

Main Point: Jesus has the authority to reinvent how we relate to God because he is God's son who will be rejected but raised to be the cornerstone by God.

Application: Jesus has the authority to tell us what we don't want to hear: we belong to God.

It seems appropriate that last week we talked about what makes Jesus angry.

Very little makes Jesus angry – never angry with anyone who comes to him genuinely seeking his help, no matter how bad they have been. In this section of Mark's Gospel, biography of his life, constantly under attack – rarely angry, responds to the faintest interest and faith with joyful acceptance, assurance.

Last week we found him angry when powerful people were using God's name for their own purposes. Only act of violence we have him recorded perpetrating is against a temple with God his father's name on it which was not showing what God his father was like.

Without doubt, he would be against a political leader holding a Bible outside a church to establish his own power and credibility.

Just to be clear, before I get on my high horse, he is just as against all the ways that I want a bit of religious observance, a bit of saying the right thing, to make me look better than I am. Just as problematic to what Jesus is teaching: people, organisations, groups, that I am in that say belong to God and don't care about all the people who don't know God. People who smile and sing but don't serve others. All the families that say they are Christian but are not interested in people not Christians unlike God. Using comfort of knowing God without being like him.

Nature, posture is to be gracious, compassionate and slow to anger. But we, us, you, we are capable of provoking his righteous anger if we claim to be better than we are, comes out in our attitude to others, rather than being people who know they need his help.

Religious hypocrites, virtue signallers – tweeting the right things to show how good we are, rather in gentle broken humility coming to him for help, posture of needing grace, kindness to others, deserve his anger.

See that world leaders who use the Bible for their own gain deserve Jesus anger, it's true that left to our own devices, convinced we are important, and right, we deserve honour for our good deeds and are bad deeds be ignored, particularly if we own God's name, we are in trouble too.

Someone comes in and starts saying things like that: you think you are so right, but you are really really wrong, question we always ask:

“Who gave you the right?”

Who gave you the right to make that type of judgement about me? I am standing here on your screen saying this: trying to be better than you are, hides what you are really like, is not good enough, and will make God angry with you. Who gave me the right to say things like that?

No one, gave me the right. Listening to Jesus. Seems to me to be what he is saying – look for yourself and has he heads into controversy: same question comes – who gave you the right? Chief priests, scribes and elders, delegation of group called Sanhedrin, invested in the way things ran came to ask him questions – “By what authority are you doing these things” Who gave you the right?

Does Jesus have the right to say to you and me – you are not good enough. Pretending to be good enough is offensive to God. Turn away from that and say my only hope is Jesus. Get religion to prove you are better than others – furious. Who gave him the right to say that?

People come to ask him that,, fake

Fake questions don't get answers

These guys are, in Jewish society, the big guns. Ruled by the Romans, this council, made up of these guys is the government. Government of religious affairs, very worried by that particular apple cart being upset.

Guy comes in here kicking off, publicly criticising them: who gave you the right?

But Jesus seems to avoid their question: he starts talking about John the Baptist. John featured earlier in the story, he was Jesus' cousin. Called the people to repentance before Jesus came, but said about Jesus that he was the one who could actually bring change to people.

Head chopped off by a nasty king in chapter 6. Felt like his bit of the story was over long time ago, why are we talking about him?

Clever question: Jesus was baptised by John, Holy Spirit came down upon him. "From God, we're not just agreeing with John, but agreeing with Jesus" If we say from man, then the people will be angry with us and we don't want that. So wouldn't answer.

About to see in next story, by asking – does Jesus really have the right to tell me how to live my life, they were actually asking the right question. Work out whether you should submit yourself to what Jesus says, or just do the thing he hates – ignore God and keep being religious occasionally – very important question.

Asking they were close to the truth – they knew John was from God really – about to take the lid off the whole thing - John's baptism was from God, Jesus is his son, he can remake us into people who know God. Asking that question you are right to ask

Note what stops them seeing the truth:

"why didn't you believe him" – they clocked that if John was right, Jesus was right, and they were wrong, and they didn't want that. Easier not answer the question. Many people today do the same thing. Not really truth seekers, because we know that if it turns about to be true, if what Jesus says about me is true, then he's right. I'm wrong. Upset the whole apple cart of life I have built for myself.

Sitting here, listening, Bible open; response to Jesus only goes as far as I want it to. Unearthing truth if it's going to call for change.

Other reason they don't give an answer – afraid of the people. Response is totally conditioned by what other people will think of it – more important than the truth.

People, people who say they are Christians, and people who say that they are not, asking question "who gave you the right?" not so that they can work out whether to listen to Jesus, but because so they can work out how much Jesus will embarrass them.

I need to get round Jesus right to tell me what to do here, because doing what he says will be Embarrassing.

Come asking about Jesus authority, really your subtext is you don't want his authority, response to him limited by what other people think, you will get from him what they get from him – at best a seminar, and at worst, pretty much nothing.

Exploring Christianity – people get it and people don't. People do because they come knowing they need help, take that help no matter how it effects their life or what people think of them.

People don't because they say "I'll accept this as long as Jesus doesn't challenge me here" "I'll look into this, but I couldn't have people thinking badly of me" – get it here, but not here.

