

Corrupt Scribes and a Widow's Offering

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Preacher: Nathan Rambeck

- [0 : 00] We are going to open up our Bibles to Mark chapter 12. Oh boy, knocking things over. All right, Mark chapter 12, and let me get set up here.
- Today, we're actually going to go through, it's not a nice, neat little passage or account today. We're actually going to look at three kind of separate short accounts, but all related to Jesus in his last Passion Week there in Jerusalem.
- And he's actually spending time in the outer courtyard, called the Court of the Gentiles, teaching and sharing some different things. It's interesting, so over the last few weeks or maybe a month or so, we've been looking at different times where Jesus was asked questions.
- There are different people, leaders of the Jews, part of the Sanhedrin, scribes, Pharisees, chief priests, Sadducees, and they've been asking Jesus questions, trying to trap him, trying to make him look bad.
- Where we finished with last week is it said that they dared not ask him any more questions. So that ended this questioning of Jesus.
- [1 : 29] Interestingly enough, what we look at now, at least the first part of the passage that we're going to read today, is Jesus has some questions of his own. And then he will be teaching.
- He's going to be teaching here in the temple, the courtyard of the temple. So there's three things we're going to look at.
- One is Jesus is going to correct some of the theology of the scribes related to who is the Messiah. He's going to correct, adjust.
- It's not a huge correction. It might seem minor, but it's actually a pretty big deal, as we'll look at this in a second. But he adjusts their theology.
- He finds their theology just somewhat inadequate regarding who the Messiah is. The second thing we'll look at is he criticizes the scribes for their attitude, their misplaced affection.
- [2 : 33] And then the third thing we'll look at is there's a little lesson to be learned from a small, seemingly insignificant offering contributed to the temple by a widow.
- So let's go ahead and read. Let's just tell you what, let's just read each section individually and then look at it and then continue on to the next one.
- So we're going to start in Mark 12, verse 35. Then Jesus answered and he said, while he taught in the temple, how is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David?
- For David himself said by the Holy Spirit, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand till I make your enemies your footstool. Therefore, David himself calls him Lord.
- How is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly. So Jesus was speaking about the teachings of the Pharisees.

[3 : 44] If you actually look at this account in Matthew, he actually asks the question, who is the Messiah or the Christ? Here, the word Messiah isn't used. It's the word Christ, which is just the Greek word for Messiah.

So Messiah is actually a transliteration of a Hebrew word. And Christ is a transliteration of a Greek word that both mean the same thing.

Messiah means anointed one. So he's talking about the Messiah, the one that the scriptures, the Old Testament scriptures said was coming.

The scribes, as we've talked about before, were the theologians. They were the ones who studied the Bible, full-time many of them, in order to be able to teach the people about what the scripture said and what an important role.

That's one of the most important roles, even today, is teaching the Bible. What does the Bible say and what should we learn from the scriptures? But evidently, they missed an important part of this understanding of what was going to happen in the future and specifically about the identity and specifics about the identity of the Messiah who would come.

[5 : 01] So, he says, how is it that the scribes say that Jesus Christ, or that the Christ, I said Jesus Christ, he really wasn't necessarily talking about himself.

He wasn't, at this point anyway, claiming to be the Messiah. He was just talking about the Messiah who was said to come. He was asking about him. And you might get from this passage that what Jesus was saying that the Christ was not the son of David.

And that would seem to be very confusing because it seems over and over and over again, the Bible indicates that the Messiah would be, both from the Old Testament perspective, would come from the lineage of David.

And then in the New Testament, we see the same thing, that the Messiah, Jesus himself, was of the lineage of David. But I think the point being made here is that the Messiah would not just be a man from the lineage of David, that he would be more than that.

Remember when we looked at the account of blind Bartimaeus? This is actually as Jesus was on his way. This was his last stop before getting to Jerusalem. I think I have it written down here. Mark chapter 10.

[6 : 17] Blind Bartimaeus. Remember he cried out to Jesus because he was looking for a healing. You remember what he called Jesus. He called him son of David. Have mercy on me.

And it was an indication that he actually knew that this man Jesus was who he claimed to be, that he was the Messiah. The Messiah would be the son of David.

