

JESUS, THE TEACHER

Mark 12:35-44

Intro: I have taken my subject for today's message from two verses in the text. The first is the verb in verse 35 which tells us what the Lord Jesus was doing. "He taught in the temple." The second is in verse 38 where we read, "And He said unto them in his doctrine." A teacher is one who teaches, and what he teaches is his doctrine. Doctrine, after all, is teaching, or that which is taught.

I think that it is very significant that John Mark tells us in these verses that our Lord was a teacher, and that here he was teaching.

But you might respond to me by asking, "Haven't we had a lot of the Lord's teaching since we began the study of the Gospel according to Mark? And I would have to respond by saying, "Yes, we have." But I think that after the episodes that we have studied as the Lord responded to the chief priest, scribes, and elders first, and then to the Pharisees and the Herodians, and next with the Sadducees, and finally with that one scribe, we need to see that there is a difference here. Before the Lord was answering their questions. They set the direction the Lord's remarks would take. *But here the Lord was talking about the things that He wanted to talk about. He was teaching what He knew that the people and the disciples needed to know. Perhaps many of the Jewish leaders were listening to the Lord, but He was teaching what He wanted to teach.* And we can see that He spoke about three specific subjects.

I don't always read what J. C. Ryle has to say concerning a passage I might be teaching, but I did this time. I was delighted to see that his emphasis was the same that I had seen, that up to this point the Lord had been answering the questions of His enemies, but at this point He began to speak about three specific issues which He knew that His disciples, and those standing around them need to hear.

First, He spoke about a Psalm of David, and what it had to do with the Messiah. Second, He issued a strong warning against the scribes. And finally He declared how He evaluated the gifts of money that the Jews were bringing to the temple.

This first incident is recorded also by Matthew in chapter 22, verses 41 to 46 – the last six verses of Matthew 22. Matthew said that these remarks

were directed specifically to the Pharisees. The comments of the Lord about the Messiah in Psalm 110 are also found in Luke 20:41-44. Matthew gives us an extended condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23. Luke give a very brief report of the Lord's condemnation of the scribes in Lue 21:1-4. Luke says that the Lord was speaking directly to the disciples, and so it was for the disciples. The account about the giving of the people is not recorded in Matthew, but it is in Luke 21:1-4.

Now let us look, first of all, at:

I. DAVID WROTE ABOUT THE MESSIAH IN PSALM 110 (Mark (12:35-37)).

The Lord loved to quote Scripture. He loved to teach the Scriptures, and this was where the scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees were weak. And the Lord especially enjoyed teaching what the Scriptures had to say about Himself.

Now the Jews considered Psalm 110 to be a Messianic Psalm. That is, they believed that Psalm 110 spoke about the coming Messiah. But they did not believe that Psalm had anything to do with Jesus. They did not consider Him to be their Messiah. It was because He claimed that God was His Father, that they wanted to kill Him. They believed that He was guilty of blasphemy. And He would have been if His claim had not been true. But they never thought of searching the Scriptures to learn about the character of the Messiah. They believed that the Messiah would be a descendant of David, giving him the right to the throne of Israel. They looked for him to come to set them free from Rome. But they had no understanding at all of the Gospel.

The Lord's question to them was this: "How say the scribes that Messiah is the Son of David?" I think that the Lord probably had two ideas in this question. He was asking them how they knew even that much about the Messiah. Of course, the answer to that question would have been that they learned it from the Scriptures. But the other part of the question was, Why did they believe that He was no more than the son of David, that is, no more than just a man? And He exposed their ignorance by quoting to them the first verse of Psalm 110. It was David himself who spoke of the Messiah as the Lord! And David was not just speaking on his own when he wrote that, but he was speaking, the Lord said, "by the Holy Spirit." "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," is what Paul wrote to

Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:16, and that applied to all of the Word of God. It is just as true of the Old Testament as it is of the New Testament. And if David was speaking by the Holy Spirit, then he was speaking the absolute truth of God. It was right there in their Scriptures, but the scribes and Pharisees, and most of the other Jewish leaders had missed it. No person is going to understand the Scriptures unless the Holy Spirit opens the eyes of their hearts so they can understand. His miracles were a proof that He was more than an ordinary Man. His teachings were such that people saw a great difference between His teaching and the teaching of the scribes. But they were so blinded that they did not ask themselves how He could do such works, and how could He teach what He taught. They had evidence of the Deity of Christ in an overwhelming measure, but they were too blinded to see it.