Christians. Look at people we know with deep, life changing, passionate relationship with Jesus. Pray big prayers and see them answered, deep wells of forgiveness to draw from I don't have. Life of true disciple Jesus talked about just before.

Not like that, it can be that underneath, in themselves, saying – I'm not sure you have authority to tell me how to live. I live my life and you can fit into it. I am not up for doing anything that makes me look bad.

They don't get anywhere as Christians. Stunted, dead, disinterested respectable life. Respected by middle class mortgaged neighbours or right on social justice warriors, never experienced the serving praying forgiving God indwelling life Jesus is offering.

You see if it's not a real question, you don't get a real answer. Determined to walk round the outside looking in, what you'll do. Willing to respond to Jesus' real authority, say he can be in charge if your life, then you'll meet Jesus.

Interesting, but he still hasn't answered the question. Second thing we'll see in this passage:

Who DID give him the right?

What's worse than finding a worm in your apple? Finding half a worm in your apple.

What's worse than breaking lockdown rules by sneaking out to the park with 7 friends? Sneaking out to break lockdown rules to throw cheat on your spouse.

Rejecting relationship with someone on your side is worse than breaking a rule, though both are wrong.

Jesus has a right to be heard because he is the one who makes the rules, and he because he is the one who loves and serves is.

Jesus tells a story. A story with a not very hidden meaning.

A man planted a vineyard and put tenants in it. (back story here, in OT, first part of the Bible, God's people often called a vineyard)

Every time he sent people to collect what was his, they beat them up, or shamed them, or even worse killed them.

Finally sends his beloved son, thinking, surely they will respect him.

Tenants said if we get rid of the beloved son, that's us getting rid of the authority of the master.

In fact, the master came and judged them for killing his son, and somehow not clear, turned that rejected son into the cornerstone of a whole new building.

Something created by someone and people put there as tenants. One all powerful being, who lends his stuff to people who can use it to do great things.

One who owns it, asks that the tenants, the people who live in his creation, use what we can do with it for the things that matter to him.

Sends prophets, words we have in the Bible, every one rejected and ignored.

Eventually he says, if my own beloved son comes into the world I have made, surely people will respect him.

In fact, when God's beloved son came into the world, that God his father had made we killed him. We killed him, we weren't there. Still today people take God's son and use him for things that are wrong, political capital or personal comfort from him, actually accepting his right, as son of the creator to rule their lives. Take the same attitude as those tenants.

So the bad tenants will be destroyed, son, who was dead, somehow alive again, beginning of a whole new way of living. Quoting from Old Testament; God will do it and we will think it is amazing.

God did do, turned rejection of Jesus into start of whole new kingdom rules by Jesus.

Cleverly the religious leaders realise he is speaking this story about them. Because of course, this is the reason Jesus has the authority to tell all them and us what to do.

Here's the story we're told. The world is here by accident, therefore what I choose as no implications except for me and a few people around me. I have the right to choose as I wish, anyone who is trying to limit my choices is some sort of abuser. Realise that story isn't right, still behave that way.

Gently challenge a Christian about how they are living, they say "it's my life I'll do what I want". Accepted this different story Jesus is telling.

The world belongs to God, he made it. People were put on this world with great dignity and ability – the only tenants of this universe who can create and produce and make decisions that reflect God's character.

When God comes to us and says – my creation, reflect me – produce fruit that fits with what made the world for – we say, who gave you the right? It's my life I'll do what I want.

Reaching out to us is right, and done in love and care for us, church history littered with people who were rejected, tortured, killed for telling people that, even today.

God says, surely, surely you will respect my son. People killed his son, people sign up to bits of his teaching, they don't want him telling them what to do.

But be clear. The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. The Jesus who was rejected and who died, crushed and beaten, he was raised to life by God, only person to walk through death. God has set him up, above everyone, the beginning of a new community, a new world, a new building where God lives.

Not just theology: that is what gives him the right to tell people what to do.

He has the right to say to them – your temple is misrepresenting God and it needs to go.

He has the right to say to us – it doesn't matter what a good person you think you are you need to trust him to make you right with God.

He has the right to say, as he will do in the next passage – you do not get to use his message for political ends.

Get to next week in advance – about to say some pretty controversial things.

You must obey the government unless it's stopping you honouring God. Marriage is a passing thing, getting or seeking marriage, having a comfortable marriage is the wrong thing to structure life around, nothing more important than loving God and loving your neighbour – no allowance for self care. Next week but controversial.

Jesus puts his finger on shifting out a life which basically does what it wants but throws in a bit of religion – not ok. No, trust me to put you right with God, listen to me.

Who gave you the right to say that? Whole story gives him the right. We don't live in a world with a passive faraway God who wants throwing a few bones. Live in a vineyard, lovingly planted by a God who put us in it to do great things that reflect his character. Same God sent his own son into the world to be killed. Same God building a new world with Jesus at the centre – gives him the right to tell us.

What's worse than ignoring God who made the world? Ignoring God whose son died to put you right with him and now rules over everything.

Jesus pins hypocrisy. Self righteousness. Thinking I'm ok. Calls it. Calls us to something different – humble trust in him that admits we are wrong. He has the right to confront us about that, so we should listen.