If you actually look at Mark's gospel, the very first verse, which, did I say Mark? Matthew. Look at Matthew's gospel. Matthew starts with a genealogy of Jesus.

But here's what verse 1 says. The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David. And then he continues to say also the son of Abraham and so on and so forth.

But it's important that Jesus is the son of David. He gets his lineage. He comes through the line of David. So Jesus asks this question.

[7 : 18] He wants to make a point. And he uses the scripture, an Old Testament scripture to point out something that they're missing in their theology, in their theology about who the Messiah is.

And he reads this passage. He says, For David himself said, by the Holy Spirit. And so this is another, just one more bolstering, one more confirmation that the scriptures are what men write or say, but not in and of themselves, but is what they say by the Holy Spirit.

1 Timothy, or 2 Timothy 3.16 says very explicitly what we actually see throughout the Bible teaching. It says, All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instructions in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped in every good work.

But all scripture, every scripture, is given by inspiration of God. That word inspiration just literally means, if you look at that root word in the original language, it means God breathed.

God breathed. So here, Jesus is about to quote a passage from one of the Psalms. And it's a Psalm of David. David is the one who wrote this psalm, this song in the book of Psalms.

[8 : 48] But he makes sure to point out that he spoke by the Spirit. David wasn't just speaking on his own. This wasn't his own made-up thing. This is something that he got by the Spirit.

This concept that the Messiah would be part of the lineage of David was not something new.

It wasn't something controversial. This was something that everybody in Israel knew. And if you look back at the Old Testament, you see it over and over and over and over again.

Originally, from a promise made to David, which we can actually read about in 2 Samuel, and I'll actually read this in a second, but also the prophets.

They would speak again and again. There's probably at least 20, 30, maybe even more passages that speak to the coming Messiah who would restore the kingdom of Israel and he would be of the line of David, the line of Jesse, the branch of Jesse.

[9 : 51] You see this over and over again. But here's the original. Here's when this started. 2 Samuel 7, verse 12. This is God promising to David through the prophet Nathan what he would do regarding his throne.

Before him was Saul. And Saul's throne, his lineage, actually came to an end. Saul's son, Jonathan, did not take over as king.

And so David ended up taking over. It was a new lineage. But God wanted David to know that that was not going to happen again. That there would be an eternal kingdom, actually, established through his line.

So again, 2 Samuel 7, 12. When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you who will come from your body and I will establish his kingdom.

He shall build a house for my name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father and he shall be my son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men.

[11 : 02] But my mercy shall not depart from him as I took it from Saul whom I removed before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.

Wow, what a promise. And so he was saying, hey, even if your sons after you, like Solomon, you know, sin against me, my promise is going to remain.

I'm going to make a kingdom, an eternal kingdom from your line. Just a couple other examples. Jeremiah 23, verse 5 says this.

Jeremiah 23, verse 5. Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that I will raise to David a branch of righteousness. A king shall reign and prosper and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.

In his days, Judah will be saved and Israel will dwell safely. Now this is his name by which he will be called the Lord, our righteousness.

[12 : 06] And that's talking about the Messiah that would come and save Israel in the last days. The final king to come and establish righteousness and justice.

Ezekiel 34, 23, and then we'll continue on. Ezekiel 34, 23 says this. I will establish one shepherd over them and he shall feed them, my servant David.

He shall feed them and be their shepherd and I, the Lord, will be their God and my servant David, a prince among them. I, the Lord, have spoken.

So there was this well-established messianic plan to bring the Messiah through the lineage of David. Somebody would be born in the line of David to sit on the throne of Israel and put them back as the head instead of the tail among the nations.

So Jesus quotes a psalm and this is actually Psalm 110, verse 1. If you've got your Bible, you can go ahead and turn there, Psalm 110 and we'll just read the whole thing. Psalm 110, verse 1.

[13 : 18] This is here and this is a, again, well-known among the Jews. The Jewish people would not have, they would have accepted this psalm that Jesus is about to quote from as a messianic psalm and as we read through it, you'll realize why.

It's pretty clear. But Psalm 110 says this, The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand till I make your enemies your footstool.

