

**Intro:** This past Monday we celebrated Memorial Day as a country. Every year we take time to honor our veterans and celebrate the freedom that they work to keep. It is probably true that our veterans are some of the most underappreciated men and women in America. All of us owe a great debt of gratitude and honor for the sacrifices they have made. I read an article this week that sums up the sentiment that most of us feel as we think about. A 95 year old WWII Marine veteran named Holly Easter served in the Pacific and was injured when the side of his tank was blown out. Before he enlisted, he had a wife and three kids at home, but he told his wife five simple words: "Honey, I need to go." Now, almost 70 years later Easter said: "I'm thankful to still be here standing on my own two feet. . . . There are a lot of men who did some pretty incredible things, but *the real heroes* are those who *sacrificed everything*. *The real heroes* are those who *gave it all*."

This morning I want us to think about what it means to sacrifice everything and give it all. Though most of us will not be called to serve one of the greatest causes in life, to protect our freedom and give our lives on behalf of our country, we all have been called to an even greater cause. That call is to give everything to God.

### **"Give Yourself to God"** **Luke 20:9-21:4**

In Luke 20, we are going to see Jesus continuing to encounter opposition and interrogation, but we are also going to see him initiating theological conversation with his critics in order to teach them the truth of God. These verses will call you to . . .

**The Point: Give your life to God by giving him everything.**

I am going to give you three ways you can give yourself to God. #1.

#### **I. Build your life upon the cornerstone of Christ (20:9-18)**

Parable of Rejection (PACE!!!)

- Context: Jesus is in the temple. He has just silenced the religious leaders concerning their question about his authority. Now, in very clear terms, he will explain the severe consequences for those who reject him. *Read 9-18*
- Jesus uses the picture of a vineyard found in Isaiah 5:1-7. The vineyard in the parable represents Israel. The tenants represent the Jewish leaders who were supposed to be the ones caring for God's people on his behalf, while the servants represent the prophets.
- The tenants beat the first servant and do the same with the second servant sent. The prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Habakkuk, Micah, Joel) were sent repeatedly to warn the people to repent. Finally, the master sends his only Son. The beloved son is Jesus.
- Jesus compares the current leadership with those who persecuted the prophets before them. Though they should have cared for God's people, they will actually suffer judgment and be rejected by God because they rejected his Son.
- Naturally, the people could not stomach Jesus' message, so they cried, "Surely not!" And Jesus once again turns it around on them in v. 17 by quoting Psalm 118:22. He says, "Yeah, that verse you memorized in Psalm 118, the one about the stone. You may reject me but I am the cornerstone!"

*Jesus - Cornerstone*

- Why does Jesus quote this? It is a Psalm pointing to Messiah. The people had just quoted Psalm 118 with Jesus' Triumphant entry as we saw last week: "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!"
- He is the stone that has been rejected, and he will be the cornerstone. A cornerstone would have bore the weight of two intersecting walls.
- Jesus is the one foundation on which God's kingdom is built. He is the stone without which our lives and this world would collapse. Think about it: a building is completely supported by the foundation on which it is laid. We should be thankful that the architects and builders of Springstep, designed and built a proper foundation.
- Pic: I love skyscrapers. It doesn't matter if we're talking about The Hancock Tower downtown or the soon to be unveiled One World Trade Center tower in NYC, without the proper foundation, they would never stand.
- *Application:* Is your life built on Christ? When trials and pain in life come, are you easily shaken? I know some of you are going through challenges even now.
- Here's a prayer for these faith-trying moments: **"Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." (Psalm 61:2)**
- It is not surprising that one of the titles the early church gave to Jesus was simply, "the Stone."
- Jesus Christ is the cornerstone, and he is also the focal point of judgment and destruction for all who reject him.
- This was the predicament for the Jewish leaders; they rejected Jesus, and their rejection led to judgment.

*Judgment*

- Verse 18 is intensely strong: "Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him."
- The crowd perfectly understood he was telling them they were on the path of destruction. That is why they wanted to arrest him immediately! We need to understand that we are in danger of the same judgment unless we embrace Jesus as the cornerstone of your life.

