Matthew 21:23-46

1-15-17

Coming to Terms w/Jesus or Coming to Jesus w/Terms

I. Slide1 Announce:
   A. Slide2-6 McKenna: Middle School Camp. 3rd-5th camp. The Stir. REAL. Church Counseling.
   B. Slide7 Baby Dedication - 2nd service. Andy & Shannon Deane.
   C. Slide8 January is HT month. Our 6th annual conference is 2 weeks from today.
      1. Explain the day: same message 3 services, workshops 2nd and 3rd. Focus on prevention and what each of us can do to help in this fight. Free lunch.
      3. Speakers: Cory Nickols, Sandra, me. Harmony dust, Detective Jeff, Jen O'Farrel, Kristen Dolen, Melissa Herman.
      4. HS & Jr.H are encouraged to be in here. There will be class for Jr high if your not comfortable, but we’d encourage them to be in here since they are the age that are most targeted.
   D. Slide9 The youth conference, endit17 - is designed specifically for high school students. We are partnering with student venture to help bring awareness to the kids in the valley. Please pray for this event.
   E. Slide10 Todays children at risk - we will spend the time on last minute details, and mostly praying for the conference, for the attendees, for the victims, etc…

II. Slide11 Intro: Coming to Terms w/Jesus or Coming to Jesus w/Terms
   A. The 1st Adam came to the Fig Tree for leaves, the last Adam/Jesus came to the Fig Tree, not for leaves, but for FRUIT. Jesus still expects Fruit.
   B. Last week we entered the 4th major division of the gospel of Mt. The Rejection of the King
      1. Slide12 3 signs (last week: presentation of King. Purify Temple. Curse Fig Tree).
      2. 3 parables (2 today). 3 questions. 3 discourses. 3 trials.

III. Slide13 COMING TO TERMS w/JESUS or COMING TO JESUS w/TERMS (23-27)
A. Setting: In the Temple. They cut Him off in the middle of His sermon.

B. Slide 14 This is His 3rd entry into Jerusalem this week:
   1. 1st He entered as King, looked around & turned His back upon them.
   2. 2nd He entered as Priest & cleansed the Temple.
   3. 3rd He enters as Prophet w/the message of God for Israel.

C. Remember John’s ministry climaxed when he pointed his disciples to Jesus & said, *Behold the lamb of God.* Now, Jesus *traps the trappers* by asking them *the source* of John the Baptist’s authority. [They truly were on the horns of a dilemma]

D. They want to know who gives Jesus the right to do the things he does.

E. (24) I also will ask you one thing - As a means of instruction, *rabbis* often answered a question by asking another one.
   1. The answer to His question would reveal the answer to theirs. [the source, the Father]

F. When they are unable to answer his question, Jesus refuses to answer theirs.

IV. Slide 15 SAYING 1 THING, BUT DOING ANOTHER (28-32) Parable of the 2 Sons

A. This parable is found only in Mt.

B. One son says he won’t but later does. The other son says he will but later doesn’t.
   1. Corrupt tax collectors and prostitutes can be compared to the 1st son.
   2. The scribes and Pharisees can be compared to the 2nd son.
      a) When the ministry of John came, the Religious crowd showed great interest in his work, but they wouldn’t repent & humble themselves & be baptized.
      b) The Non-Religious crowd, confessed their sins & obeyed John’s words & were baptized.

C. James summarized this parable in a verse, *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.* James 1:22

D. The 1st son, showed no courtesy at all toward his father, *I will not!*
   1. He even failed to address his father as sir. Nor did he give him an excuse why he wouldn’t.
   2. But afterwards he regretted it & went. This was true repentance, for it led to practical obedience.
a) He didn’t offer a verbal apology, or make a promise of future good behavior. He did far better...he went about His father’s business w/no further ado.

E. The 2nd son, polite in oriental fashion, addressed his father properly, I go, sir!...yet he had no intention of doing it.

F. There are 2 groups of the masses of the unconverted:

1. Group #1 - Those who are declared disobedient towards God.
2. Group #2 - Those who are deceptively submissive to Him.

G. (31) Like Levi/Matthew the tax collector entered before the religious leaders. Like Zacchaeus did. Like the immoral woman at the well did.

