

**Refuge City Church — August 16, 2020**  
**“The Gospel of Mark” (Mark 12:28-44)**

### **Introduction**

- Questions 1 & 2 posed to Jesus.
  1. Do we pay taxes to Caesar? **[Authority and honor to both State & God]**
  2. What about the resurrection from the dead? **[Power of God]**
- Now we see Question 3 presented to Jesus, and His brilliant reply that condemned the Pharisees and applies to us all.

### **Scripture Reading (Mark 12:28-44)**

#### **Verses 28-30**

**28** And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, “Which commandment is the most important of all?” **29** Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. **30** And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’”

- QUESTION 3 of 3
  - A single scribe approaches Jesus to ask him another question; **[Matthew 22:35]** “to test him”.
  - The religious leaders in Jesus’ day counted 613 commands/laws they were bound to keep.
    - The question before Jesus is ‘which of those is the most important’.
- Jesus’ Answer
  - **Deuteronomy 6:4-5**, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”
    - **Heart** = personality, character, emotional state, intention.
    - **Soul** = life-breath, self, animating principle, actuating cause of life.
      - **Genesis 2:7**, “then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.”
    - **Mind** = intellect, understanding
    - **Strength** = ability, power
  - EVERYTHING about us! Our **decisions** should be based on loving God. Our **desires** should stem from God’s love for us. Our **thoughts** should derive from God and His Word. Our **actions** should be motivated to display God’s love.
- **Numbers 15:38-41**, “Speak to the people of Israel, and tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a cord of

blue on the tassel of each corner. And it shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the Lord, to do them, not to follow after your own heart and your own eyes, which you are inclined to whore after. So you shall remember and do all my commandments, and be holy to your God. I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I am the Lord your God.”

- What do you have, or what are you doing to keep the Word of God imbedded before your eyes so that you don't wander off in to sin? What is serving as a reminder for you daily/moment by moment of God's faithfulness, mercy, and grace towards you?
  - **Psalms 119:11, “Your word I have hidden in my heart...”**
  - **Deuteronomy 6:6-9, “And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”**

### Verse 31

**31** The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

- Jesus clarified the greatest commandment. Yet, added the second that is vitally important and coincides with the first. **[Leviticus 19:18, “...but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.”]**
- In another encounter with one the Pharisees, Jesus was asked a very important follow up question.
  - **Luke 10:25-29**, “And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, ‘Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ He said to him, ‘What is written in the Law? How do you read it?’ And he answered, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.’ And he said to him, ‘You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.’ But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’
  - Jesus then proceeds to tell the story of the ‘Good Samaritan’

### Verses 32-34

**32** And the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. **33** And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” **34** And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions.

- The Scribe's response is one we should take to heart today.
  - **[Verse 33]** "is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."
  - **Micah 6:8**, "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"
  - **1 Samuel 15:22**, "...Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams."
  - **Hosea 6:6**, "For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings."
- Religious practice does not, and will never take the place of obedience to the Lord.
  - Yes, we are not to neglect gathering together in worship, fellowship, and study of God's Word.
  - But that is not the sum of all we are required to do! In fact, God said set down your religiosity, and go serve and love others!

### Verses 35-37

**35** And as Jesus taught in the temple, he said, "How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? **36** David himself, in 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. So how is he his son?" And the great throng heard him gladly.

- Now Jesus takes a turn at asking the questions!
  - **Matthew 22:41-42**, "Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, 'What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?' They said to him, 'The son of David.'"
- Whereas the Pharisees tried to entrap Jesus, Jesus now asks a question to further clarify who He is!
- The true essence of the Christ, the Messiah.
  - **Psalms 110:1**, "The Lord says to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.'"
  - Chronologically, the son of David in the flesh.
  - Spiritually/Divinely the Lord of David.
    - This verse **[Psalms 110:1]** would be repeated through the divine authorship of God through Peter in Acts 2 & 5, and the writer of Hebrews in chapters 1 & 10.
    - **[Paul would confirm in his letter to the Roman church] Romans 1:1-4**, "Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,"

- **Revelation 22:16**, "...I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

### Verses 38-40 [Matthew 23]

**38** And in his teaching he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces **39** and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, **40** who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

- He has clarified His authority, power, and Lordship. Therefore only He has the ability to condemn Israel's ruling class for their disobedience to God's law.
  - Lordship vs. Servant
  - They were all about appearances, applause, and accolades.
    - **Matthew 23:11**, "The greatest among you shall be your servant."
  - They are full of deceit and greed. Assuming spiritual piety only to line their own pockets.
    - **Matthew 23:27**, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness."
- The religious elite spent years trying to entrap, discredit, and destroy Jesus. Now in one declaration, Jesus reveals their true nature to all those around Him.

### Verses 41-44

**41** And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. **42** And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. **43** And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. **44** For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

- We see now in this final section a VERY clear depiction of sacrificial service, and a VERY clear distinction from the religious ruling class Jesus just condemned.
  - Verse 40: "who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers."
    - **Exodus 22:22**, "You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child."
    - **Deuteronomy 27:19**, "Cursed be anyone who perverts the justice due to the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow..."
- Here a widow approaches to give her offering.
  - She was poor (had nothing), and a widow (lost her husband).
  - She could very well have been one of the widows the Pharisees were taking advantage of.
  - Yet, she still came to give her offering to the Lord.
    - Next to nothing, but it's all she had... and she gave it all!

## Response/Conclusion

### - Character

- How we love and serve God is a testament to our character and obedience. We know there will be rewards in heaven, but that's not why we love and serve.
- How we love and serve others is a testimony to God's grace in us. There's no guarantee of 'approval', but that's not why we love and serve.
- We DO NOT live by quid-pro-quo. If there are thoughts of 'what will I get in return' for your love and service towards others, then you MUST check those thoughts before the Lord.
- **Romans 5:3-5**, "Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character [**Character is learned**], and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."
- **1 John 4:19**, "We love because he first loved us."
- **Mark 10:45**, "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
- Regardless of who we are, or what we have... We love God and love others... period.