Trans: A life given comprehensively to God will first be built on the cornerstone of Christ. Here's a second way to give yourself to God...

## II. Glorify God by imitating him in all things (20:20-26).

Encounter with religious leaders (*Read 20-22*)

- Verse 20 tells us the religious leaders were watching Jesus' every move. They were like lions ready to pounce on him. They continuously tried to lay a snare to trap Jesus, so they could hand him over to the authorities to kill him. That is why they sent spies, who pretended to be sincere.
- In fact, they begin their question with an attempt to win Jesus over with words of flattery: "We know that you..." Then they ask a no-win question.
- If he says "Yes, give tribute to Caesar," he will lose the favor of his people, pious Jews, who hated Roman taxation. Roman coin: **(pic on ppt)**. The denarius was a reminder of the supremacy of Caesar. It even had the words: "Tiberius Caesar, son of the divine Augustus." Everything in the empire was meant to bring Caesar homage. Surely Jesus would not endorse such tribute, BUT
- If he said, "No," they would charge him with insurrection in order to hand him over to the authorities...
- Verse 23 says "he perceived their craftiness." The NIV says "He saw through their duplicity."
- Jesus' response is astounding. He smiles at their false dilemma and says, "Show me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?" They reply: "Caesar's" And Jesus, with sage wisdom says, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." This is jaw-dropping, heart-penetrating wisdom! With one simple sentence Jesus evades their trap and provides two profound commands.

*Fulfill your earthly obligations.*

- He establishes how Christians should interact with the state (Rom 13); Render to Caesar what is Caesar's. The word render means to "give what is due." Today he might say, "Render to Uncle Sam the things that are Sam's."
- I know most everyone would love to stop paying taxes, but not only would we go to jail for breaking the law by tax evasion, we would also break the commands of Jesus!
- But Jesus is not simply concerned with our earthly obligations, he says we must...

*Fulfill your heavenly obligations*

- "Give to God the things that are God's." Rico Tice says this phrase carries "devastating force." Jesus was so wise because he knew how to cut straight to our hearts. What is more fundamental and more urgent than our earthly obligations? Our eternal obligations.
- I love how Jesus raises the stakes: You are talking about coins. I am talking about your life. And every Jew knew exactly what Jesus meant when he said, "Give to God..." **Genesis 1:27: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."**
- Your life bears the image and inscription of God! You belong to him.
- We were made to reflect his glory and spread the fame of God in all things.
- Sadly & tragically, we all have failed to reflect his image in countless ways, and rather than beholding his glorious image we chase after that which is transient and phony.
- But... Jesus died and was raised in order to remake, restore, and renew the image of God in us!
- **"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)** Unpack...
- So here's the simple encouragement. In all things, in all things, behold the glory of God and live the truth of Ephesians 5:1 which says, **"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children."** This is so helpful to me... What should my life be about? God. How should I work? Like God works. How should I think? Like God thinks. What should I do? What God does. How should I parent? Like God parents me. So I start naturally asking: Would Jesus listen to that music? Would God endorse that purchase? You say, "But that's so intrusive." Exactly! But when God intrudes, he actually sets us free!
- God deserves your highest trust, your highest obedience. He deserves your love, your praise, your life!
- Very practically: (TS) "How can we know what God is like?" Here's the good news: "He shows us what he is like." Tolle lege (Take up and read)...

