

Matthew 21:23-27 | Ted Tash

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Preacher: Ted Tash

[0:00] Good morning. I will tell you guys, I'm at the phase of the flu where I have one big coughing fit a day.! I'm like 75% through that coughing fit for the day.

So, we don't have a cough button I can hit like we would on radio or something like that. So, Brad, I apologize if I blow your eardrums out. Coughing here in a minute. Turn with me, if you will, to the book of Matthew, chapter 21.

First message from the new Bible. My neighbors, Tom and Nikki, got me a new Bible for Christmas, ESV. First message out of it.

So, if it's not good, again, you can blame Tom and Nikki for that. This is an interesting passage today. We're right in the middle of Matthew 21.

And this passage, which is just a couple verses, just like five or six verses, is going to set off the next three weeks' worth of messages out of the book of Matthew.

[1:05] So, really the first part of the message today is to just introduce the next three weeks' worth of messages.

So, if you think about, you know, from here to the next three weeks, it's kind of a four-part series. This is part one. We'll intro the next couple weeks' worth of messages.

And then after we intro that, we'll come back and we'll take a little bit of a look at the passage itself and what kind of things we can get out of that. Does that kind of make sense?

So, that's what we'll do. So, let's go ahead and pray and then we'll get into it. Father God, I just thank you for your word. Thank you that we can gather together and read from it and study it and hopefully learn something from it, Lord.

And we pray just be with our time and just allow us to glean from your word today. And pray all this in Jesus' name. The last two years, I've ended up in Austin, Texas for work.

[2:07] And one of the two times, I don't remember which, Austin's airport is a lot like the Kansas City airport, if you've ever been there, where the ground transportation is separate from the terminal.

So, if you were going to rent a car or, you know, rent a car, you have to take a shuttle from the terminal to the ground transportation. Like, there's no ifs, ands, or buts.

Way too long of a walk, especially if you have, like, a suitcase. Like, if you were going to rent a car, you are on the shuttle. And I say that because I think most of us try and avoid shuttle type of vehicles, pretty much at all costs at all times.

So, you're forced to do it. And so, I was on the shuttle and guy next to me, you know you're traveling, you don't really want to make small talk, whatever. What are you doing in Austin?

I'm here for work. What do you do for work? I write software. What do you think about the blockchain? And what I thought was, please stop talking to me. What I said was, it's probably, like, overblown.

[3:06] Like, no one really cares that much about it. And he's like, what do you think about crypto? And then I was like, man, I will give you all my money to stop talking to me. I was like, definitely overblown.

And, like, if you think any relevant information has trickled down to us, like, you are crazy. But anyway, I didn't say that. I said, yeah, probably overblown. And he's like, it is overblown. And I was like, what are we doing here?

Like, what is this conversation? And then he goes, you know, he looks around and he's like, I have this coin. Please stop talking to me. So anyway, he goes on and on and on about this coin and why it's different than all the other coins.

And I didn't care at all from the beginning. And I definitely didn't care at the end. But the point is, we opened the can of worms. That's what I'm trying to get at. We struck the cord. Pandora came out of the box.

Pandora did not go back in the box. I say that the chief priests and the elders, they're going to ask Jesus a question. And Jesus just kind of opens up.

[4:08] And he keeps going and he keeps going. And he goes into the next chapter and keeps going. And he kind of goes on like a 35 verse response across three different parables to the chief priests and the elders here.

And also the Pharisees are kind of lumped in that. We see that at the end of chapter 21. And so I say all that just to kind of introduce the message like, this conversation struck a chord with Jesus. This conversation opened the can of worms. And Jesus kind of let him have it. And it's really cool. And we're not going to look too much into the future because, again, those speakers are going to have those messages. But we'll look at it just a little bit.

So anyway, just kind of setting the scene for where we're at. Jesus has come to Jerusalem.

Remember, he left Jericho. And there was the blind man there who cried out, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.

