

CROSS EXAMINATION Luke 19:41-20:40

Proposition: Jesus has the answer to all questions because ultimately He Is The Answer.

I am not like Jesus. In this passage we see just how powerfully he loves the people of Jerusalem and by implication, you and I even though He knows that they are about to betray Him and crucify Him horribly. That's far bigger than anything I have grown to understand or experience yet and as we open up this passage you will see that the heart of the Son of God is bigger than that of Phar Lap or any other champion of our times, and we will be left saying wow.

Over a million people have gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover and now Jesus descends the Mount of Olives, sits on the donkey that he needed and starts riding down the main street. Its Palm Sunday and people are cheering and yelling hosanna which means save now and the party is going and while this is happening as we shall see the big, buff, weathered builder from Galilee, the man who would tomorrow drive out animals and money changers from the temple with a whip, the man who tomorrow no one would dare oppose, this man's man, the Lord is weeping. They are partying and yelling and waving branches and as we shall see, Jesus is weeping.

Luke 19:41-20:40 (Contemporary English Version)

41When Jesus came closer and could see Jerusalem, he cried 42and said:

It is too bad that today your people don't know what will bring them peace! Now it is hidden from them. 43Jerusalem, the time will come when your enemies will build walls around you to attack you. Armies will surround you and close in on you from every side. 44They will level you to the ground and kill your people. Not one stone in your buildings will be left on top of another. This will happen because you did not see that God had come to save you.

They are yelling yeh, go Jesus, go Jesus, but everywhere he looks what he sees breaks his heart. In Daniel 9 Daniel prophesies exactly this event for exactly this day April the 9th AD32 where it says that the Messiah would come and offer himself to the nation. This is what is happening but no one is getting it and in just a few days he will be rejected and crucified by this same crowd. He looks back to bible prophesy and sees they are missing the significance of this day.

He looks at them presently and Jesus and only Jesus can see what is in their hearts. They are yelling Hosanna/ save now but he knows what they are thinking and plotting and that they will be yelling from the same lips very soon 'crucify him.'

As he looked forward prophetically he could see that the temple and the whole city was soon to be devastated, ruined, crushed, wiped out. And history records that in AD70 just 38 years later the Roman General Titus would besiege the city for 143 days then level the city and wipe out 600,000 Jews in one go. By the time the battle would be finally over Josephus the Jewish historian tells us that 1 million 100 thousand Jews would have been put to the sword.

He looks back to bible prophesy and sees that they are missing the the significance of the day. He looks at them currently and sees the deceit and shallowness in their hearts and He looks forward prophetically and knows that everything around him including the people he loves so much are all about to be destroyed horribly. So the people are yelling making all the right nice noises and yet Jesus sees the whole picture and big, loving tears begin to move down his brown weathered face.

What I find so amazing about the Lord is this, these same guys are about to spit on him, tell lies about him, whip his body so that he is not recognisable to his relatives then nail him to a cross to die a slow and excruciating death and His heart, is filled with compassion and love for them. No one is like Jesus. I am a caring Christian but I am a million miles behind that depth of love.

Every now and then you hear a debate about the importance of Israel today. Irrespective of what different

people think, one fact is obvious from Scripture and that is this that God has never given up on the Jews and never will. And when I have struggled, particularly in those early years of my marriage when life was so hard, I just know that I know that He won't give up on you and I either.

Vs 45 on Monday

45When Jesus entered the temple, he started chasing out the people who were selling things. **46**He told them, "The Scriptures say, 'My house should be a place of worship.' But you have made it a place where robbers hide!"

The priests were meant to be praying for the people and leading the worship but they were preying on the people and extorting money out of them instead. The high priest of that day was meant to be a man called Annas but he had stepped down from the top priestly job and given it to his son in law Caiaphas. Annas then dedicated his life to making money out of worshippers. Particularly at the Passover millions would come to Jerusalem from the nations of the world and they were told that they had to give their offerings in the local currency so Annas and his boys charged exorbitant exchange rates so that the people could give to the temple, not only that when they examined the stock that worshippers had brought to sacrifice they always found faults and rejected the offerings. They would then turn to the worshipper and say this is your lucky day for this huge price you can buy a pre-approved animal for sacrifice. Annas became the Donald Trump or the Bill Gates of his day by ripping off believers.

