

Transcript of Judgment Trilogy

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We have the series , three gospel parables that are called the Judgment Trilogy. These are three parables that Jesus directed towards the chief priests and the elders of the people.

And the context is Palm Sunday: Jesus has just entered into Jerusalem to begin His saving work, and the chief priests and the elders of the people oppose His authority. They question Him.

So Jesus fires off three parables in judgment against them. So let's go back two weeks and remember that first parable.

That was about the two sons, the obedient son and the disobedient son. Jesus compared the chief priests and the elders of the people to the disobedient son, the one who said he would go but never went to work in the vineyard.

And Jesus said to them, "Tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of heaven before you." Absolutely unthinkable in the minds of the chief priests and the elders of the people. However, the tax collectors and the prostitutes listened to the preaching of John the Baptist, and they converted. They came to believe in Jesus and changed their lives. Not so the chief priests and the elders of the people.

Then if we go back to last week, the parable of the bad tenants. Jesus compared the chief priests and the elders of the people to the bad tenants, the ones who abused the servants and eventually killed the son of the owner, which is all a metaphor for the way that the Jewish ancestors treated the prophets.

It is prophetic in the sense that the chief priests and the elders of the people will be complicit in killing Jesus. And so Jesus said to them, "The kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to people who will produce its fruit."

Then we have today's parable. Jesus compared the chief priests and the elders of the people to the guy who got thrown out of the wedding banquet. The wedding banquet being a metaphor for the kingdom of God. He is thrown out because he does not have the right disposition of faith. He believes that he can go in there and stay there on his own terms. Jesus says that's not the way it works.

And so consider these three parables and how there's kind of an escalation in the urgency and the warning that Jesus gives to the chief priests and the elders of the people.

In the first parable, he's really giving them a warning that they're going to be excluded from the kingdom of God if they do not accept Jesus and His teachings. So there's a warning regarding exclusion.

And then he ups the ante in the second parable, where he says, "If you don't change, you will lose the kingdom of heaven. You will lose that and I will give it to others who will bear its fruit." Finally he says, "You will be punished." And Jesus says that very clearly. It's one of His 16 references in the four gospels to hell, when the guy is thrown out into the darkness where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. That is a reference to what will happen to the chief priests and the elders of the people if they continue to oppose Jesus and His kingdom values.

So while that is, you know, in the history of salvation very specific to Jesus and His interaction with these Jewish leaders, we know that every parable has a powerful message for us. Because every parable tells us something about the nature of God, the nature of God's kingdom, and the nature of responsibility in that kingdom.

I think we can see today that there are still those who, in a very dangerous spiritual way, continue to oppose Jesus and His kingdom. They continue to oppose and reject our Lord's authority.

Take for example California. California just passed a law, Assembly Bill 1803, which says that every employer with 5 employees or more must institute anti-hate speech instruction. That sounds like a good idea, doesn't it? Except there are many Catholic parishes in California who have 5 or more employees. And who gets to define hate speech? Sacramento.

So when a priest or a deacon or a parish employee happens to say, "God made them male and female," quoting the book of Genesis, and someone is offended, let the lawsuits begin.

Last night, after the 5:30 mass, our parishioners left, and they were greeted by two men standing out here who were harassing and intimidating them, calling us idolaters.

Of course, the month before, our historic statue of Mary was desecrated. And over all of that, you know, we listen to the warnings of Bishop Barron, who reminds us that there are those today, individuals and groups, who try to insert their woke ideologies into our Catholic theology, trying to take the kingdom of God by force, to use the words of Jesus.

And so all of that is to say that there continues to be rejection and opposition and indifference and even violent opposition to Christ and His teachings and His kingdom today. That's the reality in which we live today. And even here in our small community of Lebanon, we experience it.

So thank goodness we have been gifted with faith, and we have our Lord's Word, and we have His sacraments to guide us and to strengthen us, so that we may live in a right relationship with the Lord, strengthened by His love and wisdom. That our faith may be humble and may be strong, and that we may never lack the proper disposition of faith that we need to enter fully into His kingdom.

As we remember those immortal words of Jesus, who said, "Many are invited, but few are chosen." May we humbly ask the Lord to count us among the few and the chosen.