And then the Lord asked them another question which amounted to this: How could David call the Messiah, Lord, when He was his son? The Lord asked questions to provoke the Jewish leaders, as well as the common people, *to think*. This should have sent them back to their Scriptures, but there is no record that it did except in a few cases about which we are told in the NT. Nicodemus was not ready to say that He believed that the Lord was the Son of God when he came to the Lord that night, but what brought him was the conviction that God had to be with the Lord in some unique way or He would not have been able to do what He did. And Nicodemus probably had in mind the teaching of the Lord also since the Lord had not been trained by the rabbis to be a rabbi. But people called Him rabbi anyway.

What the scribes and Pharisees did not understand was the unique way in which the Lord was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary. It was all in the Scriptures which the scribes wrote out countless numbers of times, but they were blind spiritually so that they could not see.

If any of you have questions about who the Lord Jesus Christ was, then go to the Bible, read it from cover to cover, asking the Lord to help you to understand the Word of God until you know who Jesus of Nazareth was. Pray for understanding. It is imperative that you and I understand Who Jesus is if we are to be saved from our sins.

But let us go on to the second message that the Lord gave.

II. THE WARNING THAT THE LORD GAVE (Mark 12:38-40).

You would normally think that men who gave their lives to copying out the words of Scripture, and who taught it year after year, would be able to teach you Who Jesus Christ is. Christ is the central theme of all Scripture. He is the Key to the Bible. You can't understand the Scriptures if you don't understand and know Christ. Don't begin by reading books about the Bible; *read the Bible!* *If you concentrate on the Bible first, then you will be in a position to know if what people tell you is true, or if it isn't true.* I once heard a well known Bible teachers say that he had never had people who wanted to know who Jesus was, read the Gospel of John , but what they had not only come to know who Jesus was, both God and man, but that they had also trusted in Him for the salvation of their souls. In John 20:30 and 31 the Apostle John tells us why He wrote the Gospel book which bears his name. This is what he wrote:

30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name (John 20:30-31).

The scribes were the preachers of the day. They were the theologians. They should have been telling the people about Jesus. But they didn't know Jesus, and so they really couldn't help anybody else to know Him. All they wanted to do was to make you think how great they were.

Look at what the Lord had to say about them in verses 38 through 40. Their very appearance and behavior would, or should, have made any person suspicious of them. They would tell you what to do, but they wouldn't be doing what they told you to do. And if you did all that they said, you wouldn't know Jesus; you wouldn't die some day and find yourself in heaven. You would die and find yourself in hell, and that scribe would be there with you. They didn't want the Jewish people to know Jesus and His power to save sinners from their sins. They wanted you to know them, and how great they were. And if you didn't fall in line, they would put you out of the synagogue. These men according to the Lord Jesus Christ were hypocrites. What is a hypocrite? He is a person who tries to make you think that he is a lot better than he really is. But it was all on the outside. Read Matthew 23 and you will get more of what the Lord said than you have here. We have the same problem today.

It ought to disturb all of us who know the Lord when we see the way churches are going. There are liberal churches who don't believe in the Word of God. They don't believe in the Deity of Christ. They don't believe in the total depravity of the human heart. Instead, they are inclined to deify man.

But then there are churches that concentrate on doing anything to increase their attendance. They measure their success by the number of people who attend their services. Music has replaced that the Word used to have. And it is not music that is designed to glorify God, but to appeal to people.

In many churches where the Word of God is preached, there is a great deal of worldliness. And there is much coldness of heart. We know the truth, but we are not living the truth. Do you suppose the Lord's word to the church today would be, "Beware"? We need to learn Christ. We need to live Christ. We need a revival of our love for Christ. We need to please Him seven days a week. Twenty-four seven is what the Lord deserves. May the Lord help us, revive us, bless us that we might be a blessing to the people who know us, and to the people who attend our services with us. Prayer needs to have a greater place in all of our lives, and it will when we truly recognize how much we need the Lord.