Trans: So glorify God by imitating him in all things. And finally, #3... Give yourself to God by surrendering

## III. Surrender everything to the Lordship of Christ (20:27-21:4).

Encounter with the Sadducees. (*Read 27-33*)

- The Sadducees are next in line to try to create controversy around Jesus, and they do so by testing his understanding of the Scriptures. They did not believe in resurrection so (in the words of Michael Wilcock) “they concoct a ridiculous story” they thought would refute the reality of resurrection.
- Their questions centers on the concept of Levirate marriage, which required “a brother of one who died childless to marry the widow of the deceased brother” in order to perpetuate his lineage. Their question is shocking because it proposes it happens six times with seven marriages total! Whose wife would she be?
- Jesus replies... vv. 34-38... He says they are wrong in supposing the future age is like the present. Jesus says in eternity we will not be given in marriage. Everyone who is worthy of eternal life will be wed to Christ, one with him.
- Matthew & Mark tell us this same story and say that Jesus tells the Sadducees in the strongest terms: “You are wrong because you neither know the Scriptures nor the power of God.” (Matthew 22:29)
- He answers their Scriptural question with Scripture by turning to Scripture they embraced, the Torah. When God revealed himself to Moses in the burning bush, he said I am the God of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob.
- May it not be said of us that we do not know the Scriptures or power of God. A Jesus-shaped life is a Bible-shaped life. Let’s dig and study. Let’s love the Word so much that we seek to apply it every nano-second of our lives.

Trans: At this point, they saw the deep, deep wisdom of Christ and resolved to not ask him any more questions. Look at v. 39 (read 39-44). Do you see what is happening? They are done. Jesus had answered their question, but Jesus was not done. He continues the conversation.

- In effect, Jesus answers their rejection by quoting David in Psalm 110... The Messiah will be a descendent of David, right? Yes. The Messiah will be David’s Lord, right? And not only that, David says that the Messiah will sit at the right hand of God and all of his enemies will be a footstool for his feet.” That’s me. I am the Christ! I am the Lord!
- Luke wants his readers to see “the surpassing greatness of Christ.” We must recognize his authority and call him Lord.
- As my pastor from college used to say: “Jesus is either Lord of all or he is not Lord at all.”

Trans: This understanding of the Lordship of Christ leads us to the final two episodes, which provide two contrasting pictures of false devotion and true devotion.

#### **An example of false devotion (20:45-47)**

- He exposes the hypocrisy and greed of the scribes. Even though everyone knew them and they enjoyed the places of privilege... Even though they looked the part and could pray the most eloquent prayers, their spirituality is simply a show. They were actors and imposters.
- To take it a despicable step further: they even used their influence to rob widows. Jesus says, “They will receive the greater condemnation.” In other words, they will be held more accountable for not keeping the law they teach.
- Luke then shows how Jesus provides the perfect contrast as . . .

#### **An example of true devotion (21:1-4)**

- 21:1-4. The rich give their moneybags, and this poor widow follows them up and presents a laughable portion. She gives two lepta, the equivalent of two pennies. She doesn’t have the resources to cover life’s necessities, but that doesn’t stop her from giving.
- In fact, Jesus shocks them by saying the poor widow gave *more* than all of the rich gave. How? Not more in your eyes, but more in the eyes of God. You don’t see like God sees. . . She didn’t say, “Well, I have two coins. I’ll give God half of what I own.” She gave it all! Sometimes it’s the smallest gift that costs the most.
- You may not have a lot to give, but we can all give a portion of what God has given to us and we can all give sacrificially. Do you ever give until it hurts? She did. The issue is here is sacrifice.
- And don’t miss this: what she does with her money is a reflection of what she is willing to do with her life? She had a heart totally surrendered to God. What about you? Have you raised the white flag? Are your hands out and open before God saying, “God, my life is yours.”
- Many of you are probably thinking, “I surrendered my life to Christ but I often don’t live like it. What should I do?”
- Jesus said, **“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross *daily*, and follow me.” (Luke 9:23)**
- Jesus wants all of you! Every part of your day, every part of your thought life, it all belongs to him.

#### **Conclusion:**

Story: In 2 Samuel 24... David built an altar and wanted to worship by offering a sacrifice. The problem was that he had no animals.. Araunah wanted to pay homage and give King David oxen for free. But David says in verse 24: “No, but I will buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God that cost me nothing.” My heart has to be all in! And when our hearts are truly surrendered in sacrifice to him, God responds.

How much does your Christianity cost you? Are you willing to give it all away to Jesus? Let’s pray.