**Uniquely Jesus**  April 2, 17

Mark 12:35-44

Mark 11-16 tells the story of the last week of Jesus’ life.

On Sunday, he was welcomed into Jerusalem by thousands upon thousands of people.

On Monday, Jesus drove the moneychangers and animal sellers out of the Temple.

On Tuesday, he was asked a series of carefully crafted questions, by which the religious leaders hoped to either discredit Jesus or even better, give them cause to have him arrested.

*“By what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you authority to do this?”*

*“Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Should we pay, or shouldn’t we?”*

*“At the resurrection, whose wife will she be?”*

*“Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”*

Coffee/question

While it may not seem so to us, each of these questions was like a landmine.

Matthew tells us that Jesus answered each question with such wisdom and tact that when he was finished, *“No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.”* Matthew 22:46

As we continue in the story - keep in mind it is still Tuesday.

There are three different scenes in the passage we’ll study today.

While it may not look like they are connected, they are - Jesus’ identity was the common thread.

**Scene 1 - v.35-37**.

To whom did Jesus ask this question?

Mark doesn’t specify.

But Matthew does.

Matthew 22:41: *“While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them...”*

Is the Messiah a son of David, as the religious teachers taught, based on 2 Samuel 7

and Psalm 89? Or was there something else about him that has been hidden?

In his question, Jesus challenged the Pharisees to explain the emphasis of Psalm 110:1: *The* ***LORD*** *says to my* ***Lord****: sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.*

In your Bible when you see the word ‘lord’ capitalized (LORD) - this is a translation of the Hebrew word Yahweh. And when you see the word lord, with only the first letter capitalized (Lord) - this is a translation of the Hebrew word Adonai.

Both... are names of God.

**Yahweh.**

Yahweh is the most frequently used name of God in the Old Testament.

Mark Driscoll writes: *In the Old Testament, the most sacred name for God is Yahweh.*

*It is never used to refer to any pagan gods; neither is it used in regard to any human.*

*It is reserved solely for the one true God alone. The name Yahweh appears some 6,823 times in the Old Testament, as he is the focus and hero of the Scriptures.*

Mark Driscoll; Gerry Breshears. Doctrine: *What Christians Should Believe* (Wheaton, IL, Crossway. 2010), 16.

The name Yahweh means “I AM,” not “I Was” or “I Will Be.”

Yahweh has always existed and does not change.

He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. https://bible.org/seriespage/8-names-god

**Adonai**

Adonai is from a Hebrew root word meaning to rule.

It is used 215 times in the singular form, ‘adon,’ when referring to human beings -

and is translated, "sir," "lord," or "master."

It is also used 300 times in its plural form, ‘adonai,’ when referring to God. The name, Adonai, signifies that God is the master and owner of everything - including our lives. http://www.xenos.org/essays/old-testament-understand-names-god

https://www.compellingtruth.org/names-of-God.html

Let’s come back to the question asked by Jesus - who is the Messiah?

If he is only David’s son, how is it that David, moved by the Spirit addressed the Messiah as… his Lord, whom Yahweh invited to sit at his right hand?

Tom Wright says: *[Here Jesus] is raising the corner of the curtain that hides the biggest secret of all. He is not simply David’s son, but is David’s ‘Adonai.’* Mark for Everyone, p.174

Who is the Messiah?

He is a son of David and he is Adonai.

He is God embodied.

This is who Jesus claimed he was.

**Two implications from v.35-37.**

1. In v.36, Jesus used eight words to state what it is that makes the Bible unique:

*“David himself speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared...”*

2 Timothy 3:16uses four words: *“All Scripture is God-breathed…”*.

The Bible is so much more than simply another book among millions that humans have written. Jesus said that through this book, God speaks to us.

You want to hear God’s voice?

Read this book aloud.

1. Why does it matter who Jesus is?

Because who he is had everything to do with what he did.

Most people would agree that Jesus was an outstanding teacher.

Some may even concede he was a remarkable healer.

But we mustn’t stop there.

Jesus said he is the Christ, who is fully human and fully God.

We speak of crimes against humanity.

But what about humanity’s collective guilt for the crime committed against Jesus the Messiah?

When Jesus, who is God, the Ruler of all came to this earth, we betrayed, condemned, mocked, spit upon, flogged and crucified him.

To make any sense of the crucifixion of Jesus, you have to understand who it was that hung on that cross, and who put him there.

**Scene 2 - v.38-40.**

These three verses are a condensed version of what Jesus said next.

It is Matthew who gives us the longer version.

This is not the first time, Jesus has warned his followers about the religious leaders. Remember, what he said after the feeding of the 4000?

*“Be careful. Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees...”* Mark 8:15.

A warning is given when? When there is danger.