And they told the blind guy to stop talking. And he cried out all the more, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. And so Jesus heals him. That's a really cool passage because that's the last time Jesus was in Jericho. Like, that was that dude's last chance for eyesight was right then.

[5:10] And I love that he took his chance and cried out and that Jesus healed him. So anyway, that happens. And then Jesus comes in and he has the triumphal entry on the donkey, Palm Sunday, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.

And we looked at how that fulfilled prophecy from Zechariah, chapter 9, that he would come in and have the triumphal entry. And then Dave Baumgartner pointed out last week, a couple days go by where Jesus is in and out of the temple.

The way it reads in Matthew, it seems like it was just like a one-time deal. But from Mark and the other accounts, you can see that Jesus was kind of in the temple, out of the temple. And then like another day would go by and he'd be back in the temple.

And so he's in there. And one of the days where he's in there, he drives out all the money changers, flips the tables. David Vineyard pointed out that he brought the blind and the lame into the temple, which was another prophecy, which I didn't know about.

I think it was from Jeremiah. The blind and the lame were not allowed in the temple. But he brought them in, which was a messianic prophecy fulfilled. And he heals them in the temple itself.

[6:14] And then another day he curses this tree and the tree withers and dies. So that's kind of the stage for where we're at. And with that in mind, verse 23, our passage today says, When he had entered the temple, the chief priest and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching and said, By what authority are you doing these things?

And who gave you this authority? And this is the question of like, what are you doing in Austin? It opens up the floodgates in Jesus' response.

And the question again, By what authority are you doing these things? These things being healing the blind, fulfilling the prophecy, cursing trees. By what authority are you doing these things?

And who gave you this authority? Now, I'd like to pause here and just say that Jesus does not give them a super direct answer here in Matthew.

And there's a couple reasons for that. One is he's already given them a clear answer. We're going to see at the end of the message that more than likely these chief priests and elders knew.

[7:32] And not only did they know, but the Bible says in John that they understood where his authority came from. So, one, they already knew the answer. Two, Jesus doesn't give them a straight answer because the last time he gave them a straight answer and he said, You know, I and the Father are one, they tried to stone him.

And so I really think that their motive here, this is just me, I think their motive for asking the question is to try and trap Jesus into, quote unquote, blasphemy, so that they can kill him.

And I think Jesus knows that is their intention. And so he intentionally skirts the question and answers them the way that he does. That's just my own two cents.

But their question again, by what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you this authority? And so Jesus answers with a question of their own. He kind of plays the uno reverse card here.

And he says, I will ask you a question. And if you tell me the answer, then I will tell you by what authority I do these things. And so here's Jesus' question.

[8:38] The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man? And they discussed it amongst themselves, saying, If we say from heaven, he will say to us, Why then did you not believe?

And if we say from man, we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet. So they answered Jesus, We do not know. And he said to them, Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

If you go to the end of Jesus' parables that he's going to unleash on these guys in 2215, the first kind of glimpse at their response that we have, it says that the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him in his own words.

I mean, he got them. He got them so good, so much that they had to go out and say, Okay, we've got to think about how to catch this guy. Which I love that. But Jesus' response, he hits them with John the Baptist.

He said, Was John from heaven? Or was John from man? And it's a great question. And the reason it's a great question is right there in the text. Because if they say, Yeah, he was from heaven, then he'll say, Well, why didn't you believe him?

[9:51] And if we say from man, they're afraid of the crowd. And here's the question. What was John's message? Right? John's message was a message of repentance. He came in the way of Elijah, as the prophecy said, to make the way before the Lord.

To make the way before the Messiah. To get the people to repent and have their hearts right before the Messiah came. And so he came and he preached a message of repentance and he had a baptism of repentance.

And of course, the chief priests and the elders and the Pharisees, they did not believe him. They did not go on and repent. And so they can't save from heaven because Jesus would have had them trapped. And they can't save from man because obviously the crowd there all thought that John was a prophet.