The Lord shall send the rod of your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of your enemies. Your people shall be volunteers in the day of your power and the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning.

You have the dew of your youth. The Lord has sworn and will not relent. You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. The Lord is at your right hand.

He shall execute kings in the day of his wrath. Wow. You know that's going to happen one day when Christ establishes his kingdom on the earth.

[14 : 25] There will be, I'm sure, public executions of the wicked kings that at that time are ruling on the earth. And will there be any shortage of wicked kings to find? There won't be, will there?

And the people, the righteous anyway, will celebrate, they'll rejoice on that day when that happens. Verse 6, He shall judge among the nations.

The nations will be judged. He shall fill the places with dead bodies. Wow. He shall execute the heads of many countries.

He shall drink of the brook by the wayside. Therefore, he shall lift up his head. And so this is something that the Jews were looking forward to. There were all kinds of evil nations surrounding them.

Of course, many times Israel forgot about their own wickedness. But they were looking forward to a day in which God would come, he would send his Messiah and the kings, the wicked kings that had ruled over them and oppressed them would be executed and righteousness would be restored not just in Israel but in all of the world.

[15 : 32] And that day is coming. But he just quotes verse 1. And so let's look at this a little bit more closely. It says this, the Lord said to my Lord. And if you notice in your Bible and every Bible is a little bit different but in my Bible, New King James, the first Lord is all caps and the second Lord is actually just the capital L.

Now what's up with that? Well, in many Bibles, New King James is one of them, I'm not sure how many do this, but all caps is actually an indication of the underlying Hebrew word that that word Lord is a word that we would typically say today as Jehovah or some people use the word Yahweh.

That is a word that is only used of the God of Israel. It's not used for saying, you know, somebody's my master. Sarah, the Bible says, called her husband Abraham Lord and she didn't call him Jehovah.

She didn't call him Yahweh. That was a different word. That's the second word that we'll look at in a second. So this first word is Jehovah. The second word for Lord is actually the Hebrew word Adonai, which is sometimes used of God but sometimes used of people.

And so what's going on here is it says Jehovah the Lord God said to my master.

[17 : 04] So Adonai, a lot of times you can just translate and many times it is translated master. Somebody who you know is in charge. Somebody that I either look up to has a more honorable place.

Somebody who's in charge. So the Lord Jehovah he spoke to my Lord. And who is the one who is saying this? This is a Psalm of David.

And so Jesus is making the point here. David is saying the Lord God spoke to my master. And who's he talking about?

Well he's talking about the Messiah who is supposed to be a son of David. Probably a great great great great great great great great grandson.

Right? Many greats in there. But one of his sons. Now in Jewish culture at this time it's a father would never ever ever call his son master.

[18 : 05] You know we might see today in our culture where you might have a business and a son might build up a nice business and then he hires his father you know and the son is the boss.

You know you might see that occasionally but in the Jewish culture that would that would not happen. The elders were always the ones who were in charge and always the ones given that honorary title.

So an elder would never call his son or grandson or any of his descendants master this word Adonai. So Jesus is using this to make a point about who this messiah is.

David here is prophesying he's talking about the future messiah that he would come and David is calling his son lord and master and that says something about who this will be.

The messiah the Christ will not be just a son of David not just a man. He'll be more than that. We know that Jesus is called the son of man. The son of God.

[19 : 18] And eventually David will bow down to his son as king in Jerusalem of Israel as king of all the earth.

Okay. So Jesus is just correcting the scribes here. He's showing the scribes themselves and also the people that these scribes are not being as careful as they ought to be about how they interpret the scripture.

Let's move on to the next section here. Mark chapter 12 verse 38. Just three verses. Mark chapter 12 verse 38. Then he said to them in his teaching, beware of the scribes who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense they make long prayers.

These will receive greater condemnation. In the previous passage that we just talked about, the doctrine, the teaching of the scribes is criticized.

Here, Jesus is criticizing the behavior of the scribes. And he uses this phrase, he says, beware of the scribes, beware of them.

[20 : 49] It just means to take heed, be careful, look out for these guys, and he's about to show how they're being fake, they're being fraudulent. And I think the warning is, don't be like them.

