

## Message #98

## Luke 20:19-26

In all my years of life, living in the United States of America, I have never seen a President so demeaned and so hated as President Trump. The political world and the media world has done everything they can possibly do to destroy him. They actually sent in spies to watch him. They have made up lies about him. The most recent being he says bad things against the military and wants to defund the police. That is an outright lie.

But the fact is, they have not been able to trap him or overthrow him. The only explanation I can give for the fact that he has been able to not only escape their plots and accomplish so much is that God has put him in office and has continued to protect him in office. As we said, I have never seen anything like this ever before in this country.

But there was a situation even worse than this about 2,000 years ago in Israel. About 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ was literally here on earth and He went through things that were even far worse than what we are seeing happen to our President.

He was the perfect Son of God who never did one thing or said one thing wrong and the political and religious leadership hated Him. He told the truth and He taught the truth and He was a sharp rebuke and contrast to their arrogant, godless, money hungry, power-crazed ways.

The leadership running things was smooth and polished. They looked good; they appeared innocent; they appeared concerned and even appeared to be spiritual; but it was all an act. It was not real. These leaders had such a hatred for Jesus Christ that they wanted to put Him out of business. They wanted to take away His popularity and hang Him on a cross. These people were crafty and smooth and demonic. They were not just confused, they were evil.

What is clear from this text is this:

**SELF-RIGHTEOUS, HYPOCRITICAL LEADERS WERE OUT TO DESTROY JESUS CHRIST BUT THEY WERE NOT ABLE TO DO IT.**

If you are where God wants you to be and you are in a right relationship with God, there will be some who will hate you and seek to destroy you. That is their goal. We are not talking about a difference of opinion; we are talking about an animus that actually is out to destroy.

There will always be “wolves in sheep’s clothing.” There will always be those in powerful positions who pretend to be so concerned and caring. They pretend they are interested in the people’s welfare. But they are frauds who are out to discredit and destroy one who is really doing what is right before God.

Why would any denomination or religion not want people to believe in Jesus Christ so they could go to heaven? The resurrection proves He is the only one who can save. Why would any minister want you to follow anything else? He is not interested in your welfare or truth.

Satan does not want those right with God succeeding. He will produce those who appear to be “servants of righteousness” who will come into your world with the goal of destroying you. When this happens, stay steady and trust God because in the end, those phonies will be exposed, eliminated and destroyed.

This is a powerful and important passage pertaining to the life of Jesus Christ. There are seven specific details that are brought out:

**SPECIFIC DETAIL #1** – False religious leaders desire to destroy Jesus Christ. **20:19a**

We need to clearly see this, the Scribes and Pharisees hated Jesus Christ. These were the political and religious leaders at the time Jesus was here on earth. They hated Him, they hated His teaching and they hated His popularity.

If these leaders would have had their way, they would have killed Him right then and there. He taught the truth and stood for truth and it ripped their souls to shreds. They were phony frauds who loved the power and prestige and were getting rich off the people.

If you purpose to love Jesus Christ and defend the word of God and present it accurately, you too will be hated. There will be those in positions of power who will want you gone. They don't like you; they don't like truth; they don't like your influence.

But we need to stay faithful because our God is sovereign and even the most evil people cannot do one thing to us unless it is permitted by God and if it is permitted by God, then great honor is just around the corner.

**SPECIFIC DETAIL #2** – False religious leaders fear the people. **20:19b**

Do you see what it is that drives those who are false? It is not truth, it is not righteousness, it is not justice; it is popularity with the people. These leaders feared what the people might do if they grabbed Jesus to kill Him. **They do not have any fear of God; they fear the people.**

The one they should have really feared was Jesus Christ, who is God who will judge them. Instead these leaders have no fear of Jesus Christ, but they do fear the people.

What we learn here is so real and relevant. Political and religious leaders, who are not after truth and righteousness, are driven by a desire to control the people. They love the power, the prestige and the authority. They have no fear that one day they will face God.

