

DAY 3

The Religious Leaders Question Jesus

Read: Matthew 21:23-27

²³And when he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” ²⁴Jesus answered them, “I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?” And they discussed it among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ ²⁶But if we say, ‘From man,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet.” ²⁷So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

Additional Reading:

Matthew 21:42-46; Mark 11:27-33; 12:1-12; Luke 20:1-18.

Reflect

In this passage, religious leaders questioned Jesus' authority to do everything He was doing. They did not understand who He was. Looking at how they responded to Jesus' question, they were more concerned about their reputation rather than knowing, understanding, and believing in Jesus and His authority. As religious leaders, they were most familiar with God's laws, yet they were mostly blinded by religiosity and self-righteousness. They were the spiritual leaders then, but they missed what God was doing and failed to acknowledge His authority in their lives.

Just as the religious leaders questioned Jesus' authority, we also tend to question God's authority in our lives. When we fail to submit or yield to His authority, doing all the religious activities this Holy Week will not matter. Instead of having a facade of religiosity, we should answer the question of authority: **Do we really embrace God's authority in every area of our lives?** Everything we do for God should flow out of our relationship with Him and our desire to honor and submit to His authority. Obedience is a response to knowing He is both our Savior and Lord. He deserves our submission in every area of our lives.

When things don't go our way and we disagree with God, we tend to question Him. We may neglect His word or turn away from Him. The truth is, when we do not yield to

God's authority, we are choosing to submit to someone or something else. But the only place where we can get grace, freedom, and fulfillment is in Christ, under His authority.

This week, let us remember and reflect on the Lordship of our Savior, Jesus Christ. At the cross, even though He had full authority, He showed us the full demonstration of His love and grace. He took our place, died for us, and redeemed us. May this result in absolute surrender, even when there are things we still don't understand or want to question. May we worship Him, enjoy His presence, and live under His authority with gratitude and peace. May the cross of Christ lead us to a life of repentance and lifelong submission to Him.

Respond

- Do you consider yourself to be religious? What are some of the things you usually do during Holy Week that are religious but leave you empty or unchanged? What insights did you gain from today's reflection?
- How do you usually respond to authority? Who would you say is the authority in your life? If it's the Lord Jesus Christ, how do you think you should respond to Him today and every day?
- Find a place this week where you can be silent before God for a few minutes. Take time to pray and to encounter God in new ways.