

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Luke 19:45–20:19

Who Is Your Authority?



About This Week's Message

In this passage, Jesus confronts corrupt practices in the temple, challenges the religious leaders with piercing questions, and tells a parable that reveals His ultimate authority as God's Son. What began with the cleansing of the temple escalated into a direct showdown over authority—religious leaders versus the true Messiah.

Through the parable of the Tenants, Jesus exposes the heart of rebellion: wanting to be the owner instead of the tenant. The leaders rejected God's messengers, and now they would reject His Son. Yet even in judgment, we see God's patience and mercy as He sends servant after servant before sending His beloved Son.

This passage presses us to ask: Who or what is the true authority in my life?

Goals of This Week's Discussion

- Recognize Jesus' authority as Lord, not just Savior or teacher.
 - Understand the parable's meaning and its connections to Israel's history and our lives today.
 - Examine the subtle ways we resist God's authority by choosing self-rule.
 - Embrace the call to live as faithful tenants—stewards under God's authority.
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Connections with the 7 Marks of a Jesus Follower

- **Walk in the Word** – Let Scripture reshape your view of God's authority.
 - **Pray Without Ceasing** – Invite Him to expose areas where you're clinging to control.
 - **Play Your Part** – Steward your life, resources, and gifts as belonging to God, not yourself.
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Starter Questions

- When you hear the word *authority*, what emotions or images come to mind? Positive? Negative?
 - Can you recall a time you resisted someone's authority—and later realized they were right?
 - Why do you think our culture struggles so much with the idea of living under authority?
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Read Luke 19:45–48 – Jesus Cleanses the Temple

⁴⁵ And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, ⁴⁶ saying to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a den of robbers.” ⁴⁷ And he was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him, ⁴⁸ but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words.

Discussion:

- Why did Jesus react so strongly to what was happening in the temple?
- How does His cleansing reveal both His authority and His zeal for God's house?
- What modern-day examples of exploitation or misplaced worship might Jesus confront in our context?

Key Insight:

Jesus' authority is not soft—He confronts corruption and restores God's purposes.

Read Luke 20:1–8 – A Question of Authority

One day, as Jesus^[a] was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders came up ² and said to him, “Tell us by what authority you do these things, or who it is that gave you this authority.” ³ He answered them, “I also will ask you a question. Now tell me, ⁴ was the baptism of John from heaven or from man?” ⁵ And they discussed it with one another, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why did you not believe him?’ ⁶ But if we say, ‘From man,’ all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet.” ⁷ So they answered that they did not know where it came from. ⁸ And Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

Discussion:

- What do the leaders mean when they ask, “By what authority are you doing these things?”
- How does Jesus’ counter-question about John the Baptist expose their hearts?
- What does this reveal about the dangers of avoiding truth rather than submitting to it?

Key Insight:

Avoiding God’s authority is itself a revealing answer—neutrality is not possible.

Read Luke 20:9–19 – The Parable of the Tenants

⁹ And he began to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while. ¹⁰ When the time came, he sent a servant^[a] to the tenants, so that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ¹¹ And he sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully and sent him away empty-handed. ¹² And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out. ¹³ Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.’ ¹⁴ But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.’ ¹⁵ And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? ¹⁶ He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others.” When they heard this, they said, “Surely not!” ¹⁷ But he looked directly at them and said, “What then is this that is written:

**“‘The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone’?^[b]**

¹⁸ Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”

¹⁹ The scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him at that very hour, for they perceived that he had told this parable against them, but they feared the people.

Discussion:

- In this parable, who do the vineyard owner, tenants, servants, and son represent?
- How does this parable summarize Israel's history of rejecting God's messengers?
- What does it reveal about the nature of sin as wanting to be the "owner" instead of the "tenant"?
- How does Jesus' role as the rejected Son and Cornerstone shape our view of Him today?

Key Insight:

At the heart of sin is the refusal to live under God's authority. But Jesus, the rejected stone, has become the Cornerstone of salvation.

Look at this chart from the sermon that contrasts the "owner" and "tenant" mindsets. Let it be a mirror for us as we ask the Spirit to search our hearts:

Owner vs. Tenant

Category	Owner Mindset (Sinful Rebellion)	Tenant Mindset (Faithful Stewardship)
View of Life	"This is mine."	"This is a gift entrusted to me."
Authority	"I answer to no one."	"I live under God's authority."
Obedience	Selective, conditional — "Did God really say...?"	Joyful and trusting — "God said it, I believe it."
Purpose	Self-fulfillment, self-rule	God's glory, others' good
Response to God's Word	Ignore, reinterpret, or resist	Listen, submit, and respond
View of God	Distant, threatening — a barrier to autonomy	Gracious Owner — patient, kind, generous
Response to Correction	Defensive, hostile — reject the messengers	Teachable, repentant — receive the messengers
Attitude Toward Fruit	"It's for me."	"It belongs to God."
Identity	"I'm in charge of me."	"I'm a steward, not the owner."

Applying the Text:

Where in your life are you tempted to act like the “owner” rather than the “tenant”?

How does remembering that “every good and perfect gift comes from above” (James 1:17) shift your perspective on your time, talents, and resources?

What would it look like to live with joyful submission to Jesus’ authority this week?

Practical Challenge

- **Authority Check:** Each day this week, pray: *“Father, show me where I’m clinging to control instead of submitting to Your authority.”*
 - **Stewardship Step:** Identify one resource (time, money, skill, relationship) that you will intentionally steward for God’s glory rather than self-fulfillment.
 - **Submission in Action:** Choose one area (finances, relationships, decisions, habits) to actively yield to Christ’s Lordship this week.
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Pray Together

- **Thank** God for His patience in sending messengers again and again—and for sending His Son.
 - **Confess** ways you’ve resisted His authority or lived as though you are the “owner.”
 - **Ask** the Spirit to give you joy in submitting to Jesus’ Lordship and courage to bear fruit as His steward.
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Gospel Connection

This passage points us to the cross. The tenants rejected and killed the Son, but God raised Him as the Cornerstone. By faith, we no longer stand condemned with the rebels—we are welcomed into God’s vineyard as forgiven sons and daughters who live under the gracious authority of King Jesus.