

## Mark 12:18-44

### “All In”

When our time came to a close last week we were in the midst of Jesus turning the tables on His opponents who were trying to trap Him in His words, catch Him on the horns of a dilemma, they're inspecting the sacrificial Lamb of God (inadvertently though it may be) only to find Him free from fault, with out blemish, and with out spot... a worthy sacrifice for the sin of the world. and As we enter in to Vs 18 the situation remains the same, it's still the Tuesday prior to His crucifixion and His opponents are still engaging Him. We've heard from the Herodians, we've heard from the Pharisees, next up: the Sadducees.

#### **Vs18-19**

Another baited scenario, they're coming together on a point that they know He will consent to only to try and catch Him in a contradiction, or leave Him with out response in the end. The focal point? The resurrection. You see we note in Vs 18 that it's a group known as the Sadducees who are engaging Him at this point. Who are the Sadducees? Well, for a lack of a better way to say it these guys were the religious liberals. They were a well educated, highly sophisticated, influential and wealthy group of guys who were often of the high priestly kind of party. and If you boil it all down they really set their minds *on* and lived *for* the things of this world, they were materialistic in a radical kind of way. Because they didn't believe in the resurrection, or in the fact that there are angels or spirits or things of that nature. and When you don't believe there's life to come you have a tendency to set your sights on *this* life and bleed it for all you can get. and Their theological argument for the position they had taken was that they didn't see those things supported in the Torah (the 1<sup>st</sup> five books of Moses) and the 1<sup>st</sup> 5 books of Moses was all they would consent to as being Divinely inspired. and So they seek to ensnare Jesus concerning what they consider to be the absurdity of the reality of the resurrection.

and The set up takes place in Vs 19. They refer Jesus to Duet 25:5-6 where God instructed that should a man take a wife and for some reason die before they had a son; if the man had a brother, the brother was to marry her and the 1<sup>st</sup> born son would be considered the brother's who had died so that his name wouldn't be blotted out in Israel. Everybody knew it, they would all agree to it being stated right there in the writings of Moses.

#### **Vs20-23**

The question comes up; was this a hypothetical case or something that actually happened? I'm not sure; we don't know. If it was something that actually happened I'd be looking in to what she was feeding those boys and make sure they didn't have some incredible life insurance policies or something. But no doubt this was a scenario that they'd used to stump the Pharisees over and over again. Because they're envisioning 7 men fighting over the same woman in heaven; if she was each of their wives on the earth then when they rise whose wife will she be? You see they're seeking to ridicule the idea of the resurrection.

and People come up with these “apparent” problems to try and discredit what the bible teaches. If someone receives a kidney transplant, in the resurrection who gets the kidney? The body is made up of various chemicals, now when someone died out on the prairie and was buried, their body would obviously begin to break down into those various chemicals. The

prairie grass would send down it's roots feed from those various chemicals and they would go up through the roots into the shoot of the prairie grass, cows would come along and eat the prairie grass, then someone would come along and milk the cow and drink the milk and those chemicals assimilate and become apart of their body...

Now in the resurrection, who gets the chemicals? and People come up with these hypothetical case scenarios or whatever to try and discredit the word of God. Because most people perceive heaven as simply a glorified extension of earth, oh there'll be a new environment, new surroundings, but other than that things will remain pretty much the same. People like to perceive heaven as their most idealistic state, so the American Indian perceived heaven as a "happy hunting ground" where they could hunt buffalo in abundance. The ancient Vikings called heaven Valhalla where they pictured themselves fighting as warriors all day and feasting all night. and Even here if there were a resurrection the Sadducees perceived it as an extension of life as they knew it, if you were married here, you'd be married there and with all these variables it would just make for more problems than solutions; and since they couldn't find it in the books of Moses, they just discounted it all together. But Jesus is going to speak to that, check it out.

