



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V23 N21

May 23, 2021

KING JESUS

“What Do You Believe About Jesus?”

Mark 12:35-44

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Single-Mindedness

I focus on God and his priorities for my life.

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Matthew 6:33



Whose examples are disciples to follow?

The teachers of the law are single-minded but not in a good way. Rather than focus on God and his priorities for their lives, they focus on themselves and their own priorities for their lives. With perhaps one exception – the “friendly scribe,” who commends Jesus for his identification of the greatest commandment (12:28, 32, 34) – the teachers of the law are *single-minded* along with the chief priests, the elders, the Pharisees, and the Herodians in their hatred toward Jesus. Early on, they accuse him of being “possessed by Beelzebul” (3:22); later on, they plot to kill him (11:18) and look for a way to arrest him (12:12; cf., 14:1).

In his indictment of them recorded in Matthew 23:13-36, Jesus repeatedly accuses them of hypocrisy. Seven times he says, “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites” (vv. 13, 15, 16, 23, 25, 27, 29). In two “woes,” Jesus contrasts their *physical* outsides with their *spiritual* insides. In verse 25, about them he says, “You clean the *outside* of the cup and dish, but *inside* they are full of greed and self-indulgence.” And in verse 28, after comparing them to beautiful, whitewashed tombs full of dead people’s bones, about them he says, “In the same way, on the *outside* you appear to people as righteous, but on the *inside*, you are full of *hypocrisy* and *wickedness*.”

Their *greed*, *self-indulgence*, *hypocrisy*, and *wickedness* are on display in Mark 12:38-40. In the first place, they love themselves more than they love God. They parade around calling attention to themselves and seek to be seen in prominent positions in order to garner the respect and honor of people. What’s more, they love themselves more than they love others – even the most vulnerable in society. They exploit widows, devouring their houses, for their own per-

sonal gain. One commentator suggests this may mean any one or more of the following: (a) Scribes accepted payment for legal assistance, though such payment was forbidden. (b) Acting in the capacity of lawyers, perhaps appointed to such office in the wills of the deceased husbands, the scribes cheated widows out of their estates. (c) Scribes free-loaded on the hospitality of widows. (d) Scribes mismanaged the estates entrusted to them. (e) Scribes took money from credulous women in return for the supposed benefit of intercessory prayer (as perhaps implied by the next clause in v 40). (f) Scribes took houses as pledges for debts that could not realistically be expected to be repaid” (Craig A. Evans, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 34B, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 279). The fact that the teachers of the law know better makes their conduct all the more egregious.

Over against the unrighteous scribes, Mark sets “a poor widow” as a foil. Her *generosity* contrasts negatively with the *selfishness* of the teachers of the law. She gives more than all of her fellow contributors because out of her poverty, she gives all she has; whereas, out of their wealth, they give only what they will barely miss. As one commentator writes: “Her unassuming piety sharply contrasts with the conspicuous impiety of the scribes in the preceding denunciation. She shows radical trust in God to provide for her and gives what is surplus for this day to God” (David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Mark*, 481). Religion looks much the same today. Religious appearances can be and too often are deceiving. And religious leaders can be and too often are the least godly of all.

1

EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

35 While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, "Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David? 36 David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared:

"The Lord said to my Lord:

"Sit at my right hand

until I put your enemies

under your feet."

37 David himself calls him 'Lord.' How then can he be his son?"

The large crowd listened to him with delight.

38 As he taught, Jesus said, "Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, 39 and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. 40 They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely."

41 Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. 42 But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

43 Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44 They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything – all she had to live on."

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Underline "temple courts" in v. 35.
- Bracket "teachers of the law" in vv. 35, 38.
- Circle "my lord" in v. 36.
- Underline "flowing robes," "greeted with respect," "most important seats," and "places of honor" in v. 39.
- Bracket "devour widows' houses" in v. 40.
- Circle "punished" in v. 40.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in vv. 42, 44.
- Circle "temple treasury" in v. 41.
- Circle "copper coins" in v. 42.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. According to Psalm 110:1, “*The Lord said to my Lord.*” Identify “the Lord” and “my Lord.”
2. How would you answer Jesus’ question (v. 37)?
3. The scribes’ view of Messiah is *deficient*. How so?
4. The teachers of the law “like” *four* things. List them.
5. What does what the scribes “like” say about them?
6. Put what “devour widows’ houses” means in your own words.
7. “These men will be punished *most severely*” (v. 40). What do you infer from that?
8. Explain the *contrast* introduced in verse 42.
9. Explain what the disciples are to learn from the poor widow’s example.
10. **Discussion:** Jesus is teaching in the temple. Talk about what the disciples are learning.

