

Introduction: Pg. ____

RK DISMISSAL, WELCOME GUESTS / RHC APP! (CONNECT & GIVING)

Introduction: Today we are returning to the Gospel of Mark to continue our "Follow" series in Mark 12:13, as continue to discover and rediscover what it means to follow Jesus and walk with him every day.

As you make your way there, I have some really sobering news to share with you: your pastor is not perfect. I know that is a shock for most of you. I know some of you cannot believe that, in fact some of you refuse to believe it (and I'd like to thank you for that), but I do have some evidence against myself.

This past week our pastors traveled to NC to be a part of the Pillar Unite Conference on the campus of Southeastern Seminary. Southeastern is the school where Pastor Chasteen trained to be the amazing pastors that we are. :) It is the place where I met my wife, and it is the place where I worked 6 years as an Intern to Dr. Danny Akin, the President of the Seminary.

Every time I'm back on campus, a thousand memories flood my mind. For some reason, I thought about one of my greatest failures while working for Dr. Akin.

One of my primary responsibilities was airport runs... As you might imagine, the #1 rule was not "Be on Time," BUT "BE EARLY!" Well, I basically had the whole experience down to a science, executing it with flawless perfection every time. For drop offs, you show up to Dr. Akin's home 10 minutes before departure, get his car keys, load up his suitcase. Grab 2 Diet Cokes, one for him and one for me. And as soon as he came outside, BAM, we're off for the 27 minute drive to RDU.

Pick up was even easier. Grab the car 45 minutes early, so I could arrive at the airport 10-15 minutes early. I would then wait for his one word text as the wheels touched down: "Landed." By the time I circled the arrival loop with impeccable precision, he would only have to wait outside about 15-30 seconds before I pulled up curbside, and BAM, back to his house in another 27 minutes.

Everything worked to perfection every time except the time that it didn't.

One evening, I was laying in my bed, reading a book for class the next day, when I see my cell phone light up. It's Dr. Akin. I immediately thought to myself, "Why is he messaging me so late tonight?" And when I clicked on the message, my heart skipped a beat when I saw that infamous word: "Landed."

Needless to say, I sprinted to his house, broke the speed limit while driving to the airport and simultaneously prayed baggage claim would be slow AND that I would not get a ticket on the way (not because I was worried about my driving record or paying a ticket, but because that would make me even more late!)

By the time, I got there, the ever kind and gracious man I worked for, was not very receptive to my apology. The atmosphere in the car was on the icy side, and the only five words he spoke verbally when we got back to the house were: "Don't let that happen again."

I needed that correction. I needed that rebuke. I think I was there 2 hours early for his next flight.

When we come to Mark chapter 12, we find the religious leaders trying to trap Jesus in his words, in hopes that they might incriminate and crucify him.

BUT as the story unfolds, it is the leaders who ultimately receive one of the sharpest rebukes ever given in human history.

Mark 12:13-27 (text displayed)

This morning, I want to share with you...

“Three Things You Better Know” Mark 12:13-27

Jesus tells us the first thing we need to know in verses 13-17.