You know, the scribes especially, the Jewish leaders as a whole, but the scribes especially, they were the ones that everybody looked up to. These were the ones who taught the scripture, who knew the scripture.

They were the ones who you were supposed to look up to. You know, you're supposed to be able to look up to your leaders, and Jesus is giving warning. Even though you're supposed to be able to look up to these guys, they should be living the kind of life in which they should be looked up to, beware, because they're acting the hypocrites.

In fact, even though, I'll just make this point, we saw one of the scribes, right, a couple weeks ago, who he actually had an honest question.

His interaction with Jesus was very genuine and sincere. And so, it's not that all the scribes were this way, or that Jesus is even condemning all the scribes. But you don't always have to bring out the exception, right?

[22 : 07] A lot of times, just generalizations are helpful in communication. And so, Jesus is making a generalization because this is a common, huge problem among the scribes.

If you go back to Matthew chapter 23, there's almost the entire chapter 23 in Matthew is focused on Jesus' criticism of the scribes and the Pharisees.

And this is actually pretty lightweight. These three verses that we read here, if you look at Matthew chapter 23, it gets intense. Jesus, over and over and over again, speaks to the scribes and the Pharisees and he calls them hypocrites over and over and over again.

He calls them fools. He calls them whitewashed tombs and blind guys and serpents and a brood of snakes. Jesus was not a fan.

He took them to task and he wasn't afraid to criticize and even use very strong language in his criticisms of them. We'll just look at the things focused on, that Mark focused on in his account, his narrative here.

[23 : 24] But really, I think if you look at all these things, and we'll look at them one by one, the specific criticisms, I think it has to do with pride. And that's a real challenge for anybody, especially somebody in a position of leadership, to fall to the temptation of pride.

And any of us, whether we're in a leadership position or not, can fall prey to the temptation of pride. And so I think we can learn from this. Even though we may not be a scribe, we may not be in a position of power like they were, or in a position of high visibility even, we can, I think, take warning from Jesus here.

Because pride can be big and it can be small, right? And do we just want to avoid big pride and kind of be okay with the little things? Not at all.

You know, when it comes to leadership, the Bible actually teaches that you should give honor to whom honor is due. When somebody is in charge, when they have a leadership role, you should give them a certain amount of honor for their service that they do.

But Jesus is looking at the hearts of the scribes themselves, not just the honor that's given to them, but their heart and what they are seeking. Because when you are in a position of leadership, your job is not to seek after the honor, seek after the accolades, but your heart should be seeking to serve.

[24 : 54] And this problem isn't unique to obviously the Jews back then. You see this over and over again throughout all of Christian history and even today where pride rears its ugly head.

So the first thing he says here is, he says, beware the scribes who desire to go around in long robes. And so you might think, well, hey, you shouldn't wear long robes.

You know, today we have a mixture depending on what kind of denomination the church might be. Some people might wear, I call it like clerical outfits, clerical garb.

Sometimes you've got the cool collars and sometimes, you know, different kind of things, right? Robes are actually fairly common when you have those kinds of things. You've got, and I've seen him on the Catholics and the Lutherans and even Presbyterians and so it goes across the spectrum.

Eastern Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, all those things. You know, I don't think Jesus was particularly concerned that these guys wore special religious garments.

[26 : 14] That in and of itself was not the problem. In fact, the Bible itself indicated that at least the priesthood, right, the ones that Jesus or that God chose for special service in the temple, that they were supposed to wear unique clothes.

There was this special clothing that the priests would wear. And, you know, if people have tried to create illustrations of what that actually looked like, it kind of looks funny, you know, if you look at it.

I think some people might be embarrassed wearing something like that today. But it was special, special clothes. So, I don't think that Jesus was concerned about just wearing special garments just to indicate that you are a religious leader.

But really, it's about flaunting that position through, you know, lengthening your robe, making yourself stand out even more than you ought to.

And really, it's about modesty, right? Modesty in your position, in your rank, and even with your clothing, right?

[27 : 23] A lot of times we talk about modesty when it comes to women's clothing, usually. And really, it's about flaunting what you have, right?