Commentary On The Text

Mark 12:35-44 can be divided into three units or pericopes. The first pericope (vv. 35-37) contains the last of the six controversy dialogues with Israel's religious leaders; in it Jesus asks a question about the Messiah's relationship to King David. The second (vv. 38-40) contains Jesus' denunciation of the teachers of the law and a warning to the disciples to "watch out" for them. And the third (vv. 41-44) contains a lesson for the disciples based on a poor widow's example of godly piety. While the three pericopes appear to record three isolated incidents, the first two are linked by references to "the teachers of the law" (vv. 35, 38), and the mention of "widows" (v. 40) and of "a poor widow" (v. 42) links the second to the third. All three are linked by their setting in the temple courts and by Jesus' teaching.

Jesus is asked a number of challenging questions by the religious establishment: (1) regarding his authority (11:28); (2) regarding paying taxes to Caesar (12:14); (3) regarding resurrection (v. 19); and (4) regarding the greatest commandment (v. 28). Now it's Jesus' turn, and he asks, "Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David?" (v. 35). He asks the question not to say that Messiah isn't David's descendant, but to say that Messiah is more than simply David's descendant. In other words, he asks the question to show that the scribes' understanding of Messiah is deficient. His argument has three premises. This first is not controversial. Messiah is the Son of David. This is widely recognized to be true in Jesus' day (see Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Mark*, TNTC, 306). Neither is the second. David, acknowledged to be the author of Psalm 110 (the most quoted Old Testament passage in the New Testament), is "speaking by the Holy Spirit" as a prophet when he writes, "The Lord said to my Lord . . ." The third is eye-opening. "David refers to the Messiah when he speaks of 'my Lord'" (Schnabel, 307). Given the fact that fathers are not in the habit of calling their sons "my Lord," Messiah must be more than simply David's son. So if David calls Messiah "Lord," Jesus asks, "How then can he be his son?" One commentator gives the only valid answer to that question. "The Messiah is David's Son and David's Lord at the same time. This strongly implies that the Messiah is both God (David's Lord) and man (David's son; cf. Rom. 1:3-4; 2 Tim. 2:8)" (John D. Grassmick, "Mark," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 165). Disciples are to have a full understanding of Messiah's person.

After delighting the majority and dismaying the minority, Jesus continues teaching, warning the disciples against the teachers of the law. Added to his parallel scathing denunciation of them in Matthew 13:1-12 is a list of seven "woes to you, teachers of the law" recorded in verses 13-39, the fifth and sixth of which echo similar

criticisms in Mark 12:38-40. Jesus' four-fold indictment of them in Mark includes the following: (1) "They like to walk around in flowing robes" means they take pleasure in impressing other people by their outward appearance; (2) They like to "be greeted with respect in the marketplaces" means they hope people will either recognize them or conclude from their attire that they are important people, who deserve a deferential greeting; (3) They like to "have the most important seats in the synagogues" means they like to sit in the seats facing the congregation, reserved for honored persons, located in front of the chest containing the Old Testament Scriptures; (4) They like "the places of honor at banquets" means they want to sit at the host's right hand, where they would receive privileged treatment. Jesus' final denunciation is the most damning. "They devour widows' houses" and hide behind "lengthy prayers" to disguise their guilt. "Since first-century Law teachers got no pay for their services (Mishnah *Aboth* 1. 13; *Bekhoroth* 4. 6) they depended on the hospitality extended to them by many devout Jews. Unfortunately, there were abuses. The charge, **they devour widows' houses**, was [at the very least] a vivid figure of speech for exploiting the generosity of people of limited means, especially widows" (Grassmick, 165; see also J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, AB, 2:1318). Disciples are not to be like these profane hypocrites (see Mt 23:8-12).