But we have one more point, don't we? Look with me at verses 41 through 44. The subject is"

III. GIVING TO THE LORD (Mark 12:41-44).

It has always been expected that the people of God would give to the Lord. As with the children of Israel when they were preparing to build the Tabernacle, the people gave from the heart, and they gave so much that they were restrained from giving. Although David was not to build the temple, yet he spent a major part of his life gathering the materials that would be needed to build the Temple. In the early church there was a great deal of poverty, especially among those who lived in Jerusalem. Paul taught that "the Lord loveth a cheerful giver." This means that His blessing was upon people who gave to the work of the Lord so that the needs of the people might be met. Paul's letter to the church at Philippi was in part prompted by the gift had prepared and had delivered to him during His imprisonment at Rome. He devoted two chapters in his second epistle to the church at Corinth to teaching upon the subject of

giving – 2 Corinthians 8 and 9.

The last part of our text is about giving. The Lord had driven the money changers out of the Temple because the leaders were taking advantage of the people, and the Temple was prospering because of it. But this did not please the Lord. The Lord set Himself where He could watch people give, and what they gave. We can be sure that the Lord is well aware of how much we give.

In the first church I was the pastor of after I finished Seminary, the man who was the pastor before me took these verses not only as his responsibility, but also as his obligation, to find out how much the people in the church were giving. He prompted the ushers to notice if there were people who were not giving. He even tried to find out how much the men in the church were making, so he could figure out if they were giving as much as a tithe. Needless to say, this was one of many things that he did which ultimately led to his leaving the church. This not what the Lord was teaching. The Lord knows everything about us. Concerning giving, He knows what we give. He knows why we give. He knows our attitude about giving. But He knows everything about us. But giving is a matter that church leaders need to leave between the Lord's people and the Lord. We are to teach about giving, but here at Trinity we don't believe in asking people to make pledges to the church. As you know, when we began twenty-five and a half years ago, we decided not to take offerings. We don't even own offering plates. And yet we can say that the Lord has led all of us to give, and enabled us to give, so that all of our needs have been met on time since our work began. This is not to our glory, but it is to God's glory.

Well, it is always true that some can give more; some can only give a little. And probably there are some who don't give anything. We keep good records of what people give, but I have never seen those books, and I don't want to see them. Giving to the work of the Lord is the privilege that God has granted to all of us.

The Lord in watching the people saw that some gave much, and others only gave a little. He noticed one lady. She was very poor, and she was a widow. I don't think that we can calculate how much it was that she gave, but it was practically nothing. But she obviously wanted to have a part in the work of the Lord even though it could not be much. The Lord said that she cast in all of her living, which probably means that she didn't

have anything left when she gave what she gave.

I have told many of you about a lady in the church in Vancouver, B. C. where I was a pastor just before we came to Portland in 1951. She came, but her husband did not come to church. And he really didn't want her to come to church. One thing he refused to do, was to give her money to give to the Lord. She did not live near the church, and so she had to take a bus to come to church. He gave her just enough to pay her fare to church, and then fare to get back home. At the time I wasn't aware of what was going on in her life; I only learned about it later from some of our people. It made her very unhappy not to be able to give to the Lord because she really loved the Lord. But do you know what she did? She rode the bus to church, put the fare for her return trip in the offering plate, and then walked home. When I found out about it, I felt like the Lord said about the woman in our text, that this lady, in putting her quarter in the offering plate (or whatever it was), was giving more than any of the rest of us gave. She gave because she loved the Lord, and that is the reason that we all should give.

Concl: And the Lord taught that when we read our Bibles, we ought always to be looking for the Lord. We need to be learning of Him, and loving Him, and living for Him. We need to be very careful about the leaders that we follow. And leaders need to be careful about how they lead. Follow people who love the Lord, and who will help us in our walk with the Lord. Pray for your leaders that nothing will ever make them turn aside from what we ought to be doing to what we ought not be doing. And whatever we can give, let us give it because we love the Lord, and because in this way, we want to have even a small part in the work of the Lord in the lives of others.

These truths that the Lord taught, are truths that should be written upon our hearts. They are most important for the blessing of the Lord, and for our growth in grace as we seek to walk each day in fellowship with the Lord.