H. (32) Jesus sums their problem w/two sins: They wouldn’t believe John’s message, nor repent of their sins.

I. The rejection of John was actually the rejection of the Father who sent him.

1. But God being gracious, didn’t send a sentence, but sent His Son.
2. This leads us to the next parable. (same theme)

V. Slide16 GOOD OWNER, WICKED TENANTS (33-46) Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers

A. Jesus draws on imagery from Isaiah’s parable of the vineyard (Is.5:1-7).

1. In Isaiah, the problem is the lack of fruit, and the solution is the destruction of the vineyard. In Jesus’ parable, the problem is the tenants, who refuse the owner His fruit. The solution is replacing the tenants.

B. Slide17a GOD’S KINDNESS (33)

C. God is the man who established & equipped a vineyard & rented it to tenants, since He lived far away.

1. A type of Sharecropping: [they’d lease the land, cultivate & prune the vines]
   a) Their agreement was that the landlord would receive a share of each crop as rental.
   b) The whole project was a venture for the landowner.

2. Slide17b Look at the kindness of the owner: He planted it. Protected it w/a hedge. Dug the winepress for it. Built a 15-20’ watch tower on top of the terraced hill for shelter, protection, security, storage, & a look out.
3. Also, Jesus was standing at Solomon’s porch, where hung a richly carved grapevine. 70 cubits high, sculptured around the door which led from the porch to the holy place. Kent Hughes, pg.94, quoting Rossocup.

D. Slide18a GOD’S PATIENCE (34-36)

E. Fruit was the issue last chapter also (w/ the Fig Tree & Temple mount)

F. The owner usually received 1/3 to 1/2 the produce.
1. It was also not uncommon for rent collectors to be treated badly.

G. Time and again God had sent prophets to Israel to gather fruits of repentance and righteousness but His prophets were abused, wounded, and killed.
1. Slide18b Jer.7:25,26 From the day your ancestors left Egypt until now, I have continued to send my servants, the prophets - day in and day out. 26 But my people have not listened to me or even tried to hear. They have been stubborn and sinful - even worse than their ancestors.

H. Slide19 Jesus parable was no exaggeration (eg. Isaiah, Zechariah, John the baptist)
1. Heb.11:35-38 others were tortured, refusing to turn from God in order to be set free. They placed their hope in a better life after the resurrection. 36 Some were jeered at, and their backs were cut open with whips. Others were chained in prisons. 37 Some died by stoning, some were sawed in half, and others were killed with the sword. Some went about wearing skins of sheep and goats, destitute and oppressed and mistreated. 38 They were too good for this world, wandering over deserts and mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground.

I. So here we have the sad rejection of God’s messengers; before the sad rejection of God’s Son.
1. We still have the sad rejection of God’s messengers in our world Today…some rejections are not just verbal. Some result in beatings & even death for some of God’s messengers. (pers church)

J. It would have been unheard of for the owner to have been so patient.
1. But God wouldn’t turn His back on the world; He continued sending servant after servant. (What persistent love)
K. How was God patient with you prior to your conversion? How is God patient with you presently?

L. Slide20 GOD’S LOVE (37-39)

M. (true story from Wales) A man loved a women, whom after having a spat, wouldn’t talk to him. He wrote letters for 40 years & placed them under her door, but she continually refused to speak to him. He wrote 2,184 love letters w/o ever a spoken or written word. He finally got the courage to present himself in person, knocked on the door & asked for her hand. She accepted. The became Mr & Mrs at age 74.

1. Imagine God’s dilemma. Time and time again He tried to get His message of love through to His human creation with little response. Finally, when there was no other way, He wrapped up His message in a person.

N. He/Jesus stands in succession to the great prophets of old, but He is distinct from them.

1. Slide21 If you reject Him, He answers you w/tears. If you wound Him He bleeds out cleansing. If you kill Him; He dies to redeem. If you bury Him; He rises again to bring resurrection. Jesus is love made manifest. Spurgeon

O. (37) They will respect My Son - As if the Father said, Since Heaven adores Him; Hell trembles at Him; surely they will reverence My Son.