As parents, we do that with our kids.

“Stranger danger!”

We warn them not to go off with someone they don’t know. Why?

Because even though a person may look nice, and seem safe, it doesn’t mean they are.

We do the same with friends, with family, with colleagues.

It’s not gossip to warn someone of danger.

In fact, not to warn someone of danger is a terrible thing to do.

Why did Jesus give this warning?

Because it was of the utmost importance that his disciples and the crowd, realize the religious leaders were dangerous.

Before we ask what gave Jesus the right to sound the alarm, let’s look at the extended version of his warning.

**Matthew 23:2-12**

The religious leaders were dangerous because:

\* v.2-3 – they don’t practice what they preach.

\* v.4 – they placed heavy burdens on people.

\* v.5 –they were all about appearances.

\* v.6-7 – they liked to be first and to be thought of as being important.

\* v.8-12 – they were full of themselves.

When it came to how to have a vibrant relationship with God, Jesus warned his listeners to not look to the religious leaders.

**Matthew 23:13-39.**

\* v.14 – you keep people from entering the kingdom of heaven.

\* v.15 – you turn people into children of hell.

\* v.16 – you are blind guides.

\* v.23 – you major on minors and neglect what it truly important.

\* v.25 – your inner person is filthy.

\* v.27 – your inner person is dead.

\* v.31 – you participate in the sins of your ancestors.

\* v.33 – you are like dangerous and deadly vipers.

\* v.37-39 – instead of bringing life to people, you bring desolation.

When we act poorly, or make bad decisions, or say hurtful things, or don’t do what we should have done – all of us have this innate ability to tell ourselves a story that justifies our actions. Why do we do that?

And when we repeatedly tell that story to ourselves, you know what happens, don’t you? We come to believe that the story is true. Why does that happen?

Because, as Jeremiah 17:9 says, the human heart is deceitful above all things.

This is what had happened to the religious leaders.

They were certain they knew God intimately.

They had convinced themselves that they were outstanding spiritual role models.

They thought they could lead people into life.

And Jesus told them the truth about themselves - they had been infected by a moral and spiritual cancer, that had deadened their hearts and blinded their minds.

Why did Jesus do this?

It had everything to do with who he is.

All will answer to him for what they have done with their lives.

**Three implications from v.38-40.**

1. Because Jesus is God the Son; and because he is our Creator, as John 1:3 says, *“Through him all things were made…”* we are accountable to him.

> In the workplace, we all are accountable to our boss.

Jesus is the ultimate boss of every human being.

> In the workplace, we’ve all had a job performance review.

At a future moment, all of us will undergone a life performance review.

Later that same day, as he sat on the Mount of Olives, (Matthew 24-25) Jesus spoke to his disciples of that certain future moment, when all the nations will gather before him, and each person will give an account for what they have done with their life.

At that moment, Jesus said, the destiny of each person will be determined – a destiny lived away from God or a destiny lived with God.

1. Jesus warns because of love.

Matthew 23:37a – *“…how often I have longed to gather your children together…”*

Do these sound like the words of a vindictive deity?

1. If a person is willing, the trajectory of their life can be changed, from one heading toward desolation, to one that embraces life to the full.

Jesus, though he could, does not force a person to receive him and to believe in him.

We see this with the religious leaders: many of them ignored Jesus’ warning.

Matthew 23:37b – *“…but you were not willing.”*

A person must come to Jesus of their own volition.

**Scene 3 – v.41-44.**

Does anything seem strange to you about this scene?

When we give our tithes and offerings, the offering bags are passed around the room.

In Sabaneta, Colombia, at El Redil Sur, people come to the front of the room to give their offerings, similar to what people did in the verses we just read.

Imagine, if we did that.

Imagine, if I sat and watched as each of you put in your offering.

How would you feel?

Hold on to that thought and ask - why was Jesus watching people give?

The answer had everything to do with… who he is.

He is Adonai, the Messiah, the Ruler and Master of everything.

The worship at the Temple – everything done there, was... for him.

Jesus was doing what you would expect the Lord of the Temple to do.

**Three implications from v.41-44.**

1. It is easy, when we sit in a chair in this room, to think of ourselves as the audience. The reality is, the only audience here is the Father, the Son and the Spirit.
2. Size or proportion?

When it comes to giving, it is natural to fixate on the size of the gift.

**This article was in the Vancouver Sun on Tuesday, March 28.**

**Vancouver billionaire Jim Pattison donates $75M towards new St. Paul's hospital**



“I am proud to donate to St. Paul’s Foundation for hospital that has been putting people first in our community for more than 120 years,” the 88-year-old Pattison said in a release. “The new Jim Pattison Medical Centre will build on St. Paul’s Hospital’s history of serving British Columbians with excellence and compassion, and enable close collaboration among clinicians and researchers to collectively drive new standards in health care and treatment for all British Columbians.”