#### Vs24

Oh!!! and Jesus lands a devastating blow! Jesus gives them a double barrel blast here doesn't He? Before He addresses their ridiculous case scenario regarding marriage or the reality of the resurrection He puts His finger on the root of these boys problem; and it's 2-fold, did you catch that. Why were they mistaken? #1 They didn't know the scriptures, and #2 They didn't know the power of God. He says you guys are displaying the fact that you're deceived due to the fact that you don't know the scripture and you deny the power of God.

and When He says that they don't *know* the scripture, He's not saying that they can't recite Ch and verse because believe me they could. He's saying that they don't know the meaning *of* it, the heart *in* it, and what God was communicating *by* it. You might be able to quote it but you're not really comprehending or understanding it.

and We obviously can't go on here with out taking the time to stop and draw attention to the imperative need to *know* the word of God. Not just academically, but intimately, assimilating it and comprehending it *internally* in the inner man. The bible exhorts us to, "*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" 2 Tim 2:15 We're to be students of the word of God, again not simply to add to our list of accomplishments *academically* but that we might receive accurate and intimate insight into the heart of God *personally*. People are so often deceived (which is what the word "mistaken" in Vs 24 literally means) because they simply don't know what the word of God teaches in truth. So many mistakes could be avoided if we only knew the scriptures and really believed in the power of God to do what He says He'll do.

Detrimental decisions are made, be they spiritual or practical so often because we won't simply consult the word of God regularly. We're not true to it devotionally, we're not committing it to our memory. We read in Ps 119:11, "*Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.*" and Again, "*How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.*" Ps 119:9 But how can one heed to the word if they won't sit down and take the time to *feed* on the word?

People are mistaken, deceived concerning sin, “How could something that feels so right be so wrong?” Because our perspective is tainted straight out of the shoot due to our sin nature; if we were intrinsically holy rather than sinful we wouldn’t think it seemed or felt right, we’d would see the devastation and destruction in that path. The bible says, *“There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.”* Prov 14:12 Our flesh likes to be fed, but don’t be deceived the wages of sin is death. Both physically and eternally in separation from God.

People are deceived about salvation and what it takes to be saved, they think that God favors good ol’ boys and frowns upon bad guys. The problem is that there’s no good ol’ boys, not really, we’ve all gone astray, we all have wicked and sinful hearts. Even if we don’t engage outwardly the things we’ve entertained inwardly are sinful and wicked. People are mistaken/deceived about hell, it’s bad but not undoable, or it may be an eternal party, or that they’ll receive some sort of authority in hell, or that it’s like a prison sentence and eventually they get out. They’re deceived not knowing the scriptures, they don’t put stock in the power of God.

I can’t emphasize enough the importance of really *knowing* the scriptures, and believing with your whole heart in the power of God. Jer 32:27, *“Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?”* Jesus points out their problem, now He addresses their conundrum, this seeming puzzle that they’ve pointed out.

#### Vs25-27

Or again, “Greatly deceived.” Jesus takes their argument and basically tells them that they don’t know what they’re talking about and that their argument is completely irrelevant because life in heaven won’t be like a perfect life on earth. Life in heaven is after another order altogether. On earth our existence is defined in large part to our relationship with one another. A man can be a son, then a husband, perhaps a dad, a granddad, so on and so forth. In heaven our existence isn’t going to be defined by our relationship to one another so much as it is our relationship to God.

In the resurrection people won’t be married or given in marriage, (it’s not an issue) but rather they’ll be like the angels in heaven. Now I don’t want you to misunderstand what’s being said here. Because on this point a lot of people are torn because they can’t imagine living forever with out their spouse, it’s as if they’d be incomplete, something missing. and I suppose it’s only appropriate that we’d feel that way, after all we were created with a need to be completed. and In the marriage relationship the 2 become one, spouses complete (in a certain sense) one another. (Not in the ultimate sense, that’s where Christ comes in but that’s not what we’re talking about here.) But Jesus isn’t saying that there will be a reduction of love in heaven. To the contrary it’s only when you’re there that you’ll know the perfection of love, you’ll be able to love perfectly as it was intended to be.