And one of the things, one of the unique things about women is women are beautiful. beautiful. But we have to be careful, right? Not to flaunt that beauty before others, but to be modest.

And it's fine to allow that beauty to show, but to flaunt it is a sign of immodesty, of pride. pride. You know, you can have pride not just in your clerical garments, but I think you could actually have pride in your non-clerical garments too.

You could actually be prideful about, well, I'm not going to be like those other guys. They wear, you know, their robes, or maybe some of those stuffy churches, they wear suits.

And well, hey, I'm going to wear my Hawaiian shirt, you know. To church. And you have actually pride in that, right? And so, really, it's about the underlying heart.

[28 : 37] Pride in your position. Sometimes pride in your humility. The next thing he brings up here is, he said, beware the scribes who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplace, and the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at the feasts.

So, they like to be greeted. They like to be popular. People will greet them with special greetings. Really, this is about loving the recognition. I'm seen by all these people.

They recognize me. I'm popular. I have a position. I have privileges that others don't have. And this is something that, really, Jesus, again, is getting back to the heart of things.

Is it wrong to be greeted in the marketplace? Is it wrong to maybe have a place of honor at a dinner or a meal? Not necessarily. But what is their hearts?

They love it. Because it's all about me. We see similar things today among, you know, and it's easy to see this, you know, a lot of times in the megachurch world.

[29 : 59] I think it's easy to pick on megachurches because they're more visible, right? But this happens even in many churches. Not just on megachurches. But, you know, you're more interested in getting to know the people in your church who have more money, more spending more time with people who have more higher positions, who maybe are more famous.

I see this sometimes among people who are speaking. They will, they'll be speaking and they'll talk about somebody who is very well known and popular.

And they met them once at a conference. And they'll say, oh, well, my friend so-and-so. And you're kind of like, you make it sound like you've been friends since childhood, you know.

But really, it's just name dropping, right? Have you ever seen name dropping? And I'm sure most of us have probably done that too, right? Just name drop. Why? Because you want to make yourself look good. God.

The next thing he talks about is who devour widows' houses. Devour widows' houses. Now, it's actually not clear exactly what Jesus is talking about here.

[31 : 16] But this kind of transitions from pride, which he's been focused on, to really greed. Greed. Now, these scribes weren't paid scribes.

They weren't paid for their positions. So a lot of them actually lived in relative poverty. And so when you don't have your own means of income, it's easy.

It's a temptation, right, to take advantage of any clout, any position that you have to bring in the dough, bring in the cash.

And so evidently, these scribes, many of them, were using their religious position to take advantage of widows. And the Old Testament, especially, the Old Testament scriptures, if you just do a search, a Bible search for the phrase or the words, widows and orphans, or the fatherless in the Bible, so many scriptures over and over and over and over again about being sure to provide justice and care for the widows and the orphans.

And why is that? Why widows and orphans? Well, really, I don't think it was necessarily just to be the widows and orphans, but they were really a symbol of the most vulnerable people in society. Especially back then, if you were a widow, you didn't have a means of income.

[32 : 43] Your husband was the one who provided that. And so unless you had a large estate and servants and all that kind of thing, you were in a really tough spot. And then same thing if you were orphaned.

You didn't have a family to help with your sustenance. And so the Old Testament scriptures would speak very clearly about supporting and providing justice for widows and orphans.

Even now, though, widows especially can be very vulnerable and are an easy target for people who would look to take advantage of them.

You know, just like then, I think now, and I think this is appropriate, right? You have, when you have a family, we just talked about mothers and fathers and the importance of mothers and fathers, but in a family, a division of labor is a good idea, right?

You can have the husband or the dad focus on certain things that are more masculine. And you have the wife and the mom focus on things that are more feminine, nurturing the family.

[33 : 51] And so it's very, very, very common, right, in a household for the father to focus on the income and the finances and for the mom to focus on the children and the household.

And that's great and that's wonderful. But what happens when the husband dies? Something, some tragedy strikes. A lot of times, women will be left, I, he paid all the bills.

I don't even, I don't even know where to start. In fact, I remember when, and I don't know why this, this made such an impression on me, but when my grandfather passed away, I remember very specifically, and I can't remember if I heard it directly from my grandmother or from somebody else.

