

PRETENDING TO SEEK THE TRUTH

Luke 20:20-44

We're living in a period historians may one day look back on as **the death of virtue**.

Francis Schaeffer predicted it nearly 40 yrs ago.

People enjoy benefits of Christian values,

and take them for granted, but reject the foundation.

He predicted the day people would ask "why?"

and throw over the standards that gave us those benefits.

Today little Judy tells a lie;

her mom and dad say, "Always tell the truth!"

Then she asks why. What do they respond?

"Because God says we should?"

No. We've already done away with that standard!

"Because it's the right thing to do?" Who decides what's right?

"Because we *ought to* treat one another as we want to be treated?" Right. And whose bright idea was that?

Maybe my standard is: "Do unto others before they do unto you!" Or, "Do unto others and beat it!"

If there's no God, no absolute standard, who says **murder** is wrong? Or, who is it O.K. to murder? Under what conditions?

O.K. to kill Tiller the abortionist?

Ahmadinejad? Obama? Bush?

What right do we have to impose standards on others?

Doesn't everyone have freedom of choice?

And so, **we watch the death of virtue**.

In reality, **virtue has been unpopular for a long time**. [Take truth, for example,]

We hold the illusion people seek truth.

But truth hasn't been popular for a long time.

It's more important to be "politically correct!" That's no change. That was standard in Christ's day.

The leaders aren't seeking truth.

They want to preserve their privileges.

They want to be rid of "THE TRUTH!"

That's what all the questioning is about in Luke 20.

Jesus threatened the system;

so the leaders have to respond (20:1- 21:38).

THEIR QUESTION CONCERNING TAXES 20:20-26

2nd trap they try. [1st trap = "Who gave you authority?"]

Introduction of the questioners

20:20-21

*Keeping a close watch on Him, they sent spies, who **pretended to be honest**. They hoped to **catch Jesus** in something he said so that they might hand him over to the power and authority of the governor.²¹ So the spies questioned him: "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is right and that you do not show partiality but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth.*

Jesus accused teachers and priests of persecuting prophets and killing the Son.

They're looking for an excuse to arrest Him and shut Him up.

They send questioners.

They're called "spies" => "people hired to lie in wait"

They pretend to be honest seekers. "Pretend" < hypocrite

Purpose: catch him saying something they can get him for

Notice the flattery:

"You speak and teach *"straight"* => *"what is right"*

"You aren't prejudiced—you don't show partiality."

Mainly deals with class distinctions

—He isn't favoring any social class or political party.

"You teach the way of God in accordance with truth."

If Jesus were normal, how would He respond to the flattery?

They're good. The leaders wouldn't risk exposing themselves.

Yet, *"He saw through their duplicity"* **23**

Jesus knows what's going on. He knows their hearts.

QUESTION: 20:22

"Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

Why ask *this* question?

A hot issue in Palestine—it provokes rebellions.

It isn't a heavy tax.

Fanatics insist they shouldn't pay *any* tax to *any* pagan ruler.

If Jesus says to pay taxes to Caesar,

what will happen to His crowd support?

If Jesus says not to pay, **how will the rulers respond?**

What's the net effect expected to be?

Any way He answers He's in trouble; *they'll be rid of Him!*

His answer:

20:23-25 *He saw through their duplicity and said to them. 24 "Show me a denarius. Whose portrait and inscription are on it?" "Caesar's," they replied. He said to them, "Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."*

Give each authority the response it deserves.

Issuing coins is a right of kings.

If he can issue coins, he can tax them.

If they want to be free of taxation,

use their own coins and see what they buy!

To live in a state and enjoy its privileges, we have to pay.

More important is to give God what He deserves.

Jesus' conflict is not with government.

That's under God's control; his conflict is with their leaders.

Their reaction: 20:26

They were unable to trap him in what he has said there in public. And astonished by his answer, they became silent.

They acknowledge He answered well.

They aren't going to trap Him this way.

THEIR QUESTION CONCERNING RESURRECTION

20:27-40

Introduction of the questioners 20:27

Some of the Sadducees who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus with a question.

Who are the Sadducees?

Party of priests identified with religious aristocracy and wealthy class.

Intellectual and sophisticated,

though not as respected as the Pharisees.

Pentateuch alone is their authority.

They deny supernatural intervention in their day.

No angels.

No hope of resurrection after death.

That's why they're so "sad-you-see!"

The problem 20:28-33 *"Teacher," they said, "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother.²⁹ Now there were seven brothers. The first one married a woman and died childless.³⁰ the second³¹ and then third married her, and in the same way the seven died, leaving no children.³² Finally, the woman died too.³³ Now then, at the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?"*

Do they really want to know the answer to this question?

They win either way. They want to stop Jesus.

They want to reject the argument of the masses of Israel.

They think He won't have an answer; no one else has.

Jesus' ability to deal with "impossible" theological issues demonstrates His supernatural awareness of God's truth

His answer

20:34-38

Jesus replied, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage.³⁵ But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage,³⁶ and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection.³⁷ But in the account of the bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'³⁸ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive."

Other gospels add that their assumptions limit God's power and deny God's Word.