1. Know your life belongs to God. (12:13-17)

Encounter with religious leaders

- Verse 13 tells us the religious leaders, the Pharisees, were scheming with the Jewish political leaders, the Herodians, in order to “trap him in his talk.” Like lions prowling for an opportunity to pounce on him, they constantly continued to try to lay a snare, so they could incriminate him and hand Jesus over to the authorities that he may be killed!
- We see their insincerity in verse 14, as they try to seduce Jesus with words of flattery: “We know that you...”
- Then, they seek to put Jesus in a dilemma, by asking him a no-win question: “Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not.” This is a Yes or No question.
 - If Jesus says “Yes, give tribute to Caesar,” he will lose the favor of his people, pious Jews, who hated Roman taxation. The denarius was a reminder of the supremacy of Caesar. It even had the words: “Tiberius Caesar, son of the divine Augustus.” Everything in the empire was meant to bring Caesar homage. Surely Jesus would not endorse such tribute, BUT
 - If he said, “No,” they would charge him with insurrection in order to hand him over to the authorities...
- Verse 15 says, “But knowing their hypocrisy.” In Luke’s account (20:23), it says “he perceived their craftiness.” “He saw through their duplicity.” (NIV)
- In that moment, Jesus did not answer with a yes or a no. Rather, he says, “Bring me the coin.” Can you see him?!
- He looks it over, one side and then the other... The suspense is building...
- Jesus’ response is astounding. In verse 16, he smiles at their false dilemma and says, “Show me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?” They reply: “Caesar’s” And Jesus, with sage wisdom says, “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.” This is jaw-dropping, heart-penetrating wisdom! With one simple sentence Jesus evades their trap and provides two profound commands.

Fulfill your earthly obligations.

- He establishes how Christians should interact with human governments (Rom 13); Render to Caesar what is Caesar’s. The word render means to “give what is due.” Today he might say, “Render to Uncle Sam the things that are Sam’s.”
- I know most everyone would love to stop paying taxes, but not only would we go to jail for breaking the law by tax evasion, we would also break the commands of Jesus!
- But Jesus is not simply concerned with our earthly obligations, he says we must...

Fulfill your heavenly obligations

- “Give to God the things that are God’s.” Rico Tice says this phrase carries “devastating force.” Jesus was so wise because he knew how to cut straight to our hearts. What is more fundamental and more urgent than our earthly obligations? Our eternal obligations.

- I love how Jesus raises the stakes: You are talking about coins. I am talking about your life. And every Jew knew exactly what Jesus meant when he said, "Give to God..." **Genesis 1:27: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."**
- And think about it, he is saying every human being, including the emperor is made in the image of God. That means he is under his authority, and he is not supreme!

You bear the image of God.

- That not only means that every person has equal dignity and worth in the sight of God, but that we should LOVE and RESPECT every one equally. Respect involves recognizing, honoring and protecting the God-given value of others! There is so much more we could say about respect and equality and justice in light of every person being made in the image of God, but that is not Jesus' point here.
- Jesus is saying, don't miss this: Your life bears the image and inscription of God! You belong to him.
 - We were made to reflect his glory and spread the fame of God in all things.
 - Sadly & tragically, we all have failed to reflect his image in countless ways, chasing after things that look glorious at the time but leave us unsatisfied.
 - But. . . Jesus died and was raised in order to remake, restore, and renew the image of God in us!
 - **"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)**

When we recognize we are made in his image and made to reflect his image, we seek to think like Jesus, love like Jesus and look like Jesus in everything we do. It begins by KNOWING our LIVES BELONG TO GOD.

T: But then Jesus encounters some other leaders who want to pick a different fight.

Read Mark 12:18-24

T: Not only must we know our lives belong to God, we also must...

2. Know the Scriptures. (12:18-27)

The Sadducees & Jesus...

- On the same day (as Matthew 22 tells us) the Sadducees, find Jesus and pose their own well conceived theological conundrum.
- The Sadducees did not believe in a spiritual or physical resurrection, so they made it their business to try and persuade people to their position.
 - They did this by fabricating a highly unlikely scenario by which a woman who is married becomes a widow and is remarried seven times. The question is in verse 23: "In the resurrection, when they rise again, whose wife will she be?"
 - It is likely the Sadducees used this story over and over again to try and refute belief in the resurrection.
- Now, we need to pause and understand that this question assumes the instruction in the Law of Moses that came to be known as Levirate Marriage. In Deuteronomy 25, it says if your brother was married and died, you were legally required to marry his wife. The primary reason was to make sure the family name was perpetuated, which was VERY important in Hebrew culture.
- They pose a scenario where this does not happen once but seven times! The Sadducees believe they have undermined the foundation of a resurrected state by posing an irreconcilable situation.