And so here's where I'd like to introduce kind of the next couple messages. And again, I don't want to take all of their content, so I won't get too deep into it. But the three parables that Jesus is then going to go straight into from here really have to do with the rejection of John the Baptist and then ultimately the rejection of Christ.

All three of these go straight into that. All three of these parables have a father with sons. In two of the parables, it's a father with one son. But all of them have a father and a son.

[11:18] All three of them. The first parable, which we'll hit next week, is about a son that changed his mind, which is all that repentance is, is changing your mind, and a son that did not change his mind.

That's the very end of verse 32 there. It says, When you saw it, you did not afterwards change your minds and believe him. And so this parable is just directly talking about the Jewish response to John the Baptist.

It is directly saying, he came, told you to repent, and you did not. The next two parables, one is over a parable of the tenants, and the other one is on the parable of like a wedding feast.

You have a father with a son, and the son is rejected. In the one case, they kill him in the vineyard because they want the inheritance for themselves, and the other one, he has a wedding feast, and all the people are invited, and nobody shows up.

And so in both of these parables, the father has a son, the son is rejected, and then the father sends his wrath on those who did the rejecting. Does that make sense?

[12:26] So in all of these parables, the message is, I sent you John the Baptist, I sent you myself the Messiah, Jesus, here in the flesh. You guys rejected them, rejected their message, you are going to be judged, and the gospel is going to go somewhere else.

And that is what these parables are all going to be about. And so we are going to really look at those the next couple of weeks, and that is going to be a good study. These are some really good parables here in the middle of the book of Matthew.

But all that starts with this question, by what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority? So that is kind of the intro portion of the passage here.

As far as what can we get out of it, I think we can answer the question. I think we can directly answer the question by what authority was Jesus doing these things, and who gave him this authority?

Jesus obviously goes to John the Baptist here to kind of trap the Pharisees, and to trap the chief priests. But within his response of going to John the Baptist is a little bit of the answer, right?

[13:38] Because the answer is Jesus was doing this in his Father's authority. It was his Father that gave him all the authority. That is crystal clear. We're going to look at that from John in a minute. But I love that Jesus kind of gives us a little glimpse of that answer by going to John the Baptist.

You don't have to turn there, but in Matthew 3, all four Gospels record Jesus' baptism. All four of them do. And in Matthew's account, it comes in chapter 3, in verse 16.

And you see the Father approving and almost giving like a charge or a commission to Jesus in the accounts. Matthew 3, 16 says, This is the start of Jesus' ministry.

Nothing else had transpired. This was the very start of it. This happens, then Jesus goes out into the wilderness, and then he comes back and starts his ministry. So right from the get-go, you have this audible message from God the Father saying, This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased.

Right at the very start, God the Father is there approving or affirming Jesus. It's really interesting. In Mark and in Luke, it uses the personal pronoun.

[15:13] It says, You are my beloved Son. It's almost like he's talking directly to Jesus. It says, You are my beloved Son. With you I am well pleased. And so Jesus, right from the very start, before anything else ministry-wise happens, has affirmation directly from his Father, I am happy with what you're doing.

I'm proud of you, Son. Like that's what he gets right from the get-go. And so it's just interesting that Jesus alludes to that. But to be crystal clear about where did Jesus' authority come from, let's turn to the book of John.

And we'll go to John chapter 10. Without Kevin Stiles here, there's not many pages turning.

Everybody else has their phone. All right, so John chapter 10, verse 17. Again, answering the question, where did Jesus' authority come from?

He says this, For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it up again. And here we go. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.

[16:28] I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.

I mean, that is as crystal clear of an answer as you can get it. In my opinion. That is as crystal clear as it comes. This charge I have received from my Father.

And then, of course, there's this division among the Jews, and they say, Well, he's doing all these works, sure, but he's just casting out these demons by the ruler of demons. Like, this man's demon-possessed. This is not from God.

He just has a demon. And others are saying, These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind? And so there's this kind of fight between the Jews there.