LOGICAL RESPONSE: 20:34-36 *Jesus replied, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage.³⁵ But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage,³⁶ and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They're God's children, since they're children of the resurrection.*

There's no marriage and child bearing at the resurrection.

Natural physical marriage has no bearing on resurrection life.

Like angels, there's no marriage—no childbearing—no death

35 – "those considered worthy"

= -ow ending as "declared righteous"

= judicial pronouncement = those declared worthy

36 – "children of" = "characterized by"

Contrasts "children of this age" with "children of resurrection" –those who belong to present age vs. those who belong to resurrection.

Children of God =>Like God,

they don't die, nor bear children.

They're children of resurrection

Lifestyle transformed

Characterized by what characterizes resurrection

NOT by what characterizes physical life.

Nature of resurrected life is different than nature of present life!

Paul presents same idea about the nature of the resurrection body in 1 Cor. 15.

We try to understand future life by what brings pleasure now. Eternal life isn't centered on physical pleasure and satisfaction.

We view eternal life through eyes of physical existence.

Eternal pleasure isn't about sex, marriage and children.

Eternal life focuses on God's presence.

They try to argue by making truth look absurd.

That's how many people deal with Scriptural truth they don't like.

If we make it look absurd, it must be wrong. We can ignore it!

Their case is built on misunderstanding the nature of resurrection.

BIBLICAL RESPONSE (from O.T.)

20:37-38

But in the account of the bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'³⁸ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive."

Moses testifies to resurrection (all accept *his* word)

For Sadducees, "Moses never presented a resurrection."

Jesus says they haven't found resurrection in Moses
because they aren't looking.

At the bush, the Lord identifies Himself to Moses

as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

He is God of the living, not the dead.

They live; from God's perspective they're alive

If there's no resurrection, God is the God of the non-existent.

He can only be their God if they exist.

They can only exist if there's a resurrection.

Their reaction

20:39-40

Some of the teachers of the law responded, "Well said, teacher!"⁴⁰ And no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Instead of harming, questions establish Him — confirm His supernatural wisdom.

Notice who likes His answer! Scribes and Pharisees love it!

They believe in the resurrection.

However, since questions aren't accomplishing purpose,
the leaders stop.

For the moment, they're more interested in the threat *He* poses
than they are in fighting each other.

They'll get back to this discussion later.

You can bet they'll use HIS answer
the next time they discuss it!

HIS QUESTION CONCERNING DAVID'S SON 41-44

His question:

20:41-44

Now Jesus asks *them* a question: *Then Jesus said to them, "How is it that they say the Christ is the Son of David?"⁴² David himself declares in the Book of Psalms: 'The Lord said to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand'⁴³ until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.'⁴⁴ David calls him 'Lord.' How then can he be his son?"* <= **Psalms 110:1**

How could the Messiah be both David's son and his Lord?

Would you call your son your MASTER?

Psalms 110 is Messianic. There's no debate about that.

Jewish perspective emphasizes respect for ancestors

—ancestors are superior to descendants.

David is the ideal king. His descendants *must* be less.

Yet he calls Him Lord.

David recognizes that his son will be *superior*.

At least He is *his* master; He may be Lord = God.

Jesus only claims what David foretold.

Everyone refers to Jesus as Son of David.

David calls Jesus Lord. Jesus' claim is valid.
 If David recognizes that the Christ is truly human and God,
 how can they criticize Him, David's Son, for claiming that.

Their answer: Do you hear their answer? v. 44? v. 45?

Silence!

Why don't they ask Him?

His other answers have been good. Why not ask this?

Perhaps He knows the answer!

Perhaps they won't like His answer

They aren't interested in answers, nor in the truth

They want to stop *Him*; this question won't help their cause!

WHAT LESSON DOES THIS ENCOUNTER TEACH US?

What are the leaders up to?

Defined in verse 20. They're pretending to be honest.

They "pretended to be honest."

They're just *acting* like they want to know the truth.

They acknowledge that He's a good teacher,
 speaking and teaching what's right.

They acknowledge that He doesn't show partiality

They acknowledge He teaches the way of God
 in accordance with the truth.

The problem is they're neither seeking truth nor righteousness.

They aren't interested in knowing the way of God.

Therefore, they try to trap Him.

What good did it do? Did they trap Him? Did it help them?

What potential danger must we consider?

How about us? Are WE really seeking truth?

Truth starts with JESUS!

"I am the way, the truth and the life.

No man comes to the Father but by me!"

He's *the* way to God. He's the truth.

In Him is the life God offers us.

There is no other way to God.

We can't earn it

We can't buy it.

We can't even contribute to it.

Are you looking for the way to God?

Don't fall in the trap of the religious leaders!

We can put on a good show. We can pretend.

We can fool others.

But we can't fool Him!

There is no other way to God, but by Him.

Are you really trusting Him?

More specifically, the question for US:

Are we really looking for truth?

Do we really want to know what God thinks

or what God wants?

Jesus says that those who want to *DO GOD'S WILL*, will discover the truth.

That principle start with salvation—trusting Jesus.

But it doesn't end there. It's the key to living for Him.

John 14:6