But she really struggled with taking care of all these things that her husband took care of for so many years. And when you're in that kind of position, it's easy for somebody to come along and say, oh, well, I can help you.

Here's a financial product where you can have some security, but it'll put a ton of money in my pocket. And so I'll help you out, and I'll do these things for you.

[35 : 07] But taking advantage of those who are in a vulnerable position. You also see this kind of thing, and Jesus is talking to religious people, and so we'll keep that context.

But televangelists, right, are famous. For who is their core audience member of a televangelist? And of course, not everybody who's a preacher on TV is bad, but there's a reason why when you say the word televangelist, it has a negative connotation, right?

Somebody who's a preacher on TV, do they want to be called a televangelist today? They do not, right? Because there is this, that word has become a byword, a bad word.

And so televangelists, if you've ever kind of experienced this over the years, their primary market, their primary audience, older women.

Because they're easy to manipulate and guilt and provide hope. You know what? If you sow a generous offering of seed faith, your children who have walked away from the Lord, God will restore them if you just sow that generous seed to our ministry.

[36 : 27] And it's evil, it's wrong, it's wicked. Devouring widows' houses is what Jesus called it. And then Jesus says, and for a pretense making long prayers.

For a pretense making long prayers. Pretense. What other word does that sound like? Pretense. Pretend, right? They're just pretending. They're just putting on a veneer, a facade of their spirituality.

You know, is praying a long prayer again, is there anything wrong with praying a long prayer? No. In fact, if you look at John chapter 17, it's a famous prayer that Jesus prayed.

The whole chapter, it's a pretty long prayer. It also has some other faux pas that you're not supposed to do when you pray. When you pray, you're not supposed to like preach a message. Have you ever seen somebody do that, right?

They pray and they pray a long prayer and it actually is like kind of a sermon in your prayer. And sometimes I see that happen. I think, you know, just talk to God. You know, you don't have to preach a message to the congregation in your prayer.

[37 : 37] But then I realized in John chapter 17 specifically, that's exactly what Jesus does. He's praying to the Father and he's actually, he knows his disciples are listening and that's important as part of his prayer that they know what he's saying.

It's actually a sermon to them through his prayer. And so that can be certainly fine to do. So the long prayers, the sermonizing even in your prayers is not necessarily the problem.

But it's the pretense, the lack of sincerity. And really, what are they looking for? Or I'm going to really impress everyone who's listening to me with my deep spirituality.

Can you do that with a short prayer? You can. You can try to impress people with your prayers when you do short prayers as well. Sometimes I've seen people, and I've, you know, over the years you kind of, I think, gain some wisdom as you gain experience.

But I've heard people who, whenever they pray, they only pray in King James English. Right? And, you know, when they talk regularly, but then when they pray, they pray in King James English.

[38 : 48] And I think, that doesn't sound very sincere. Sounds like somebody's trying to be, you know, overly spiritual. But then I've seen people over the years who do that. It becomes a habit. But, you know, they read the King James Bible.

And so their interaction with the Lord and His Word is in King James English. So that kind of tends to be where they go to. So it's not necessarily a negative thing or somebody trying to put on a pretense when they do that.

I thought in times past that it was, but I don't think it necessarily is the case. But it could be. So we ought to be careful.

And all of us have opportunities, whether it's at the dinner table, right, or before a meal, after church, to pray in a public setting. And is it good to do that? You know, sometimes people say, well, you should never pray in public.

Well, Jesus prayed in public. And so Jesus did talk about making sure that you don't do long public prayers. But He was talking about trying to make yourself look good.

[39 : 52] And so He talked about going into your prayer closet and praying there. But public prayers are certainly an important part of the Christian life. You know, being able to show if we never pray in public, will those who are new Christians or maybe young believers, how will they learn how to pray?

They learn from seeing, from watching other people. And so we have an opportunity to teach people through what we do in public. But I think we can ask this question when we pray.

Is my prayer that I'm praying right now primarily focused on impressing people? Or is it to, you know, is it to talk to God?

I think that because of self-consciousness, right? Many people are self-conscious. We're concerned what other people will think.