Like, maybe he is from God. Maybe he's just like this crazy psycho guy that has a demon. Who knows? And then look at this. Verse 22 of John 10. This is really interesting. At the time, at that time, the feast of dedication took place at Jerusalem.

[17:31] It was winter. And Jesus was walking where? In the temple. So Jesus is there in the temple. These things took place in the temple. And the Jews gathered around him and asked him, How long will you keep us in suspense?

If you are the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered, I told you, and you did not believe. The works that I do from where?

In my Father's name bear witness about me. And so Jesus is there in the temple. I can't imagine a whole lot went down in the temple, right? So like, between John 10 and Matthew 21, I'm sure there's the same group of dudes.

And if not, they at least heard about this interaction. And Jesus is saying, Look at the works that I'm doing. It's obvious where I'm coming from, right? This has to be of God the Father. Like, it has to be. Where else could it come from?

If you're not going to believe me, at least believe my works, is what Jesus is saying. And he's saying it right there in the temple. Skip down to verse 29. My Father who has given them to me is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand.

[18:40] Verse 30. I and the Father are one. Jesus, where are you getting this authority? Where are you getting this authority to fulfill this prophecy from Zechariah?

Where are you getting the authority to fulfill this prophecy from Jeremiah? Where are you getting the authority to receive worship and say, Hosanna in the highest? Where are you getting the authority to heal the blind, heal the lame, curse this tree?

Who gave you this authority? It is so obvious. It comes from God the Father, right? Like, that is the source of Jesus' authority. And he says, I and the Father are one.

And again, their response, they picked up stones again to stone him. Chapter 1031. So I get why Jesus would dodge the question. They're trying to kill him. And he says, I have shown you many good works from where?

From the Father. For which of them are you going to stone me? I love that Jesus hits them with these hard questions. They don't have answers to these questions.

[19:43] It's great. He says, I've shown you good works from the Father, obviously from the Father. Why are you going to kill me for that? You go down to 37. He just keeps going.

He says, If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.

Jesus is doing these works right before them. Right in the temple. He brings in the blind and the lame in the temple. He's having this conversation in the temple with them.

And He says, You may know and you may understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father. That is where my authority comes from. That is who has given me this charge.

It is God the Father and you know it and you understand it and you can see the signs. And that's why I think Jesus goes down this three parable rampage of you guys are seeing the Son and you are rejecting Him.

[20:52] And so the punishment for that is going to be severe and in the year 70 Jerusalem is going to be wiped out and the Gospel is going to go to the Gentiles for the age of grace and we're still there.

Right? He says, You know and you understand it is plain to you that my authority has come from God the Father. And so here's what's cool is how does this apply to us now in the year 2025 as Gentiles who have received the Gospel.

We'll turn over to John 14 if you will. And in John 14 we're going to see basically the exact same conversation as in John chapter 10 but then we see it get turned to us as New Testament believers which is really cool.

So kind of the exact same conversation in verse like 9 Jesus said Have I been with you so long and you still do not know me Philip? Like haven't you seen all the things I'm doing?

Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. Verse 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father?

The Father is in me. The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority but the Father who dwells in me.

[22:18] Verse 11 Believe me that I am in the Father the Father is in me or else believe on the account of the works themselves. It's the exact same conversation, right? We've seen those verses just four chapters prior. But then verse 12 gets to us.

It says Truly, truly I say to you whoever believes in me that's you and me whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do and greater works than these will he do because I am going to the Father.

Verse 14 If you ask me anything in my name I will do it. Man, it's easy to read verse 12 Whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do and greater works than these will he do.

Real easy to read that. Real easy to say yeah, that's cool. What on earth does that mean? Like, I can't heal the blind, you know? Like, can you imagine if I could heal the blind and I like hadn't healed like the blind?

Like, that would be pretty rude, you know? Like, I can't move mountains like physically move them. I can't speak the world into creation. So what on earth is he talking about? Whoever believes in me will also do the works I do and greater works than these will he do?