Jesus' Response

- Jesus responds in verse 24 with one of the most scathing rebukes we ever hear in the pages of Scripture: "Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you KNOW NEITHER the Scriptures or the power of God?"
 - These charges could not have hit harder. "The Sadducees prided themselves on drawing their beliefs from Scripture (the Pentateuch), so Jesus is challenging their basic claims about themselves. Jesus's teaching demonstrated a whole new level of authority (1:21-22)..." (Osbourne)
 - In fact, the Sadducees only believed the first five books of the Bible were authoritative. So if Jesus would have pointed to evidence for the resurrection in (explicit references in Isa 26:19; Dan 12:2) or (implicit references in Ps 16:9-11; 49:15; 73:23-26; Job 19:25-26) they would have said, we can't trust those words.
- BUT... Jesus meets them on their own turf. He says in verse 26, "As for the dead not being raised, have you NOT READ in the book of Moses..."
- LOOK at what Jesus does here...
 - In verse 19 they claimed, "Moses wrote," so Jesus trumps this by asserting, "God said." (Osbourne)
 - Then he uses an argument based on grammar... God says, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob..."
 - I AM... right now their God. If Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are simply in the dust, if they have moved from existence to nonexistence, then God cannot be their God right now!
 - He also names Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob because wants to point to God's covenant promises which are eternal in nature (Genesis 12 & 2 Samuel 7).

Here's a word to the wise: when you want to challenge someone on a topic, don't come at the guy who WROTE the BOOK! !! Lol!!!

[[Highlight the apologetic wisdom... Always meet people where they are. Always affirm whatever you can affirm. Find common ground, but then show them how the Christian worldview completes the picture or actually solves their problem.]]

God made us to live forever. Do you realize that? Are you ready for eternity?

We know this because God has revealed himself through the Scriptures, which leads me to a very simple, but life-changing encouragement.

2. Know the Scriptures.

How can we know the Scriptures?

"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." (Joshua 1:8)

Why must we know the Scriptures?

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Encouragements

Study this book. Let your life be changed by it. Find time each day to spend focused, face-to-face time with God!

T: Jesus says, "You better know the Scriptures, but you also better..."

3. Know the Power of God. (12:18-27)

Look back at verse 24-25 again...

- Jesus says, it's not just a failure to know what the Bible actually says, it's a failure to believe God is who he says he is. It's a failure to believe God is omnipotent, ALL-POWERFUL!!
- Verse 25 explains it... "For when they rise from the dead..."
 - In other words, marriage does not continue in heaven and the new creation.
 - Now, I know that is really sad news for some of you. Even Marsha and I say we're going to be boyfriend and girlfriend in the age to come. We've even considered changing our theology (just joking!).
 - We wouldn't go so far as to say what some married couples have said: "If there is no marriage in heaven, then we don't want to go!"
- That's really sweet but really, really, really stupid LOL

Why?

- Because God's power is so profoundly powerful, the next age, eternal life, will be incomprehensibly different and better.
- The Sadducees problem was they assumed a fundamental continuity from this life to the next, from this temporal age to the eternal age.
- They did not envision the kind of sweeping transformation God will bring!!
 - Our closest human relationships now will not compare to the intimacy we will experience with God and our fellow human beings.
 - Our greatest pleasures in this life, for example, SEX, will not begin to compare to the level of pleasure we will experience with every breath when we dwell in God's presence forever!!

It's not just that God raises the dead, it's that his power in doing so will bring us back to the place he made us for in the beginning, perfect *shalom*, perfect flourishing (Eden to New Jerusalem!)

"Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all." (1 Chronicles 29:11)

And there is a profound irony here... in just five days, Jesus will rise from the dead as the first to be raised with a resurrected body, never to die again!!

The Point: Humble yourself before God, and live what you know.

Conclusion:

Spirit...

Know God's purpose. Know God's Word. Know God's power, AND LIVE WHAT YOU KNOW.