

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 27TH–28TH, 2025 // GOSPEL OF MARK

## THE GOD OF THE LIVING (MARK 12:18–27)

After Jesus escaped the Pharisees' and Herodians' attempt to entrap Him, the Sadducees entered the scene.

- This group only accepted the authority of the five books of Moses. They did not believe in the spirit world or the resurrection and were the sworn doctrinal enemies of the Pharisees.
- Their absurd "question" was dripping with hypocrisy and insincerity (vs. 19–23).

They have come to ask Jesus about the resurrection (which they did not believe in).

- According to the OT law, a man was obligated to marry his brother's wife so she would not die childless, and his name would not die out in Israel.
- So, at the resurrection, this woman who had been married to seven different brothers—whose wife will she be?

Jesus bluntly confronted them as being ignorant to both the Scriptures and the power of God (v. 24).

- Like many people today, they imagined that this idea of "heaven" (the future life) is just an extension of the present life, only better.
- Resurrection does not mean resuscitation—coming back into exactly the same sort of physical life as before—but transformation.

The resurrection God promises for His people will certainly be a recognizable and re-embodied human existence, but a great change will have taken place as well.

- It is going to be better than we can possibly imagine! But it will be different in some ways.
- Jesus tells them there will be no need for marriage in the next life. Because there will be no death, there is no reason to bear children.

Humanity will be "like angels in heaven" in one aspect: we will not be married or given in marriage (there will be no need for marriage).

- So, since there will be no marriage in Heaven, the Sadducees' question was invalid.
- The answer was that no one would be the woman's husband at the resurrection.
- For some of us, the idea of an afterlife without marriage or sex seems unthinkable.

Our marriages now are simply pictures on earth of the heavenly marriage between the Messiah and His bride, the Church (Eph. 5:22–33).

- When the actual marriage of Christ and Church takes place in Heaven, the greater reality will displace the need for the thing that pointed to it on earth (marriage between men and women).
- In the limitations of our humanity, we cannot understand any greater intimacy or pleasure, but God has more for us than we can imagine (1 Cor. 2:9).

But then Jesus got down to the real issue: the reality of the resurrection.

- In Ex. 3:6, God spoke to Moses from the burning bush, telling him, "I AM" the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—not I was, but I AM!
- The words of God are proof that these three patriarchs have been resurrected to new life—"He is not the God of the dead but of the living" (v. 27).

## THE SCRIPTURES AND THE POWER OF GOD

We will not be disembodied spirits. We will have resurrected bodies (that are male and female).

- We will be married in Heaven—not to each other but to Jesus as part of His bride!
- We will enjoy fellowship, friendship, and intimacy with our spouses in a different way, yet in a completely perfect and better way (without sin, selfishness, and pain).

## THE GREAT COMMANDMENT (MARK 12:28–34)

The most actively debated question in the rabbinic world was, "What is the greatest commandment?"

- When we consider the fact that the Pharisees viewed the law as 365 negative and 248 positive commandments, we realize how complicated this question could become.
- No one could ever hope to know and fully obey all 613 of these commandments.

Legal experts had divided commandments into "heavy" (important) and "light" (unimportant) categories and would spend countless hours debating which ones were which.

- Jesus drew His answer to this question from the most memorized and recited passage in all Jewish Scripture: the Shema (Deut. 6:4–5).
- The most important command is to love God with everything we have (v. 30).

"Love": not simply an emotion or feeling, but a decision of the will to act in light of a deep, abiding affection for the object of our commitment.

- "Heart": all our passions, desires, and affections.
- "Soul": the inner, immaterial part of our selves.
- "Mind": our imagination, intellect, and commitment to learning and growing in thinking biblically and critically.
- "Strength": giving God our energy, time, and physical abilities rather than giving them to worldly pursuits.
- Love for God cannot be divorced from love for one's neighbor, so Jesus also quoted Lev. 19:18 and put it right next to the Shema in terms of importance (v. 31).
- If we really love God, we will love the people He created and died to save (1 Jn 3:10–18).

This particular scribe (a profession that studied the Jewish law full-time) was greatly pleased with Jesus' answer (v. 32).

- The scribe also seemed to understand that what God desires from His people is more than external expressions of religious devotion—God wants our hearts (v. 33).
- "You are not far from the Kingdom of God." This scribe was close to receiving the truth of God!

## THE SON OF DAVID (MARK 12:35–37)

We get the feeling that Jesus is getting tired of all the baited questions, so now He will ask them some questions of His own (v. 35).

- It was common knowledge that the Messiah would be a descendant of David (Isa. 9:7; Ps. 2; 89; 132; Jer. 23:5), but there was speculation and debate on whether the Messiah would be divine (many prophecies predicted He would be divine, Isa. 9:6).