And so we don't like praying in public. And we shouldn't shy away from that because we're self-conscious. Self-consciousness can manifest in two ways.

[41 : 08] One, it's because you're self-conscious. You don't want to look stupid. So I'm not going to do things in public. I'm not going to pray in public. I'm not going to do a Bible study. Because what if I say something stupid?

What if I get, what if I say the wrong words? What if I get something wrong? What if I get something wrong? And you know what? It's fine. I'm stupid.

You're stupid. We're all stupid. And you know what? If people find out, it's okay. Isn't it? And so when we're focused so much on a veneer, we want to put forth an image that is false.

When really what the Lord wants is us just to be genuine. And I understand, you know, there's opportunities to grow in our presentation and our ability to speak.

You know, you probably, if I came up here and just was saying jumbled words all the time and lots of ahs and ums, you know, those are things that I work on just to, you know, make sure that when I say things, it's clear and the message comes forth.

[42 : 14] A lot of times when you use jumbled words and the lack of communication is unclear, it can be a distraction from the message. But we shouldn't be focused solely on the presentation.

And if we mess things up, it's fine. In fact, for a lot of people, right, that's actually just showing other people that it's okay.

You can do this too. I'm a dummy and you're a dummy and we're all just dummies together. A lot of preaching today, I find, and, you know, you don't want to be judgmental.

You can't always tell somebody's heart like Jesus could when they're preaching. But it seems there's so much performance-based preaching today. It's all about the performance. Sermons that are just filled with all kinds of drama or just joke after joke after joke.

And, you know, you're just trying to be entertaining, just trying to be funny. Did I make everybody laugh? Or sometimes, did I make everybody cry?

[43 : 18] That's what you're going for. And really, it's just trying to impress people. Sometimes people, you know, they try to impress people with their boldness. And, you know, there's so many people out there who won't address the sin issues of our culture.

And so I'm going to be the one that does it. But they do it for the wrong reasons. Not because they want people to be edified, but because they want to impress people with how bold they are. It gets back to the heart.

Why are we doing this? So when we preach, when we pray, we're doing it to honor the Lord, to communicate truth to other people, to build people up, to motivate and inspire, and ultimately, to put the attention not on us, right, but to glorify God.

We'll finish up here with the widow's offering. Mark chapter 12, verse 41. Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much.

Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrants. So he called his disciples to himself, and he said to them, Assuredly, I say to you, that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury.

[44 : 33] And they all put in out of their abundance, but she, out of her poverty, put in all that she had. Her entire livelihood. Jesus knew. I don't, you know, I mean, Jesus knows all.

There's scripture verses that say things like, he knew their thoughts and addressed them. You know, Jesus, unlike us, you know, knew where she stood. I'm sure she was probably very embarrassed, right, to just put in two measly little mites into the offering.

She wasn't showing off. She probably wasn't making a big deal about it. But Jesus knew her heart and knew that she was giving up her last two mites.

Just a little bit about the history here. So this temple treasury was something that has a little bit of history in the Old Testament. When Moses first built the tabernacle out in the wilderness, he requested free will offerings from the people.

And so they would come and bring all kinds of things in order to pay the artisans who would build the different parts of the temple. There's actually another passage in 2 Corinthians, chapter 12.

[45 : 44] If you're interested, you can look this up later. 2 Corinthians 12, verse 9, in which King Joash was looking to repair a disheveled temple. The temple had been built, but then it had been neglected.

So they were looking to bring it back to, to restore it back to its former glory. And so they did something similar. They actually brought out a chest. It says they drilled a hole in the top and they let people come in and they would just give it a free will offering.

This wasn't anything required. This wasn't like the tithe that was given to the Levites. It was not required in any way, shape, or form. It was all based on a heart of charity and giving. And so they had this during the time of Jesus.

So Jesus was just checking things out. He was just sitting there watching as the people gave. And some people would bring in bags of money and give lots. It seemed very, very generous. The mite was the smallest of all the coins.

And really, I think if you look at it today, I think it was 1 or 2% of a day's wage. 1 or 2% of a day's wage.