P. (38) This verse tells of Jesus crucifixion, which was only 3 days away.

Q. (39) Cast Him out of the vineyard. God is Dead!

1. Heb.13:12,13 Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate (Jaffa). Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

R. In verse 38 we find The key. They claimed everything as their own (inheritance)... Their capacity to work, their output, the whole scene of their work & their life, namely, the vineyard itself. In the end they take credit for sunshine, rain, & good climate...heck, in the end they were the ones that produced this good wine.


S. Jesus was God’s Ultimatum [nothing remains when Christ is refused]
1. You put your finger in the eye of God, when you slight His Son. *Kent Hughes*

T. Slide22 God, the greatest Giver. So loved, the greatest motive. The world, the greatest need. That He gave, the greatest act. His only Son, the greatest gift. That whosoever, the greatest invitation. Believes in Him, the greatest opportunity. Should not perish, the greatest deliverance. But have eternal life, the greatest joy.

U. Slide23 GOD’S SEVERITY (40,41)

V. In leaving the question open, Jesus was making His final appeal to the listening Religious leaders to take a long look at *their own plans*.

1. He gave His enemies a last opportunity to change their course.

2. Oh, the *patience* of God, to wait, to give another chance.
   a) Robert G. Ingersoll, the noted *agnostic lecture*, used to take out his watch and give God *3 minutes* to *strike him dead* – If there *were* a God. On one occasion, however, a man in the audience asked: *Does the gentleman think that he can exhaust the patients of an eternal God in 3 minutes?*

3. But the leaders were caught up in the drama of the story & didn’t realize that they passed sentence on themselves.

W. How can people say *hell* isn’t fair? How can *hell* not make sense? They killed a Fathers one and only Son.

1. *God should have kicked this blue soccer ball we live on, so hard out of our atmosphere, so it burnt up immediately with a fervent heat.*

2. The question should be *How can heaven* make sense? How can *any* imperfect being be invited to inhabit such a *perfect* place?

X. Slide24 GOD’S TRIUMPH (42-44)

Y. They were *builders* who rejected the stone; they were *vinedressers* w/no fruit.

Z. Here we have the largest *excommunication* to ever take place.

1. *Here we have the consequences:* The kingdom taken away & given to another *nation/generation* (i.e. Jews later, or the gentile nation, or the Church, or it’s simply...people who recognize the identity of the Son/Jesus).
AA. Israel stumbled over Christ. The Church is built upon Christ. The Gentile world dominion will be crushed by Christ (Armageddon).

BB. Slide 25a GOD’S GRACE (45, 46)

CC. Don’t you picture big light bulbs over each of their heads? Hey wait a minute.

DD. One last chance for them to turn from the error of their way.
   1. In the 1st parable Jesus told them a story, asked them their opinion, & they gave it, & it was perfectly accurate.
   2. In the 2nd parable He told them another story, & again He asked them their opinion, & they gave it, & it was quite correct.
      a) Thus w/simple illustrations, He reached down into the deepest things in the lives of these men, & they pleaded guilty, & chose their own punishment, w/o knowing what they were doing, until He had finished.

EE. The parable is a powerful demonstration of the love & patience of God.

FF. Note the owner’s attention & care for the vineyard: He bought the land; cleared the land; prepared the soil; & even made provisions to keep out the wild animals or thieves.
   1. God has taken every care to provide for His people.
   2. He still sends messenger after messenger…but so often they are still rejected.
   3. Deliberately, repeatedly, people reject His love.
   4. Oh the generosity & patience of God & yet the stubbornness of humanity.¹

GG. This seems to be one more way the Lord shows His patient love in allowing his precious servants to be mistreated.
   1. Slide 25b It could be viewed as a lack of love for His children or It could be viewed as such a radical love for the lost.
   2. Slide 26 Martin Luther King Jr. Day tomorrow - He (Jesus) knew that the old eye-for-eye philosophy would leave everyone blind. He did not seek to overcome evil with evil. He overcame evil with good. Although crucified by hate, he responded with aggressive love.

¹ David Hewitt, pg.158.
How many more Christians does God need to send into your life before you’ll respond to His gracious love?

1. God has been waiting patiently for you…Will you respond to His love today?

II. Martin Luther King Jr. - *Jesus is not an impractical idealist; He is the practical realist.*