

Good News for all people.

The Gospel of Luke



Week 21 LEADER Discussion Questions

Week of 2/26/23

Text: Luke 20:1-26

Icebreaker: What's your overall impression of people who have authority over some area of your life (home, work, broader society, etc.)?

1. Take a look at Luke 19:45-48 and then read 20:1-2. Why do you think the religious leaders are so interested in...or bothered by...what the source is of Jesus's authority? Jesus has been perceived by them as a threat to their authority all along, and especially so now that he's in Jerusalem and has cleared the temple as a way of judging their commercialized and corrupt worship. The people, in general, have accepted Jesus, so the leaders feel that their influence is slipping away as Jesus's popularity grows.

Application: If someone asked you about Jesus's authority, how would you answer?

2. In verses 3-8, what do you think Luke's description of the religious leaders' private discussion reveals about their motivations?

It clearly shows that they're not interested in truth, but in presenting an answer that will preserve their position. They clearly would answer "no" if they were not afraid of the people's reaction.

Application: What can we learn about the wisdom and insight of Jesus from his exchange with these leaders? How could Jesus's wisdom be an encouragement for your life right now?

In contrast to them, Jesus is speaking with complete integrity and wisdom. Also, he knows their scheming since nothing is hidden from him (Heb 4:13). This combination of Jesus's truthfulness and integrity on one hand, and complete awareness of hidden things on the other, is something that can encourage us when we face uncertainty and difficulty.

3. Read verses 9-19. How would you describe the actions of the owner of the vineyard as he sends out servants, and then his beloved son in verses 9-13?

Parables are tricky. We don't want to read too much into them or take them too literally, which are easy mistakes to make. We can see, though, that the owner is insanely patient as he sends servant after servant after servant. Wouldn't we shut it all down after the first servant was mistreated?!

Application: Where have you witnessed God's patience in your own life or the lives of those around you?

4. The parable ends with the tenants being destroyed and the vineyard being given to others. What does this depict about the role of people in the unfolding of God's mission or purposes?

It shows us that God's mission prevails in spite of human unfaithfulness and resistance. God is able to "give the vineyard" to others. Romans 11 is a passage that picks up similar imagery to describe how this happened to Israel. It also reminds us of the lengths of God's incredible patience and mercy. God's mission will prevail. The question is, will we participate in his mission by submitting to his authority or resisting it?

Application: Do you think it's possible for us to adopt a similar attitude as what the tenants had? If so, what can we do to guard ourselves against it?

5. Using Psalm 118, Jesus vividly depicts how differently he is received. What have you seen so far in Luke that backs up what Jesus is teaching here?

Think of previous events Luke records where Jesus is accepted by some and rejected by others. It could be helpful for you to take a few minutes ahead of time to flip through where we've been so far to find examples.

Application: How do you think people view Jesus in your own experience at home, work, your city, or the broader culture?

6. Read verses 19-26. Why is it important that Jesus "perceived their craftiness" as verse 23 states?

There are similarities here to what we've already seen. Jesus knows the motivations of those who are seeking to trap him. No one can deceive him. Imagine a different scenario. What if Jesus didn't see it coming and he thought the spies were really good-natured and then his unguarded answer ended up getting him into conflict with the Roman authorities and crucified...all because he was tricked! This would be a different, weak, and vulnerable "Jesus."

Application: Episodes like this one reinforce that Jesus remains in control even when the circumstances seem stacked against him. How does this relate to the level of confidence we should have in his authority?

7. Read Genesis 1:26-27. Whose likeness is Caesar's? What does this say about God's authority in comparison to Caesar's?

Caesar is the image of God like all of humanity. God's authority, then, is over all of humanity.

Application: This is a complex topic, but what's one area of life where you have experienced the tension of how to "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's?" Pray for each other—that you might have wisdom in how to live in this world in a way that honors God's authority over all things.

It's easy to misapply this passage! A general principle is that, while we owe some things to lesser authorities, we owe all things to God (including all our lives as his image bearers). This passage and Romans 13 are often cited together as texts that describe how Christ-followers are to relate to human authorities. In both passages, God's authority over all things is a point of emphasis.