Finally, Jesus moves from the court of the Gentiles to the court of the women where the temple treasury is located and where people deposit their offerings into any one of thirteen trumpet-shaped chests that served as "offering plates." This incident involving "a poor widow" contrasts the spiritual poverty and physical prosperity of the scribes, with the physical poverty and spiritual prosperity of the widow. It also contrasts the greed of the scribes with the generosity of the widow. Jesus watches many rich people give large sums "out of their wealth" in contrast to one poor widow who gives just "two very small copper coins" "out of her poverty." While her donation amounts to less than \$2.00 in today's currency, according to Jesus, it is the largest donation of all. "The resounding of the trumpet when the rich toss in their silver dwarfs the tinkling of the widow's two coins. But her sacrificial devotion eclipses their perfunctory donations. The rich give from their abundance, but they do not sacrifice their abundance. This poor widow gives all that she has to live on, which is next to nothing. Her unassuming piety sharply contrasts with the conspicuous impiety of the scribes in the preceding denunciation" (David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Mark*, 481). Disciples are to be like this pious widow.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 35 *temple courts* Surrounding the temple itself there were a number of courtyards where people gathered. There was one outer court of the Gentiles, and three inner courts: the court of women, the court of Israel, and the court of the priests next to the sanctuary. “The court of the women (temple’s ‘treasury’) was within the court of the Gentiles, the outermost court of the temple. A low barrier separated the court of the Gentiles from the other courtyards and the temple building that lay within this enclosure. The court of the women was farther from the temple building than the court of Israel, which only Jewish men could enter, or the court of the priests, which only the priests could enter. Jesus had given His preceding teaching in the court of the Gentiles. Now He evidently moved into the court of the women” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Mark,” 2021 ed., 262, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/mark.pdf).

vv. 35, 38 *teachers of the law* I.e., “experts in the law” (NET) or “scribes” (ESV). Verses 35-44 contain three pericopes. The reference to “teachers of the law” (vv. 35, 38) links the first to the second. The mention of “widows” and “a poor widow” (vv. 40, 42) links the second to the third. All three are linked by their setting in the temple.

v. 36 *my lord* “Since this is a psalm of David – that is, David is speaking – the terms of the present text should be understood, ‘The Lord [God] said to my [David’s] Lord [the Messiah].’ Nothing in the LXX translation of the Hebrew text disallows this interpretation (France 2002: 486-87), and in Mark this is how it should be translated. Jesus asks, ‘How can the Messiah be simply David’s son, since David himself [the autos is emphatic], calls him “my Lord”?’ This is not a denial that the Messiah is the Son of David (i.e. David’s descendant), but the affirmation that he is much more” (Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT, 86-87).

v. 39 *flowing robes . . .* Jesus lists a number of scribal vanities. “Many but not all Law teachers acted this way (cf. 12:28-34). **They liked to (a) go around in flowing robes**, long white linen garment with fringes worn by priests, Law teachers, and Levites; **(b) be greeted in the marketplaces** with formal titles – Rabbi (teacher), master, father (cf. Matt. 23:7; Luke 20:46) – by the common people who respected them highly; **(c) have the most important synagogue seats**, those reserved for dignitaries, situated in front of the chest containing the sacred scrolls of Scripture and facing the whole congregation; **and (d) have the places of honor at banquets**, special evening meals at which they were seated next to the host and received preferential

treatment” (John D. Grassmick, “Mark,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 165).

v. 40 *devour widows’ houses* Cf., “devour the estates of widows” (Craig A. Evans, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 34B, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 279); “devour widows’ property” (NET). “Teachers of the law did not receive an income from the state; they depended on voluntary contributions. This led some of them to prey on (‘devour’) the sympathy of others, even ‘widows,’ who needed all their income simply to survive. This reference sets the stage for the next incident (vv. 41-44)” (Constable, 261). “Even though it is uncertain exactly what this expression means, it is clear that the scribes were in some way taking financial advantage of vulnerable and needy widows. Despite the numerous commands of Scripture expressing God’s concern for widows (Deut. 14:29; Pss. 68:5; 146:9; Isa. 1:17; Jer. 7:6; 49:11) and the criticism of those who mistreat them (Isa. 1:23; Ezek. 22:7; Zech. 7:10; Mal. 3:5), the scribes preyed upon needy widows” (Stein, 575; for a list of possible ways scribes defrauded widows see, J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, AB, 2:1318).

