

Follow – Walking in the Way of Jesus

The Gap Between Reality & Belief

Mark 11:26-33

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The Gap between BELIEF and REALITY (not in the sense of faith)

- When confronted with truth, we instinctively try to close the gap in one of two ways:

- Move toward reality in reorientation: Adjust belief... Accept correction... Realign with truth...
- Pull reality toward belief in distortion: Reinterpret facts... Dismiss sources... Reinforce our position...

Mark 11:26-33

- Chief priests → RELIGIOUS authority. Controlled the temple system (sacrifices, commerce, access). Responsible for maintaining order under Roman oversight
 - *“You’re interfering with how we run God’s house.”*
- Scribes → INTERPRETIVE authority. Experts in the Law. Determined what was true, orthodox, permissible.
 - *“Who gave you the right to interpret Scripture and act like this fulfills it?”*
- Elders → COMMUNAL authority. Respected leaders within Jewish society. Represented tradition, stability, and consensus.
 - *“Who do you think you are to disrupt the order of our people?”*

Leaders: *“Prove yourself to us”* Jesus: *“Reveal yourselves before God”*

1. Spiritual Authority Comes from God, Not Institutions

- Leaders assume authority is institutional
- Jesus demonstrates authority is divine and intrinsic

2. The Real Issue is Not Evidence, But Willingness

- They have enough evidence (John, Jesus’ works)
- The barrier is unwillingness to submit

3. Fear Distorts Discernment

- Fear of people > fear of God
- Leads to: Compromise, Evasion, Silence

4. Neutrality is a Decision

- “We don’t know” = Rejection
- There is no neutral ground with Jesus

5. Jesus Exposes before He Reveals

- Exposure is not the opposite of grace; it is often the beginning of grace:
 - You cannot heal what you won’t admit.
 - You cannot change what you won’t see.
 - You cannot follow Jesus while protecting what opposes Him.

Q:1 - Where in your life might Jesus be exposing something (not to shame you, but to free you) and what are you tempted to protect instead of surrender?

Q:2 - If you were to fully accept what Jesus is showing you right now, what would it require you to release... and what kind of freedom might be on the other side of that?

Date: April 19th, 2026

Series: Follow

Title: The Gap Between Reality & Belief

Primary Passage: Mark 11:26-33

Secondary Passage: John 8:32

Big Question: Who has the authority to define truth and direct our lives?

Big Idea: Jesus exposes that resistance to His authority is not a lack of evidence—but a refusal to surrender.

Keywords: Belief, Reality, Truth, Authority, Leadership, Institutions, Surrender, Fear, Distortions, Receive, Reject, Redeem, Freedom

GOING DEEPER

Where did you see Christ working around you this week? How was your HOPE challenged or affirmed?

Read Mark 11:27–33 slowly. List what each group (chief priests, scribes, elders) is concerned about. What does this reveal about how they understand authority, and how does that compare to how Jesus demonstrates it?

Trace the logic of Jesus' question about John. Why does this question expose the leaders rather than simply answer them? What does this show about the difference between having evidence and being willing to follow it?

The leaders are caught between fear of people and fear of God. Where do you see those same competing pressures in your own life? How can you tell which one is currently shaping your decisions?

Think of a recent situation where your belief and reality did not align. How did you respond—by adjusting to the truth or by reshaping the situation to protect your position? What would repentance (realignment) look like in that situation now?

Jesus refuses to give further revelation to those unwilling to respond to what is already clear. Is there something you already know God is calling you to do that you have delayed or avoided? How come? Write down one concrete step you will take this week to move toward surrender.