SERMON NOTES: November 22, 2026

By What Authority?

Matthew 21:23-32

I. The Revealing Question - 21:23

II. The Revealing Counter-Question - 21:24-27

When He entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him while He was teaching, and said, “By what authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority?” - 21:23

III. The Revealing Illustration - 21:28-32

Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you.” - 21:31

Life Group Study Questions

By What Authority?

Matthew 21:23-32

1. Share a time when you experienced a group of diverse people coming together in unity. What was the occasion and why did it gather so many varied people?

2. The religious leaders are united by Jesus' threat to their authority. What had Jesus done recently that set them on edge?

3. The leaders never question the reality of Jesus' power or authority, only its source. How does this reflect our present culture's struggle with Christ?

4. Jesus had already answered the question of His authority many times. What do the leaders hope to gain in asking Him to answer the question again? What does this reveal about them?

5. Explain the dilemma that the leaders faced in answering Jesus' question. What does this dilemma reveal about them?

6. What is the significance of Jesus' refusal to answer the question? How is this refusal bigger than just this moment? What is the scary reality that is revealed against those who only care about their own authority?

7. Jesus uses the illustration of the two sons to force the religious leaders to acknowledge their own guilt. What is the one essential action that separates them from Salvation?

8. The truth that anyone, even the person farthest from God, who repents can enter the kingdom of God is amazing. Are you ever guilty of thinking and acting like this is not true? What causes us to think this way?