v. 40 *punished* “It is best to understand the judgment referred to in 12:40c as involving the final, eschatological judgment referred to in 9:42-48 (Evans 2001: 279)” (Stein, 575) – rather than the judgment involving the events of AD 70. “Teachers such as these will be punished most severely (lit., ‘will receive greater condemnation’; James 3:1) at God’s final judgment” (Grassmick, 165).

v. 41 *temple treasury* “Here, the term [treasury] refers to one of the thirteen receptacles for money offering called ‘shofar chests’ in m. Sheqalim 6:5 due to their trumpet-shaped construction which tapered at the top; seven of these receptacles were used for fixed duties, five for specific appropriations and one for voluntary contributions; they seem to have stood in the Court of Women” (Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Mark*, TNTC, 302; see also, Stein, 579).

v. 42 *copper coins* Gk., *lepta*. “Two [*lepta*] equal the smallest Roman coin, the quadran . . . A quadran equals one-quarter of the value of the next Roman coin, the assarion, or ‘as,’ which in turn is worth one-sixteenth of a denarius. *Thus the widow’s contribution was the equivalent of one sixty-fourth of a denarius*; a denarius was the normal pay for a day’s work (Matt. 20:1-16)” (Stein, 579, italics added). At \$15.00 per hour, today’s worker makes \$120 in eight hours. One sixty-fourth of that is \$1.88 – “more than a ‘penny’ or a ‘few cents’, but still only ‘small change’, barely enough to purchase a meagre meal (Strauss, p. 559)” (Schnabel, 312).

4

APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Recognizing Jesus is both the Son of David and the Son of God, his disciples are to avoid personal pride and moral corruption and to be examples of extreme generosity and total devotion to God.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

My husband and I feel like on our fourth child we're really trying to get it right. We secretly have this mentality that he's our last hope to really nail this parenting thing. For years we've taken his Christmas or birthday money and tucked it away in an envelope in our safe. Our hope is that when he turns 18, we'll be able to hand him a sizable slush fund that will help buy his first car or pay a portion of college. Do you have financial goals for your kids? We want our kids to understand the value of a hard-earned income and wise spending, but more importantly, we want them to fully understand that our finances are a blessing from God to be used for His glory. It would be neat if he bought a car with this money, but it would overwhelm our hearts if he used it to support a missionary or local compassion agency, or even go on mission himself. Our goal is to help our kids become givers. We don't want them to tithe out of habit or just write a check when someone needs a little help. Rather, we want them to understand the relationship of giving to God prayerfully, holding money open-handedly and stretching themselves to give more than what makes sense in their head. This should challenge them to trust the One who blessed them so much. Giving from the heart is so much better than just bringing tithe money to drop in the bucket. As a family, talk about your giving this week. Involve your kids in the process. I can't wait to hear their ideas. We're praying for you!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Mark 12:41-44.

1. How much were the rich people giving?
2. How much did the poor widow give?
3. How did the woman give more when she actually gave less?

What Do You Think?

What does this lesson teach us about worship?

What Do You Do?

What do you have that you can give? Collect a bag of toys and clothes to donate to a local mission.

CORE COMPETENCY: Worship

I celebrate God for who He is and what He has done for me.

MEMORY VERSE: Colossians 3:17

"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- I completed my Bible Study
- I memorized this week's verse
- I brought my Bible to church
- I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Tom Bulick (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) for 12 years before accepting the position of Spiritual Formation Pastor at Central Bible Church in 1998. He and his wife Ruth have one son, Zach.

Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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**CENTRAL
BIBLE CHURCH**

8001 Anderson Boulevard
Fort Worth, Texas 76120
817-274-1315
wearecentral.org