[23:33] I'll tell you I don't have a hundred percent answer on that but I'll give you my best shot. I think what Jesus is referring to here is the gospel. You know, Lazarus Lazarus died Jesus came in John 11 and raised him and then presumably later Lazarus died again.

Like, Jesus healed some blind people and then they died. He healed some lame people made them walk they died. Gave deaf people hearing mute people speaking they all died. But what is the commission he gives to us, right?

It's go out and make disciples. Like, the New Testament church has been commissioned has been charged with the spreading of the gospel and the making of disciples.

Now obviously when we share the gospel and if someone believes that's not of our own doing that's obviously of the Lord himself like the work on the cross is the work but the fact that you can have a sinner pass from death unto life it's a pretty great work like that's a greater work than healing a blind person or even raising Lazarus physically from the dead.

You know, giving someone spiritual life is a pretty great work. So that's my stab at what Jesus is talking about there. Again, this does not come from our own power though.

[24:51] If you look at verse 16 it says, I will ask the Father and he will give you another Helper capital H Helper to be with you forever even the Spirit of Truth whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him.

You know him for he dwells with you and will be in you. So he's saying you're going to do some great things even things greater than what I did but you're not going to do it on your own.

I'm going to give you the Holy Spirit and he's going to dwell in you and he's going to dwell with you.

You know the Old Testament Jews had the tabernacle which was just a dwelling and now we have a tabernacle with the Holy Spirit who's going to be our capital H Helper in this life.

Jesus is saying I'm not going to leave you on your own. That's what he says in verse 18. I'm not going to leave you. I'm going to send you my Helper and he is going to help you do the work which is great encouragement.

You know? Now if you're like me you know you hear on Joy FM like the same power that rose Jesus from the grave. You know you hear that and you're like yeah that's great but then you hear like is in us and you're like wait yeah I guess I guess that's true.

[26:02] And if you're like me you listen to Joy FM you're like the same power. Hey use your blinker you jerk that rose Jesus like that's how I listen to Joy FM. That's true.

Like the Lord has sent his Holy Spirit to dwell in us. It's pretty neat. And so you you know you read these and you think man that's really cool that the Lord is there and he's going to help me and with his power I can do some things and that is that's a good mindset to have but I would I would flip it the other way around and say without him we can't do anything.

And if you look at John 15 you'll see that 100% corroborated. This is great. John 15 obviously is a very famous passage about the vine and the branches and he says you know I my my father is the vine dresser he's going to take away the branches don't produce fruit but I am the true vine you guys are the branches.

And in verse 4 he says this abide in me and I in you as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine. He's not saying like yeah the vine kind of helps the branch bear fruit it's saying it cannot bear fruit without the vine.

Without the vine there is no fruit. It's not like yeah it helps a little bit or like that's how you can kind of do it it's A or B it's either there or it's not.

[27:31] You know when when I garden it's been a minute since we've had a garden with moving and building the house and stuff but sometimes I will put the cages around the tomatoes right when I plant them sometimes I'll wait a little bit longer my thought process on that is usually I can't find all the cages when I'm planting so there's not a right or a wrong there but I know the times when I've put the cages on later if the plant is already growing a bit and you're trying to wiggle the cage over it and you like bend the arm of the plant down you can feel when you bend it too far and it kinks right and when you break that and you cut that off you may as well prune the branch because there's there's no chance it's going to produce fruit like it is shot it is broken it is essentially worthless cannot do anything and that's what Jesus says the branch cannot bear fruit by itself and then he says this neither can you unless you abide in me neither can you unless you abide in me and then he goes on at the end of verse 5 he says apart from me you can do nothing now that sounds like a bit of a dig you know it's kind of kind of hurts the pride you're like well I can do some stuff you know like