The temple is full of important people and guards but Jesus turns up, makes a whip and kicks Annas and his boys and the livestock out. Thousands of people are there and yet no one dares to stand up to Jesus.

47Each day, Jesus kept on teaching in the temple. So the chief priests, the teachers of the Law of Moses, and some other important people tried to have him killed. **48**But they could not find a way to do it, because everyone else was eager to listen to him.

After Jesus aggressively wrecks the whole money making racket and turns the temple system on its head he doesn't go and hide or take a breather He just opens the Word and starts teaching in the temple. Gutsy, gutsy stuff.

Interesting,

On Palm Sunday He functioned as a King

On Monday He functioned as a High Priest

On Tuesday He functions as a Prophet of wisdom and authority.

Now Jesus is going to be examined closely. His authority is going to be questioned, His integrity is going to be questioned and His theology is going to be questioned. He is about to be cross examined.

Now friends, this book has got layers within layers. According to the Jewish calendar this day was the 10th day of Nissan. Between the 10th and the 14th day of Nissan the priests had to examine all the lambs and doves and livestock that was to be offered on the Passover. That's what they did. This is the day that the thorough examinations, the close inspections of the lambs took place and it is the day that the Lamb of God is also about to be closely examined.

1. THEY EXAMINE HIS AUTHORITY

1One day, Jesus was teaching in the temple and telling the good news. So the chief priests, the teachers, and the nation's leaders **2**asked him, "What right do you have to do these things? Who gave you this authority?" Who gave you this authority to drive all the money makers out of the temple?

Clever question if you are trying to trap Jesus as they were. If Jesus says I do this by my own authority he can be arrested as a trouble maker, someone who disturbs the peace. If he says that he is the Messiah and therefore has authority from God then the Romans would happily arrest him as they were on the watch out for people who made such claims.

Jesus responds masterfully

3Jesus replied, "I want to ask you a question. 4Who gave John the right to baptise? Was it God in heaven or merely some human being?"

5They talked this over and said to each other, "We can't say that God gave John this right. Jesus will ask us why we didn't believe John. 6And we can't say that it was merely some human who gave John the right to baptise. The crowd will stone us to death, because they think John was a prophet."

7So they told Jesus, "We don't know who gave John the right to baptise."

8Jesus replied, "Then I won't tell you who gave me the right to do what I do."

If they had said that John was a man of God and brought God's revelation then they would have to explain why they rejected John, if they said that he wasn't a man of God and brought God's message they would be stoned by the masses. So they play it safe. We don't know. Jesus then says well if you won't answer that question I don't feel I need to answer yours either.

Interesting principle here.

Because they didn't respond to the first revelation from John the Baptist they were not going to get any further revelation from Jesus Himself.

I have seen this happen in people's walk with the Lord many times. They are strong Christians, they are hearing God's voice and growing in faith and then one day the Lord says to them forgive that person, or train for this ministry or do that thing and sometimes folk say no. Can't. Won't. Not going there and as a consequence the revelations that they get from the Lord are not like they used to be. Obedience is like a bridge to further revelation.

When you obey the prompting of God then you find you get more and more and more. When you say to the Lord, no, I won't, don't want to, revelation often seems to dry up. If you are not getting as much revelation as you used to it's a really wise person who prays "Lord have I disobeyed you somewhere? Have I not acted on a revelation that you gave to me?" Because when obedience is restored the bridge for further and increased revelation follows.

Jesus doesn't give them any further revelation but in a roundabout way, through a parable he shows them where they are at spiritually, not to condemn them or to make them feel guilty but to give them the opportunity to repent and to get off the slippery slope of sin.

9Jesus told the people this story:

A man once planted a vineyard and rented it out. Then he left the country for a long time. 10When it was time to harvest the crop, he sent a servant to ask the renters for his share of the grapes. But they beat up the servant and sent him away without anything. 11So the owner sent another servant. The renters also beat him up. They insulted him terribly and sent him away without a thing. 12The owner sent a third servant. He was also beaten terribly and thrown out of the vineyard.