[46 : 49] So if you went out to do day labor today, you might make 100 bucks today, right? So about a dollar. She just put in one, two dollars into this offering box.

So Jesus' point here was about her heart. Again, she's giving not nearly as much as these others, and it doesn't describe who the others were, but just people who had more means.

This was a private lesson. This wasn't necessarily something that Jesus shared abroad. This was something he was just showing his own disciples. But he says that some gave out of their abundance, but she gave out of her poverty.

In fact, all of her livelihood. Her giving was sacrificial. You know, it's very popular today to give, right? To show your generosity.

And it's been that way for a long time. Corporations, big corporations, they want to improve the image of their brand, right? And so you have giving campaigns where you give to the community.

[47 : 51] And it can be with a good heart, but many times it's not. It's not for the purpose of being generous. It's for the purpose of improving my brand's image. You have, there are people on YouTube that they get thousands, millions, tens of millions of clicks and views on YouTube by doing some great, grand giveaway where they find somebody who is in need and they give them something that they really need.

There's been TV shows, right, where somebody who's really in need and you give them, maybe fix their house up or something like that. But again, it's all done in public.

I'm the one that's giving and I'm the one that's being so kind and generous. I remember, I don't know if you all remember this, but this was a big thing. Is Oprah on anymore?

I don't know, is she still on? But Oprah was a big thing on TV, right? And there was this one program where at the end of the show, she gave everybody in the audience a car. Anybody remember that?

You get a car and you get a car and you get a car and you get a car. And everybody was just blown away, right? But Oprah's worth billions of dollars, billions with a B, right? And so it's not quite a big deal.

[49 : 08] Same thing here. Sacrificial giving is what God's looking for. And you know, we all have, and I don't think we should just relate this to money, right?

Even though this specifically is. We don't know about money. But some people are really busy. They don't have a lot of time. And so when they give somebody or are willing to give somebody at their time, it's a sacrifice.

And God sees that as worth more than somebody who's just got nothing to do and is looking for something to keep them busy. The other thing I think about is love, our love.

You know, it's easy when you're surrounded by people who love you and return your love to be loving to them, to give your love to them.

But it's so much more difficult. You know, if you grow up in a family and everybody loves the Lord and loves you, for you to love back is a fairly simple thing to do.

[50 : 06] When you are in a family, maybe you become a believer, and man, your family is a mess. Maybe you're in a marriage, your husband's not a believer, and he's not very loving.

But for you to show love to him, wow, the Lord makes a real big deal out of that. And it's worth so much more to him.

In Matthew 5, 43, Jesus says this, You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies. Bless those who curse you. Do good to those who hate you and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.

You may be sons of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?

Does not even the tax collector do the same? Does anybody can do that? When it's difficult, when it's challenging, when it's sacrificial, is when it means so much more.

[51 : 13] And so giving of our lives, this is what it means to be a Christian, is to give sacrificially. Not just give when it's easy, but give when it's hard. And that is true love.

In Romans 12, 1, Paul says this, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, because of what God has done for you. And that's the big idea in Christianity, right?

Is that Christ laid down his life. He sacrificed for us. So what Paul says here is, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice.

Holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And that whole chapter 12, at least the first part of it, is all about serving others. Serving others. Because Christ did so much for you, we ought to also do what he did.

Pattern our lives after him. And sacrificially give. Christian life should not be focused on what we can get out of life, but on what we can give.

[52 : 18] Using our gifts and our talents and our time and our resources to bless others, to serve them, to edify others, to encourage those around us. Because that's what Jesus, that's what God did for us.

He poured out his life for us. May we also pour out our lives for others. Amen? Amen. We'll leave it there. Let's pray. Father, thank you so much for your example, for the teachings that we have from the scriptures here in Mark, but also just what Jesus showed in the big picture of stretching out his arms and saying, I love you this much.

May we constantly look to the cross and what was done for us to transform our lives that we might be like you. That we wouldn't look to have people focus on us, to be self-conscious and not necessarily want to serve or be in public because people are looking at us, but we would look to serve you in everything that we do.

Not looking for attention on ourselves, but to put people's attention on you and to serve others. May our life be a life of service just like you showed us.

In Jesus' name, amen.