to seek the good of others?

For example, maybe you should choose not to always sit with, talk with, eat with, the same people, your friends.

But instead you sit n' talk with someone else.

Will you have a welcoming and open friendship group, or maintain a cliquy culture that can sometimes exist here?-----

Even if you struggle with anxiety, could you talk with one other person you don't know.-----

I think we all need to remind ourselves that Jesus has set us free from sin and death and self, to serve?(**SLIDE**)

And if you know that, is there something that should change in your attitude? Your actions? When **Samantha** became a Christian and realized that Christ was not only her Saviour but her Lord, everything changed.

She wanted to live for Christ and for others, not for herself anymore.

She signed up to serve on the cleaning team after church, she just did the dishes at home when she didn't make the mess and it wasn't her turn.

She made a meal for her friend who got sick.

She committed to CU as she wanted to grow, and be equipped to share her faith at uni.

Yet she also committed to her studies, for she knew she was to do everything as unto the Lord.

But there was joy and fulfilment in that.

Sam just focused less on herself.

Maybe you need to do that too?

What fruit are you bearing, that shows your faith, and that Jesus is your Lord?

Our Lord who has all authority died for us, he's worth living for.-----

Lots of people say they're Christian.

But if you say, Jesus is Lord, does it show?-----

Trust him, and obey him.

Serve like him, for there is true life in him.

Let's pray