They know some of the people look up at them and they are too afraid to do anything that can change that status in the people's minds. In fact, they were not afraid to kill someone but they were afraid of being killed themselves (i.e. Luke 20:6).

False leaders should be afraid of death. Those who are not right with God should fear death because one day they will die and they will face the One they wanted to kill.

Those who are phony fear people more than God. Religious and political hypocrites are paranoid about what people will think; whereas those who are right with God care more about what God thinks.

**SPECIFIC DETAIL #3** – False religious leaders reject the truth. **20:19c**

The end of **verse 19** is important and eye-opening. False leaders do understand truth. Their hearts are pierced with the truth and they do get it.

When Jesus Christ told the parable that stepped all over them, they were convicted by it. But instead of humbly responding, they proudly and arrogantly rejected the truth.

God's word never returns void. It pierces the hearts and minds of people. Spirituality or lack of spirituality is determined by one's response to the word of God. When God's word is presented, it does convict and one's response to the conviction determines the reality of the person's spirituality.

When God's word is presented, one right with God properly responds and grows. But when God's word is presented to the fraud, his heart is convicted and he becomes arrogant, angry and hostile.

People right with God properly respond to truth. Pharisees reject truth. God uses truth to determine who is right with Him and who isn't. The more of the truth we know, the more we can spot this.

When we lived in Indiana, we had a problem with gophers. We would take a hose and put it into one of the gopher holes and turn it on. It would flush out the gopher. When God's word that is fresh and living and active is poured out into the heart and mind of a person, it will flush out the phony.

Sooner or later, he will begin to squirm and you will see his true colors. Because those who are false reject the word and truth of God and they hate the one presenting the truth.

**SPECIFIC DETAIL #4** – False religious leaders pretend to be righteous. **20:20**

People who are not right with God appear to be so caring and so religious. They go to meetings. They will show up to services. They watch and listen and pretend to be in tune with God when in all reality they are spies of Satan.

The word plural noun “spies” (upokrinomai) is the Greek word for pretender or play actor. A religious spy pretends to be spiritual but he really is not spiritual. A spy pretends to be something he is not for the sake of some secret or hidden agenda.

There are people who are skilled at this in religion. They pretend to be spiritual and right with God and their hearts are rotten and evil. Don’t assume that just because someone goes to church automatically means they are right with God. Many go led of Satan. Religious phonies do go to church, but their hearts are never right with God.

I will never forget a girl I had in a public speaking class I taught at the Grand Rapids School of Bible and Music. Her father was a pastor. She had gone to all of the services. She had taught Sunday School. She had been involved in VBS. She was in Bible College and was traveling with a music group of the school. Early in the semester she had given her testimony as I required all students to do. Near the end of the semester she asked if I would permit her to say something to the class. She stood up and said that she had been a phony for many years and just that week she had trusted Jesus Christ as Savior. She said she had been living a lie, but no more. Her play acting days were over and she would not pretend anymore. We all admired that girl for what she did. Think of this. She had been hearing truth and actually teaching for years, but it was all a pretend show. That is the way it is for those who are false.

**SPECIFIC DETAIL #5 – False religious leaders recognize truth. 20:21**

There is no question that those phony leaders realized Jesus Christ was teaching truth. In fact, the way they come across here, you would almost think they were His friend. There are four realities to which they publicly embraced and acknowledged:

**Reality #1 - They publicly acknowledged that Jesus Christ was Teacher. 20:21a**

These phonies may have denied that Jesus was the God-Savior-Messiah-King, but they could not deny that He was a great teacher. He was the best teacher they had ever heard. They could not deny that. They sensed it and knew it. When He taught there was power there.

**Reality #2 - They publicly acknowledged that Jesus Christ’s teaching was correct. 20:21b**

Those phonies also knew that Jesus Christ taught things correctly. He never took anything out of context. They knew He accurately handled the Scriptures. His teaching was true and straight.

