

Lesson 28: A Day of Controversy

Objective: To know that there is a *limit* to the kindness and patience of God.

Background: Tuesday, a day of conflict and intensive teachings. The religious leaders, outraged by Jesus' parables, resorted to the weapon of questions. They sent the experts from each Jewish party to Jesus with "sticky" questions, hoping either to embarrass Him before the crowd, or to trap Him in His talk so that they could have a case against Him. But Jesus silenced them all, and proved to be more than a match for them.

Instruction: Read Mk 11:15-19; Mt. 21:23-22:45; Mk 11:15-19; Mt. 21:23-46.

Let's Think:

During the Passion week, it was the practice of Jesus to teach in the Temple during the day and spend the night outside the city of Jerusalem. The cleansing of the Temple took place after He returned to the city. (Mk. 11:15-19).

1. On what ground did Jesus interfere with the Temple business which was the franchise of the high priestly family, the most powerful family of the Jews? Explain. By the way, is the courage of conviction a rare commodity today? Discuss.

The Parable of the Two Sons (Read over Mt. 21:28-32).

Tuesday morning in the Temple, the Jewish leaders interrupted Jesus' teaching. They wanted to know who had authorized Jesus to do the things He has been doing. Jesus answered them with two simple stories. Keep in mind, in the Parable of the Two Sons, the son who said "No" to his father *stands for* the tax-collectors and sinners who disobeyed God's laws; and the son who politely said "Yes, sir" to his father *stands for* the Jewish religious leaders who claimed to have kept God's laws.

2. In the end which son *obeyed* the father and did His will? How? Now reflect back, who *obey* John's message when he was sent by God to prepare the hearts of the people for Jesus? Were they religious leaders? Explain. (Mt 21:24-26; 31-32)
3. In what way, must the disciples of Jesus not follow the steps of *either* son. Why?

The Parable of the Wicked Tenants (Read Mt 21:33-46).

This parable has been called "the history of Israel in compendium." In the parable, the owner of the vineyard *stands for* God; the vineyard *for* the Jewish nation; the tenants *for* the Jewish leaders; the servants *for* God's messengers; and the son *for* Jesus.

4. Wherein lies the wickedness of the tenants? What was their crowning sin? And, what did Jesus reveal about His fate (the son) in the parable? Explain.
5. Was the owner patient? Was His patience *unlimited*? Explain. At the end, what did Jesus forecast about the future of the Jewish nation? Is it a bright picture? Explain.
6. Did the leaders realize that they had condemned themselves by the answers they gave to Jesus' questions at the end of each parable? (Mt 21:31a; 40-41) What was their reaction when the full importance of the parable was brought home? Explain. Why did they not arrest Jesus right there and then?
7. What happens when a person keeps rejecting God's love and disobeying His Word? Think! What does the cleansing of the Temple signify for the church and the individual? (also 1 Cor.3:16; 6:19)

Let's Remember: "...Do you not know that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance...(Romans 2:4b).