Pattison is chairman and CEO of the Jim Pattison Group, Canada’s second-largest private company with $9.6 billion in annual sales. It holds assets in broadcast media, automotive, advertising, agricultural equipment, food and beverage, entertainment, exporting, financial, and real estate. His personal net worth, according to [Forbes Magazine](http://business.financialpost.com/news/economy/forbes-rich-list-2016-reveals-the-richest-canadians-on-the-planet), is pegged at $4.5 billion.

On that long-ago Tuesday, many rich people “threw in large amounts” to the Temple Treasury. And among those who gave that day, was a poor widow, who put in, two small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

With Jesus, the size of the gift mattered, but not in the way we think.

Jesus looked at the size of the gift in proportion to what the person had.

And in proportion, the poor widow gave the most.

1. Jesus considers our giving to be a sacrificial act; something that is a personal response of how worthy we perceive him to be.

Have you heard this saying, or maybe even said it yourself: I can’t give, because I don’t have enough?

In light of Mark 12:41-44, what do you think Jesus would say to that?

Those who gave large amounts on that long-ago day gave out of their wealth.

The widow gave out of her poverty.

Those who gave large amounts still had lots leftover.

The widow gave all she had.

Why did she do this? Because she thought of God first; because she esteemed God to be worthy of her best; her all.

This is how Jesus calls you and I to give.

**Three scenes that reveal the identity of Jesus.**

1. He is God and man.
2. He will judge all of our lives.
3. We were created to worship him with every aspect of our lives.

**Eight implications.**

1. In the Bible God tells us what he is doing in this world.
2. The death of Jesus will not make sense, unless we know who he is and who put him there.
3. Each of us is accountable to Jesus.
4. The stronger the warning; the stronger the love.
5. The trajectory of our lives can be changed.
6. Everything we do is seen by Jesus.
7. In giving, what matters to Jesus is not the size, but the proportion.
8. Our giving is a measure of our estimation of Jesus’ worth.

**The Blessing**

1 Corinthians 16:23

**Life Group Discussion Questions, Mark 12:35-44.**

SUMMARY OF THE PASSAGE AND IT’S IMPLICATIONS

Three scenes that reveal the identity of Jesus.

1. He is God and man.
2. He will judge all of our lives.
3. We were created to worship him with every aspect of our lives.

Three times, Jesus revealed his identity in the Mark 12:35-44 passage.

Which of the three scenes most resonated with you and why?

What do you holds Christians back from giving in the same way this widow gave?

What do you think is the difference between guilt-induced giving and ‘cheerful’ giving?

Eight implications.

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4. The stronger the warning; the stronger the love.
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Which of these implications most connected with you?

Read and study in greater detail Matthew 23.

As you, as a group would apply this teaching to your lives today, take what Jesus said in Matthew 23, and attempt to restate it in a positive way, describing how a spiritually healthy follower of Jesus acts and speaks, and as they do so, how in turn, they impact the lives of others.

**The Attitude That Matters**

*I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on. (Mark 12:43b‐44)*

The religious performance among these scribes and Pharisees had reached such an absurd state of affairs that some of the Pharisees, before they made their contribution to the great collection box Jesus was watching here, actually summoned a trumpeter to go before them to get everybody's attention. Then the Pharisee would come up and proudly deposit a bag of gold in the treasury chest. He wanted everybody to see his ample gift.

I heard about a dear man standing up in a meeting where an offering was taken who said, “I want to give $100—anonymously”. But in this passage Jesus said the one who really moved His heart and contributed tremendously to the kingdom of God was a little unnamed, unknown widow who had no influence, who had no outward posture of being worth anything. She came and put in two tiny coins that added up to no more than a few pennies; but because she loved the Lord her God with all her heart, all her soul, all her strength, and all her mind, she gave it. And Jesus said, “She has done more for the kingdom of heaven than all the outward performances of all these others combined.”

**What is that saying to us?**

We are so intent upon the fact that God wants some kind of activity on our part. We think that the way to serve God is to do spectacular or showy things.

**Why do you think that is?**

God wants performance, but only if the attitude of our heart is right. If your attitude is one of love, love received from the God who loves you, then you are advancing the kingdom of God far, far more than if you did great things without love. Remember 1 Corinthians 13.

*~ Ray Stedman*

Prayer Time

\* Pray for a deeper appreciation of who Jesus really is

\* Pray to develop a Christ-like attitude – humility, sacrifice, abandonment to God’s will, grace under pressure

\* Pray that each of us would break free from the cultural chains a wealthy context places on us.

\* Pray that God would renew our minds with regard to cheerful giving.

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