**Reality #3 - They publicly acknowledged that Jesus Christ’s teachings were impartial. 20:21c**

It did not matter who the audience was, Jesus Christ taught the truth of God to everyone. He did not cater to certain people. He proclaimed the truth to all people. Some were rich and some were poor. Some were big and some were small. Some were influential and some were not. Didn’t matter to Jesus Christ, He proclaimed the truth to all.

**Reality #4** - They publicly acknowledged that Jesus Christ taught the way of God's truth.  
**20:21d**

This is important because these men know they are hearing the truth of God and they did sense they were hearing from God.

Truth rings and regardless of one's reaction to it, they know it is the truth. Now these are some of the same men who called Jesus a drunk (7:34) and the same men who want Him dead (**20:19**). Even though they had such hatred toward Him, they knew He was telling the truth.

One other point we want to see. **We are in the final hours of Christ's life on this earth and the primary focal point of His ministry was on teaching God's word.** Ladies and Gentlemen, the church is never more like Jesus Christ than when it places a high priority on teaching the word of God, accurately. That is what Jesus did in His final hours of life.

**SPECIFIC DETAIL #6** – False religious leaders try to trick and trap Jesus Christ. **20:22**

This tactic is intriguing. Initially, the question of paying taxes to Caesar appears to be a very conscientious discussion between religion and government or church and state.

At the time this question was asked, many Jews, who were being led by these religious phonies, refused to pay taxes. So by asking this question, these leaders are trying to get this crowd to turn against Jesus Christ.

The dilemma for Jesus in answering this question is twofold:

- 1) If Christ said it was not lawful to pay taxes, the leaders could report this to Pilate and have Christ arrested for opposing Caesar.
- 2) If Christ said it was lawful to pay taxes, He risked losing some of the popularity and support of the Jewish people, who detested the idea of giving money to Rome.

This question is a political set up. It is a question designed to trap Jesus Christ.

We see that all the time at some hearing or press conference. Honest questions are not being asked; they set up questions designed to trap.

There are people who ask questions not to learn truth; but to oppose truth and to discredit the one presenting truth.

**SPECIFIC DETAIL #7** – False religious leaders will be exposed by Jesus Christ. **20:23-26**

There are three important facts given here:

**Fact #1** - Jesus Christ knew their deception. **20:23**

Christ knew their hearts. He knew they were frauds. No one can fool the Son of God. Christ knew their motives for asking this question. He knew they were trying to trap Him. He knew they hated Him.

Hypocrites need to understand something. They may fool other people; they will never fool Jesus Christ.

**Fact #2** - Jesus Christ answers their question. **20:24-25**

Christ asked them to show Him a denarius. Now a denarius was about a day's wage back at this time. This was a silver Roman coin that first came into existence in about 269 BC. It was worth about .20 cents.

Now Christ took the coin and simply asked whose picture and inscription is on it. The inscription in Latin read "Tiberius Caesar Augustus, son of divine Augustus." So what Jesus does is force these people to pull out a coin and look at it.

He asks whose inscription is on it. They answered Caesar. So Christ says well since you have Caesar's money in your pocket and since his picture is on it, give to him what belongs to him and give to God what belongs to Him.

They owe Caesar their taxes, they owe God everything.

We do have a responsibility to pay our taxes to our government and to submit to our government (Rom. 13:1; I Tim. 2:1; I Pet. 2:13). Those who try to get out of paying their taxes are not those who follow Jesus Christ or the word or will of God.

**Fact #3** - Jesus Christ silences their deception. **20:26**

Christ shut their mouths. The phonies had nothing to say. They could not trap Christ.

Now let me show you the liars these people are. At Christ's trial before Pilate, these very same leaders will actually bring up this episode again and outright lie about what happened here (Luke 23:2). At that trial, Jesus Christ won't even try to defend Himself.

Do you want to know why? He needed to die on that cross to save us from our sins.

You may be like that college girl. You may have gone to church for years and put on a good religious show and people really think highly of you. But you need Jesus Christ in your life and He will not come into your life until you ask Him. So invite Him into your life now and you will be forever saved.