13The owner then said to himself, "What am I going to do? I know what. I'll send my son, the one I love so much. They will surely respect him!"

14When the renters saw the owner's son, they said to one another, "Someday he will own the vineyard. Let's kill him! Then we can have it all for ourselves." 15So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

Jesus asked, "What do you think the owner of the vineyard will do? 16I'll tell you what. He will come and kill those renters and let someone else have his vineyard."

The prophet Isaiah originally used the image of Israel being like God's vineyard hundreds of years earlier and the prophets being like the owner's messengers. The prophets were sent from God to Israel and beaten and now Jesus is saying that the vineyard owners' son has been sent and will get killed by the people of Israel.

The sin of the vineyard tenants gets progressively worse in this parable.

Vs10 They, possibly even an individual, thumps the messenger.

Vs11 A second messenger is sent and he gets bashed and abused.

Vs12 A third messenger is sent and he gets severely beaten up and thrown out of the vineyard.

Finally vs 13 the son of the vineyard owner comes and they kill him.

Jesus' message to his listeners is very clear. He is saying I know what is going on inside of you, that you plan to kill me, you have had messengers from God, warnings many times and yet you are persisting down this track and I know you are about to do something terrible, you are going to kill God the Son.

Jesus is not saying this to make them feel like garbage, he is saying it to give them an opportunity to stop their sinful hearts progressively getting worse and worse and to turn back to God.

Every now and then someone will say to you, Oh I don't know how this happened how I got from there, close to God to here, so far from God and involved in sin.

Truth be said, that doesn't happen by accident or suddenly.

Firstly a person gets comfortable being around something evil and sinful, they tolerate it, then they begin to want it, then they actively pursue it personally.

Things get progressively worse unless we hear the invitation from the Lord saying, stop looking, stop thinking, stop imagining, stop being around or involved in that thing TODAY and come back to me. When the first temptation comes, that's the time to win a victory, don't let it progressively change the way you think and enslave you.

When Jesus points out their sin, what do they do? They deny it.

When the people heard this, they said, "This must never happen!"

They inspected his authority and he gave them an opportunity to get their lives right with God.

17But Jesus looked straight at them and said, "Then what do the Scriptures mean when they say, 'The stone that the builders tossed aside is now the most important stone of all'? 18Anyone who stumbles over this stone will get hurt, and anyone it falls on will be smashed to pieces."

Jesus quotes Psalm 118:22 here when he talks about the stone that the builders rejected and he refers to himself as the cornerstone.

Many of you will remember when King Solomon was building the temple that huge stones were used and they were measured and chiselled a km or two away at the quarry and the temple was assembled on the temple mount without the sound of a chisel or hammer ever being heard. These stones were so perfectly fitted that they say that you couldn't fit a knife blade between the stones. As the huge stones were being sent up to the temple mount one arrived that just didn't seem to fit anywhere and so the builders rolled it off the site and let it fall down into the Kidron Valley thinking that the quarry had got that one wrong. As they tried to put the temple together they found that a stone was missing, the most critical stone that held the whole temple together and messages went back and forward, send us the cornerstone, we sent it already, no you didn't, yes we did. Then one of the builders says, hey, could it have been that stone that came first and we couldn't see where it fitted and so we chucked it? And of course it was.

The stone that the builders rejected just as these Jews were rejecting Jesus had become the most important stone.

Ephesians 2:20-22 (Contemporary English Version)

20You are like a building with the apostles and prophets as the foundation and with Christ as the most important stone. 21Christ is the one who holds the building together and makes it grow into a holy temple for the Lord. 22And you are part of that building Christ has built as a place for God's own Spirit to live.

That's probably the passage that cornerstone youth get their name from. Christ holds our lives together and

if in this life it feels like there is a lot of chiselling and hammering go on in us its only so that we will fit together perfectly in heaven.

Jesus said if we fall on Him we will be broken but if we choose not to be broken before him then one day he will be the judge of our life and we will face His judgement.

