

THE BIG IDEA: Accepting authority begins with trusting the Author.

The Take-Off

Have you ever had a relationship that was full of tension? Right. We all have.

The kind of tension that rises no matter what you do. You could say, “I love you” and they would snap back, “Why?!”

The relationship between Jesus and the religious leaders was like that, and as I’ve told you all along, the closer Jesus gets to Jerusalem, the more we’re going to see that tension rise.

All of that brings us to the first 19 verses of Luke 20, and if you’ve had a hard time picking up on that tension in previous passages, you won’t here.

Jesus is going to get asked a couple of questions, He’s going to respond with a couple of questions, and then He’s going to tell a story.

Got it? Good. Now let’s read it.

Luke 20:1-19

There’s a lot going on in these 19 verses, but if we had to pick one theme, it would be authority, or even more specifically, the struggle that the religious leaders were having with Jesus’ authority.

Of course, this makes them a lot like us, right? Bosses, parents, elected officials, teachers, law enforcement, pastors.

All of these represent authority in our lives, and many of us struggle with authority figures.

I believe that today’s passage reveals 3 approaches that we can take when it comes to authority.

We can suspect it, reject it, or accept it.

Let’s take them one at a time.

1. Suspect it

- a. First, we can **suspect it**, and I would argue that this is probably the one that is the default most of the time for most of the people
- b. We have a skepticism about those in authority over us, and while that may seem warranted at times, that’s not the case here with the religious leaders
- c. They were questioning Jesus’ authority. Some of you are, too.
- d. But there’s almost always a “question behind the question” and it’s no different here
- e. When we question authority (like the leaders here), there is usually one of two questions behind the question: do we want an answer or do we want a fight?
- f. Jesus knew that it didn’t matter what He said, they just wanted a fight, and so He responded to their question about authority with His own question about authority.
- g. I’m sure He knew that they wouldn’t answer it, so He had a story ready to go to probe their souls further!

2. Reject it

- a. First, let’s make sure we know who’s who in this story that begins with a lease and ends with a murder
 - God is the owner of the vineyard
 - Israel was the vineyard
 - The religious leaders are the wicked farmers
 - The prophets and priests that came before Jesus are the servants
 - Jesus is the Son
 - The others were Gentiles
- b. Now that we know the players, it’s pretty clear to see the message Jesus was sending: these men are not only questioning my authority, they actually mean to stamp it out.
- c. Like the wicked farmers, they are going to kill the Son of the vineyard owner.
- d. Obviously, killing Jesus was the ultimate rejection of Jesus’ authority.
- e. It’s one thing to suspect authority. But these guys went beyond that and chose to **reject it**.
- f. Do you? Are you guilty like I am of trying at times to silence the voice of God’s authority in your life?
- g. How do we reject it? You’re probably not holding crucifixions in your backyard, but think about how we do this one a practical level.
- h. We stop reading the Bible. We start **ONLY** listening to teachers who tell us what we think is right in the only way that we think is right. We cut off friends who tell us the truth and hold us accountable to it.

- i. All of these are ways that we reject authority, and Jesus tells the story to reveal that about us.
- j. But He didn't stop there, and that's good news for us!

3. Accept it

- a. I think that verse 16 is interesting, or at least, the reaction of the people in verse 16
- b. "May this never be!"
- c. They didn't say that about the Son being killed or about the owner's judgement of the farmers, but the idea that Israel's vineyard could be given to Gentiles? That got a reaction!
- d. God's plan has been all nations - all races - from the beginning, and He uses authorities to author His plan
- e. Jesus understood this, which is why He quoted the verse from Psalm 118:22
- f. Jesus knew that the authorities would reject His authority and kill Him, but He also knew that the rejection was necessary for the completion of His mission
- g. He didn't suspect it or reject it. He accepted it. That's the 3rd approach. **Accept it.**
- h. How did Jesus accept authority? The same way you and I can: by trusting His Father as the Author of it.
- i. The Big Idea says it like this: **accepting authority begins with trusting the Author.**
- j. God is writing His story through our lives, and He often uses the authorities in our lives to do it.
- k. To truly allow Him to hold the pen, we've got to accept authority by making a shift from stubbornness to submission.
- l. Let's put up the **comparison chart** between stubbornness and submission so we can highlight the shifts:
 - You won't control me vs You can't control me
 - Crossed arms vs Raised arms
 - Seeks natural power vs Seeks supernatural power
 - Demands its way vs Desires God's way
 - Fights with men vs Fights for men
 - Bows up vs Bows down

The Landing

I'm going to need some help to wrap up this message.

Let me position you so that we can get a visual of what it looks like to accept authority, even bad authority.

When we start with submission to the Author - with trusting God as the "originator or creator of something, especially a plan or idea" - then we find ourselves shifting from stubbornness to submission.

Why? Because we aren't submitting to men; we're submitting through men to the Author above them!

Accepting authority begins with trusting the Author.

Jesus didn't cower to evil men who wanted to kill Him; He submitted to His good Father who wanted to save men.

I want to call you to live lives submitted to God - to the Author.

It's the only way His story will be written through you.

Let's pray.