



Gospel of Mark Bible Study

Session #15 February 2nd – 7th Mark 11:27-12:27

Tuesday 6am @LW – Tuesday 5:15pm @AV

Wednesday 10am & 6:15pm @LW

Sunday 10:30am @AV

The Authority of Jesus Questioned - Mark 11:27-33

11:27ff The religious leaders asked Jesus who gave him the authority to chase away the merchants and money changers. Their question was a trap. If Jesus said his authority was from God, they would accuse him of blasphemy; if he said his authority was his own, they would dismiss him as a fanatic. To expose their real motives, Jesus countered their question with a question about John the Baptist. The leaders' silence proved that they were not interested in the truth. They simply wanted to get rid of Jesus because he was undermining their authority.

Study Questions:

1. Who confronted Jesus? Why? (11:27-28)
2. How did Jesus answer the challenge put to Him? (11:29-33)
3. How did Jesus silence His critics? (11:33)
4. In what ways do human authorities challenge God's authority?
5. How can we ensure that we follow God's authority rather than the "authorities" who challenge His Word?

The Parable of the Tenants - Mark 12:1-12 Life Application Notes

12:1 Parables are story illustrations that use something familiar to help us understand something new. This method of teaching compels listeners to discover truth for themselves. The message gets through only to those who are willing to listen and learn.

12:1 Israel, pictured as a vineyard, was the nation that God had cultivated to bring salvation to the world. The religious leaders not only frustrated their nation's purpose; they also killed those who were trying to fulfill it. They were so jealous and possessive that they ignored the welfare of the very people they were supposed to be bringing to God.

12:1ff In this parable, the man who planted the vineyard is God; the vineyard is the nation Israel; the tenants are Israel's religious leaders; the servants are the prophets and priests who remained faithful to God; the son is Jesus; and the others are the Gentiles. By telling this story, Jesus exposed the religious leaders' plot to kill him and warned that their sins would be punished.

12:10-11 Jesus referred to himself as the stone rejected by the builders. Although he would be rejected by most of the Jewish leaders, he would become the cornerstone of a new "building," the church (Acts 4:11-12). The cornerstone was used as a base to make sure the other stones of the building were straight and level. Likewise, Jesus' life and teaching would be the church's foundation.

118:22-23 Jesus referred to this verse when he spoke of being rejected by his own people (Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10-11; Luke 20:17). Although he was rejected, Jesus is now the "capstone," the most important part of the church (Acts 4:11; Ephes. 2:20; 1 Peter 2:6-7). The capstone is the center stone in the top of an arch, holding the whole arch together.

Study Questions:

1. Whom do the farmer, servants, and son in the parable represent? (12:1-6)
2. Why did the owner of the vineyard send so many servants to the tenants looking after the vineyard? v.2-5
3. In what ways is it possible to mistreat the messengers or message God has sent us?
4. How can we show respect for the message God has given us?

Paying Taxes to Caesar - Mark 12:13-17 Life Application Notes

12:13 The Pharisees were primarily a religious group concerned for ritual purity; the Herodians were a Jewish political group that approved of Herod's compromises with Rome. Normally the two groups had nothing to do with each other.

The Pharisees did not like Jesus because he exposed their hypocrisy. The Herodians also saw Jesus as a threat. Supporters of the dynasty of Herod the Great, they had lost political control when, as a result of reported unrest,

Rome deposed Archelaus (Herod's son with authority over Judea), and replaced him with a Roman governor. The Herodians feared that Jesus would cause still more instability in Judea, and that Rome might react by never allowing the Roman leaders to step down and be replaced by a descendant of Herod.

12:14 Anyone who avoided paying taxes faced harsh penalties. The Jews hated to pay taxes to Rome because the money supported their oppressors and symbolized their subjection. Much of the tax money also went to maintain the pagan temples and luxurious life-styles of Rome's upper class. The Pharisees and Herodians hoped to trap Jesus with this tax question. Either a yes or a no could lead him into trouble. A yes would mean he supported Rome, which would turn the people against him. A no would bring accusations of treason and rebellion against Rome and could lead to civil penalties.

12:15 A denarius was the usual day's wage for a laborer.

12:17 The Pharisees and Herodians thought they had the perfect question to trap Jesus. But Jesus answered wisely, once again exposing their self-interest and wrong motives. Jesus said that the coin bearing the emperor's image should be given to the emperor. But our lives, which bear God's image, belong to God. Are you giving God all that is rightfully his? Give your life to God-you bear his image.

Study Questions:

1. How did the religious leaders try to trick Jesus? (12:13-15)
2. What did Jesus mean when He said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's"? (12:17)
3. What values was Jesus communicating with His answer to the Pharisees' question?
4. What belongs to God that we should give back to Him?

Marriage at the Resurrection - Mark 12:18-27 Life Application Notes

12:18-23 After the Pharisees and Herodians failed to trap Jesus with their tax question, the Sadducees stepped in with a question they were sure would stump him. This was a question that they had successfully used against the Pharisees, who could not come up with an answer. The Sadducees did not believe in life after death because the Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy) had no direct teaching about it, and the writings of Moses were the only Scriptures they followed. But Jesus was about to point out that Moses' books support the idea of eternal life (Mark 12:26).

12:19 According to Old Testament law, when a man died without a son, his brother had to marry the widow and produce children to care for her and allow the family line to continue. The first son of this marriage was considered the heir of the dead man (Deut. 25:5-6).

12:24 What life will be like after the resurrection is far beyond our ability to understand or imagine (Isaiah 64:4; 1 Cor. 2:9). We need not be afraid of eternal life because of the unknowns, however. Instead of wondering what God's coming kingdom will be like, we should concentrate on our relationship with Christ right now because in the new kingdom, we will be with him. If we learn to love and trust Christ *now*, we will not be afraid of what he has in store for us then.

12:25-27 Jesus' statement does not mean that people won't recognize their partners in the coming kingdom. It simply means that God's new order will not be an extension of this life and that the same physical and natural rules won't apply. Jesus' comment in Mark 12:25 was not intended to be the final word on marriage in heaven. Instead, this response was Jesus' refusal to answer the Sadducees' riddle and fall into their trap. Sidestepping their question about the much-married woman, he gave a definitive answer to their question about the resurrection.

12:26 The Sadducees' real question was not about marriage but about the doctrine of resurrection. Because the Sadducees believed only in the Pentateuch (Genesis through Deuteronomy), Jesus quoted from Exodus 3:6 to prove that there is life after death. The Pharisees had overlooked this verse in their debates with the Sadducees. God spoke of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob years after their deaths as if they *still lived*. God's covenant with all people exists beyond death.

Study Questions:

1. Who were the Sadducees, and what did they want from Jesus? (12:18)
2. What was wrong with the Sadducees' viewpoint? (12:24-27)
3. In what ways do you think Christians today misinterpret what the Scriptures actually say?
4. How can we guard against reading into Scripture what we want it to say?

Bible Memory Verse: Mark 12:17 ..."Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's."