The apostle Paul wrote that the day is coming when every knee will bow and every tongue confess "Jesus Christ is Lord". I guess we choose to bow the knee and be repentant before him now or we will bow the knee later but later won't help us as it will be too late on the day of judgement.

Next

2. THEY EXAMINE HIS INTEGRITY

20Jesus' enemies kept watching him closely, because they wanted to hand him over to the Roman governor. So they sent some men who pretended to be good. But they were really spies trying to catch Jesus saying something wrong. **21**The spies said to him, "Teacher, we know that you teach the truth about what God wants people to do. And you treat everyone with the same respect, no matter who they are. **22**Tell us, should we pay taxes to the Emperor or not?"

Now this was a big debate in that day because the emperor Caesar claimed to be God and some said if you pay taxes you are supporting idolatry, idol worship. But if you don't pay taxes you will be arrested. Good entrapping question, but not good enough to trap Jesus.

23Jesus knew that they were trying to trick him. So he told them, **24**"Show me a coin." Then he asked, "Whose picture and name are on it?"

"The Emperor's," they answered.

25Then he told them, "Give the Emperor what belongs to him and give God what belongs to God."

People are made in the image of God and therefore should give themselves fully to God. However on the coin that Jesus borrowed was an image of the emperor and so Jesus said give it to him.

They examined Jesus' integrity and found him faultless.

26Jesus' enemies could not catch him saying anything wrong there in front of the people. They were amazed at his answer and kept quiet.

Finally

3. THEY EXAMINE HIS THEOLOGY

In Sunday School we were taught that there was a group of influential leaders who didn't believe in heaven or hell or miracles or the resurrection of the dead and so they were sad you see.

This group come to examine His theology.

27The Sadducee's did not believe that people would rise to life after death.

So some of them came to Jesus **28**and said:

Teacher, Moses wrote that if a married man dies and has no children, his brother should marry the widow. Their first son would then be thought of as the son of the dead brother.

29There were once seven brothers. The first one married, but died without having any children. **30**The second one married his brother's widow, and he also died without having any children. **31**The same thing happened to the third one. Finally, all seven brothers married that woman and died without having any children. **32**At last the woman died. **33**When God raises people from death, whose wife will this woman be? All seven brothers had married her.

34Jesus answered:

The people in this world get married. **35**But in the future world no one who is worthy to rise from death will either marry **36**or die. They will be like the angels and will be God's children, because they have been raised to life.

37In the story about the burning bush, Moses clearly shows that people will live again. He said, "The Lord is the God worshipped by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." **38**So the Lord isn't the God of the dead, but

of the living. This means that everyone is alive as far as God is concerned. 39Some of the teachers of the Law of Moses said, "Teacher, you have given a good answer!" 40From then on, no one dared to ask Jesus any questions.

After explaining to the Sadducees that in heaven there is such a unity and happiness that there is no marriage, no pairing up he goes on and proves from God's words to Moses that there is life after death. When Moses stood before the burning bush and God was speaking to him God said in the present continuous tense that "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." Not I was when they were alive 500 years ago but I am currently the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

Jesus passed their examination of his authority, of his integrity and of his theology with flying colours. No one dared ask Jesus any questions. He had all the answers and I believe he is the answer to life's biggest questions.

How do I know that God is real: Because Jesus claimed to be God and because there is more historical evidence for Him than any other person in ancient history.

How do I know that He cares for me and you, how do I know that our lives have significance? I look to Jesus on the cross and I see all of life's big questions answered.

This morning family, if you are toying with the idea of that behaviour or that relationship or that website which you know is sin. Today, choose to stop, to turn back to him before you take the next step away from God.

Maybe you have found that you have less revelation now compared to what you used to have. Can I suggest that you humbly ask the Lord the question, Lord have I failed to obey you to follow your last revelation in some area? Build the bridge of obedience again.

Maybe this morning, you are like me and in your heart you just want to say Lord you are so faithful, your life and your teaching and your Word are so full of your compassion and a desire to see us do well. Lord, chisel me if you need to; shape me if you need to, because I want to be perfectly fitted into your house for ever.