



Stuff They Didn't Teach Me In Sunday School



Episode 117 - Who Are You? (Mark 12)

The Vineyard and Tenants

When the Jewish leaders questioned Jesus' authority to drive the sacrificial animals and moneychangers from the temple courts, He asked them if John's message was from God or from man. When they refused to answer, Jesus refused to explain His authority.

Jesus could have blasted away at the Jewish leaders and humiliated them in front of the crowds. Instead, He used a parable to accomplish two things: it revealed His authority for cleansing the temple, and allowed Him to confront their disobedience in a way that only they would know He was speaking against them.

- Why do you think Jesus chose not to publicly embarrass them yet?

Jesus wanted to bring these Jewish leaders to faith. He used this parable to expose their sin so they would repent and turn to Him in faith.

- Why do you think they resisted His intention and hardened their hearts against Him?

Think of a time you hardened your heart against God's Word and did something you now regret.

- What advice would you give someone who is going through the same thing?
- What good did God bring out of that situation when you repented?

A Tax Trap

When the Jewish leaders failed to confront Jesus successfully, they sent Pharisees and the followers of Herod to trap Him.

- What would have happened if Jesus had pleased the crowd and said it was not right to pay taxes to Caesar?
- What would have happened to Jesus' popularity among the crowds if He came out and said they should pay taxes to Caesar?

Jesus identified the Jewish leaders as hypocrites, who were trying to trap Him.

- What kinds of traps have been used to try to humiliate you or turn your friends against you?
- How does it help to be aware that some people act hypocritically to trick and trap Christians?

Marriage at the Resurrection

Perhaps the most amazing thing about the Sadducees' question to Jesus is how they were able to keep a straight face. They totally rejected the notion of a resurrection, yet they based their question on it. They had hoped to leave Jesus embarrassed. By the time, however, Jesus was done with them; they were the ones looking like fools.

- Why do you think Jesus bothered to quickly answer their question, before He turned to tackle their refusal to believe in the resurrection?

Many books of the Old Testament talk directly about the resurrection of the dead, such as Daniel 12:2 and Job 19:26-27. But the Sadducees rejected those books and held that only the books of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy) were God's Word.

- What lesson can we take from the fact that Jesus proved the resurrection from the books they accepted rather than those they rejected?
- How did their refusal to believe the other Bible books that prophesied Jesus' coming, teaching, death and resurrection hinder them from recognizing Jesus as the Messiah?
- What parts of the Bible do people often avoid reading?
- Discuss the value those books have for us.

Jesus bluntly tells them, "You are quite wrong."

- Why do you think He is becoming more direct with them, even at the risk of embarrassing and alienating them more?

Greatest Commandment

One scribe asks which commandment is greatest. Jesus sums up all the commandments by telling him to love God more than anything and to love your neighbor as yourself is the greatest.

- Against the background of the parable of the Vineyard and the Tenants, how does Jesus plainly show the leaders are failing to love God?
- How does the parable show they are also failing to love their neighbor?

How Can the Christ Be David's Son and David's Lord at the Same Time?

Now Jesus poses a question of His own—and totally confounds them.

- Discuss how Jesus' question can only be answered when you understand that He is both God's Son and Mary's son: true God and true man.
- How should this question have affected those scribes and leaders who were confident they knew God's Word?

The Widow's Mite

- What lessons have you heard people draw from the widow who gave her last mite to the Lord?
- How close were they to being right?

Jesus pointed out the widow's offering to contrast true believers with these leaders who rejected God completely. She gave of herself to glorify God's Son; all they were interested in was glorifying themselves. In this example, Jesus was pointing to Himself also. Just as the widow gave her all to the Lord, He was soon going to give His all to her and the rest of mankind.

- Discuss the different ways God shows His great love which moved Him to send His only-begotten Son.