I don't know I don't know if you guys are familiar with the Red Green show but it says if if the ladies don't find you handsome they ought to find you handy it's like I can do a few things around the house you know but it says for apart from me you can do nothing and again man that sounds like a dig but you know what Jesus says the exact same thing about himself in John 5 he says 519 he says truly I say to you the son can do nothing of his own accord Jesus says that about himself he says I can do nothing of my own accord only what he sees the father doing for whatever the father does that the son does likewise so Jesus is not taking a dig at us here he's not saying man you guys are lousy you can do nothing he's just saying this is how it works and I want to help you and I want you to abide in me so that we can do some stuff that's what he's saying he's saying I want this relationship so that we can do some stuff I want to read real quick a quote from the book Wild at Heart if you are a man or you are married to a man you should read the book

Wild at Heart but he's talking about John 15 here and talking about this specific phrase apart from me you can do nothing and this is what he says he says it's like a tree and its branches explains Christ you are the branches I'm the trunk from me you draw your life and that is how it's meant to be in fact he goes on to say apart from me you can do nothing he's not berating us or mocking us or even saying it with a sigh all the while thinking man I wish they'd pull it all together and stop needing me so much not at all and here's a great quote we are made we are designed and created we are made to depend on God we are made for union with Him and nothing about us works right without it that's a great quote we are made to depend on God we are made for union with Him and nothing about us works right without it you know at the end of the breaking of bread this morning Mike Carey shared and he was talking about just all the things you can worry about across the seasons of life whether it's your kids your finances your health all the things and I would say you know I'm in the phase of life where I am squarely in the thick of it and I'm sure I will continue to be in the thick of it and I'm sure I don't even know how much more in the thick of it I can be but right now it feels like I'm in the thick of it you know husband father speaker occasionally deacon all the things and we all do there's zero special about me I'm saying we're all in this right man sometimes doesn't it feel like it's a lot like am I the only one that feels like man this is a lot hopefully not I will 100% say that nothing about us works right without it without the union with God nothing works right nothing about us works right without it without abiding in Christ man it feels like man I'm almost there I can almost do it you can't do it apart from me you can do nothing I'm there to help you I'm not going to leave you I'm going to send my my spirit to dwell in you and help you I'm there for you that's what he says and apart from me you can do nothing this is the the end of the quote here he references C.S. Lewis he says as C.S. Lewis wrote a car is made to run on gasoline and it would not run properly on anything else God designed the human machine to run on himself he himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn the food our spirits were designed to feed there is no other you know the marriage videos on Valentine's they they reference cisterns and they said you know there wasn't a lot of water back in Jerusalem so they would have to dig cisterns and when they had

water they could fill the cisterns and then they would have water for longer and you know the Bible talks about a broken cistern like it doesn't hold water you know there is only one true source [32:55] I mean you can try and fill your life with a million things and you can try and do them all on your own but that pot doesn't hold water I will just tell you that pot doesn't hold water the more redneck way of saying it is that dog doesn't hunt that dog don't hunt apart from me you can do nothing that's not a dig it's a promise that I'm there for you and we can do this together I've sent you my spirit if the musicians want to come up I would close with saying that Jesus clearly had the authority from God the Father God said this is my son you are my son I'm proud of you get in there he says I can't do anything without him in the same way Jesus says to us you are clean we have been saved and the Bible says in the same way you are saved so walk in so our justification came entirely dependent on Christ and so does our sanctification so does our walk it is entirely dependent on him apart from him we can do nothing the next couple weeks should be good we can look at

Jesus response in a little bit more detail about the rejection of Christ and the rejection of John the Baptist so we'll go ahead and close Father God just thank you for loving us and thank you for just the teaching of your word and just how clearly you've made it that your authority was from God the Father and you made it evident through the works that you did God we're thankful that the gospel was able to come to us and that you've sent your spirit to live in us and Lord we pray that each one of us here in the room would abide in you and depend!

on you Lord you are the fuel that we were made to burn and without you Lord nothing about us works quite right and so we pray that for each one of us here and thank you again for your word Jesus Thank you.