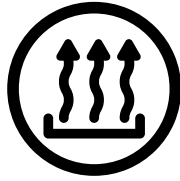




The Gospel of Mark



WARM-UP

What is your typical “clapback”, response, one-liner when someone insults you?

Read out loud as a group

Mark 11 recap: In Mark chapter 11 we see Jesus entering Jerusalem on a donkey, Jesus cursing the fig tree, Jesus clearing the merchants in the temple court, and Chief Priests and Elders trying to trap Jesus by asking him about who's authority He has.

Read out loud as a group

MARK 12:1-17 (NIV)

¹ Jesus then began to speak to them in parables: “A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. ² At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. ³ But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ⁴ Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. ⁵ He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

⁶ “He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’

⁷ “But the tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ ⁸ So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

⁹ “What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. ¹⁰ Haven’t you read this passage of Scripture:

“The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;

Read out loud as a group

MARK 12:1-17 (NIV) CONTINUED

¹¹ the Lord has done this,
and it is marvelous in our eyes’?”

¹² Then the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away.

Paying the Imperial Tax to Caesar

¹³ Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. ¹⁴ They came to him and said, “Teacher, we know that you are a man of integrity. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not? ¹⁵ Should we pay or shouldn’t we?”

But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. “Why are you trying to trap me?” he asked. “Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.” ¹⁶ They brought the coin, and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?”

“Caesar’s,” they replied.

¹⁷ Then Jesus said to them, “Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.” And they were amazed at him.



What stands out to you?

Possible Answers: Answers will vary.



Coins may have Caesar’s image but humans bear God’s image. What does Jesus’ answer in vs 15-17 reveal about our relationship to earthly authority?

Possible Answers: There is still some earthly authority that we should submit to, the idea of dual citizenship, we have earthly obligations that matter but they are not more important than our heavenly obligations. Money seems way less important than our very selves. Money is not who we are, God tells us who we are and we should give ourselves wholly to Him.



In what ways are we tempted to divide life into “God parts” and “non-God parts”?

Possible Answers: Will vary; We draw arbitrary lines around certain areas, it often has to do with what we are idolizing, “God can have this area I don’t care about but I get to keep this other area”, we think about what we are willing to give rather than what God is calling us to give, etc.

Read out loud as a group

ISAIAH 5:1-7 (NIV)

¹ I will sing for the one I love
a song about his vineyard:
My loved one had a vineyard
on a fertile hillside.
² He dug it up and cleared it of stones
and planted it with the choicest vines.
He built a watchtower in it
and cut out a winepress as well.
Then he looked for a crop of good grapes,
but it yielded only bad fruit.
³ "Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and people
of Judah,
judge between me and my vineyard.

⁴ What more could have been done for my
vineyard
than I have done for it?
When I looked for good grapes,
why did it yield only bad?"

⁵ Now I will tell you
what I am going to do to my vineyard:
I will take away its hedge,
and it will be destroyed;
I will break down its wall,
and it will be trampled.

⁶ I will make it a wasteland,
neither pruned nor cultivated,
and briars and thorns will grow there.
I will command the clouds
not to rain on it."
⁷ The vineyard of the Lord Almighty
is the nation of Israel,
and the people of Judah
are the vines he delighted in.
And he looked for justice, but saw
bloodshed;
for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.



Compare and contrast Mark 12:1-12 and Isaiah 5:1-7. What is Jesus emphasizing here?

Possible Answers:

Comparisons: both use vineyards to represent Israel; includes soil of some sort, protection of a wall or removing of stones, watertower, and winepress; both discuss God's relationship with Israel, His care towards his people, and the expectation of fruitfulness; both have a focus on the failure to produce fruit; both ends in a judgement of some type: protection removed or given to others;

Contrasts: Most notable is that the emphasis in Isaiah is on the lack of fruit from the Israelites themselves. Where as in Mark, the emphasis is on the failure of the tenants or the leaders of Israel; Mark introduces the idea of servants (prophets) and a son (Jesus); Mark ends with hope because of the cornerstone!;

Emphasizing: God's provision, God's patience, God extending every chance out to His people, you can have religion without fruit, Jesus is and has always been the answer to what we need and to our bad fruit, Jesus's death is what allows us to get the inheritance that we have no claim to!

Read out loud as a group

MARK 12:18-34 (NIV)

¹⁸ Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. ¹⁹ “Teacher,” they said, “Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. ²⁰ Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. ²¹ The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. ²² In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. ²³ At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?”

²⁴ Jesus replied, “Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? ²⁵ When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. ²⁶ Now about the dead rising—have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the account of the burning bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?’ ²⁷ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!”

²⁸ One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

²⁹ “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ ³¹ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

³² “Well said, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. ³³ To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

³⁴ When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.



In vs 26, the simple distinction of “I am the God of Abraham...” not “I was the God of Abraham...” is a simple and powerful pointing to the truth of resurrection. How does the resurrection shape how we live now?

Possible Answers: Will vary; it gives us hope that this life is not it, it's not everything, there is something better to come, it helps us share the gospel and hope with others, it helps us remember that pain/suffering/sin won't last forever, etc.



When Jesus summarizes the law as loving God and neighbor in vs. 28-35,, what does that reveal about obedience?

Possible Answers: that you can have obedience without love, but love will lead towards obedience, that loving God leads to loving others how God loves them, that love is the ultimate requirement not simply obedience.

Read out loud as a group

MARK 12:35-44 (NIV)

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.”



The teachers of the law loved status, recognition, and appearances. What might be the modern equivalents of “flowing robes and honored seats” in Christian culture today?

Possible Answers: Will vary, different ways of showing christianity without love of Christ, etc.



The heart of the widow was giving out of what she had for the love and trust in the Lord. This challenges the “give when I have more” mentality. What other mindsets make giving challenging today?

Possible Answers: Will vary.

DISCUSSION FOR ACCOUNTABILITY



- How might we be “rejecting the cornerstone” in subtle ways?
- What is your response to being corrected?
- In what ways are you acting like the owner of the vineyard instead of the renter of the vineyard?