So, would the Messiah just be the Son of David? Or would He be more than the Son of David (would He be human and divine)?

- In Psalm 110, David ("by the Holy Spirit," v. 36) says, "The LORD said to my Lord."
- In English translations, the first usage of the word "LORD" is usually printed in capital letters to show that it translates the Hebrew name for God, "Yahweh."

The second usage has only the first letter capitalized to indicate the Hebrew word *Adonai*, meaning "Master, Lord."

- So why would David call his own son "Adonai" (master)? How can the Messiah be both David's son and his Lord? (v. 37)
- The only way this is possible is if the Messiah was more than just a special human being.
- The Messiah would be fully man and fully God!

## QUESTIONS THAT JESUS IS ASKING YOU

1. Do you believe I am the Christ? Belief in Jesus as Messiah means you trust Him to deliver you out of your oppression by sin and death into new life.
2. Do you believe I am the Son of God? Jesus is not asking you to believe in Him as just a good example or teacher, but as God.
3. Am I the King of your heart? Have you submitted to Jesus, not just with your head but with your heart?

## DEVOURING WIDOWS (MARK 12:38–44)

### A WARNING (VS. 38–40)

The scribes were the professional scholars of the Torah. They were given positions of great respect in Jewish culture ("best seats," "places of honor").

- There was also a tremendous amount of decorum, pomp, and showmanship in the presentation of their expertise ("long robes," "greetings in the marketplace").
- Beneath all the piety, pomp, and showmanship of the scribes (who had given their life in the service of studying God's law), Jesus reveals what they were truly after:
- 1) Money from exploiting the vulnerable ("devour widows' houses").
- 2) Admiration and applause from the community ("long prayers just for show").

### "THESE WILL RECEIVE HARSHER JUDGMENT."

To do what seem to be "good works" simply for financial gain and applause is to love ourselves with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. It is not truly loving the Lord and our neighbor.

- It is using the Lord and using our neighbor to gain access to the idols of money and applause.
- There will be a harsher judgment from God for those who do this!

After Jesus warns the crowd about those who "devour widows' houses" (exploit poor and vulnerable people financially for their own gain), he sits down across from the offering box in the temple (v. 41).

- Jesus is people watching—observing people giving to the temple fund which went to and was managed by these crooked religious leaders.

Jesus saw rich people putting in large sums of money, and then he saw a poor widow who came and dropped in two tiny coins worth very little (vs. 41–42).

- This probably would have been about the modern equivalent of \$1, but Jesus tells His disciples that this is all this poor woman had.
- Even though she gave less than the rich, she gave more because she gave it all (vs. 43–44).

## WHAT IS THE POINT?

The danger of not loving God and others fully. Even though they had "church," Bible verses, and impressive religious practices, the scribes and Pharisees did not love God and people at all. They were lovers of self.

- Instead of helping the widows in need, they were perfectly content to rob them of their livelihood and inheritance. Selfishness is deadly!
- It is possible to genuinely believe we are doing God's work, believing God's Word, and accomplishing God's will, yet genuinely miss God's heart.
- It is possible to be right (theologically, politically, and philosophically) yet fail to love God and love people.
- It is possible to believe in the concept of Jesus intellectually but not truly surrender our hearts and lives to Him fully.

## THE SOLUTION? WHOLEHEARTED, EXCLUSIVE, OBEDIENT, AND COMMITTED LOVE FOR GOD (V. 29).

- We want to share what we love with others. When we love God more than self, we want others to see Him, not us.
- Love is always the basis for obedience. If we love Him, we will be committed to obeying Him.
- Love for God will always cause us to love other people.

## THE KINGDOM = LOVING JESUS MORE THAN RELIGION

- Religion is safe and practical. Jesus is radical and unpredictable.
- Religion sees other people as the enemy. Jesus sees sin, death, and Satan as the enemy.
- Religion grades righteousness on a curve. Jesus grades righteousness by the cross.
- Religion seeks to exalt self. Jesus encourages us to deny ourselves.
- Following Jesus truly means forsaking "religion" in favor of relationship.
- It means seeing people as He sees people.
- It means seeing your sin as He sees your sin.
- It means seeing yourself as He sees you.
- It should produce in your life humility, radical dependence on Him, and a lot of grace.

## WHAT (OR WHO) HAS YOUR HEART?

- Do you love Jesus more than you love religion? Politics? Culture? Applause or recognition? Mindsets? Opinions? How you were raised?
- Is your love for Him producing in you a love for people? Humility? Grace for others? Obedience? Worship?
- Do you know how much you are loved (1 Jn. 4:19)? Does He have your heart?