and You can rest assured that whatever it is exactly that heaven holds in store it won’t be a disappointment compared to what you’ve had or experienced on earth. You don’t have to wonder if you’ll know one another, absolutely you will (again you won’t be less intelligent there than you are here). You don’t have to wonder if you’ll just be bored with nothing to do. The bible says, *“In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”* Ps 16:11 and I hope I don’t embarrass you but I’m just going to approach a

subject that people often wonder about but are too intimidated to bring it up. Because people want to know if since there's no marriage relationship in heaven, does that mean there will be no sex in heaven? and All I can tell you is that the bible doesn't address that issue, what I can tell you is that anything that you've experienced on earth that you consider to be a good thing will at best pale in comparison with what God has in store for you in heaven. The bible says, *“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”* 1 Cor 2:9

Now when Jesus says that we will be like the angels don't misunderstand that. He's not saying that we *become* angels, we're not going to earn our wings, we're not going to sit on clouds and play little harps. The bible is clear that we've been created in a higher order than the angels.

You've been created in the image of God. He's simply saying that you won't be married or given in marriage and in that way we'll be *like* the angels. We don't have any biblical reason to believe that angels procreate, they don't marry one another. Some people say that this means that angels are without gender and we will be as well; I don't see that here nor do I see where that can really be supported in scripture.

Now concerning the dead (Jesus goes on) that they rise... I want you to notice that Jesus affirms and confirms the resurrection here. It is absolutely imperative that you believe in your heart the fact of the resurrection. Why? Paul said it like this, *“...if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!”* 1 Cor 15:16-17 Wait a minute Jeff, are you saying that if the resurrection isn't real then I can't be saved? That's exactly what I'm saying, that's what the bible declares!

So we need to be rock solid on this reality; and we are, it's all over the place in the word of God. However the Sadducees only gave credence or credibility to the 1<sup>st</sup> 5 books of the bible, the books of Moses. and They didn't see the doctrine of the resurrection there so they didn't give validity to the notion; to the doctrine. So what does Jesus do? He goes back to the book of Exodus Ch 3 (a book that they readily acknowledged it's authority as from God) and through simple deductive reasoning demonstrated the reality of the resurrection to them right there. He said, “Haven't you read that passage dealing with the burning bush where God *called* Moses? Don't you remember how God identified Himself *to* Moses? He said, ‘I *am* the God of Ab, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’” He didn't say, “I *was* the God...” but rather “I *am* the God...” Now, when God uttered those words Jacob himself had been dead for over 400 yrs, Isaac and Ab well before then. How could God be the God *presently* of someone who didn't even exist, who was dead for centuries? and How could God make an everlasting covenant with someone who would cease to exist? Seems like a cruel joke doesn't it? That must mean that even though they weren't on the earth, they were still very much alive and enjoying a relationship with God even up to that moment. Because He's not the God of the dead, of non-existent entities, but of the living. What did Jesus say? *“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.”* John 11:25-26 God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, and if you've not surrendered to Him believe me when I tell you that He wants to be your God, right here, right now, today.

The Sadducees didn't grasp the fact that God will establish a whole new order of life after death. and All those apparent problems and difficulties connected with this life will be dissolved and resolved. In short their question was irrelevant.

Now, quickly I should point out in light of this that simply believing something doesn't make it true. I don't know how many people that I've run into that think that what I believe is true for me, what they believe is true for them (relativism). Jesus rejected that, the truth is the truth whether we acknowledge it or not, and our not believing it doesn't change the reality of it. The Sadducees didn't believe in angels, that doesn't mean they don't exist, they didn't believe in the resurrection, however that didn't change the *fact* of the resurrection did it? and Whether you believe in Christ or not, it won't change the fact that He's the only way, the truth and the life and that apart from Him there is *no other* access into heaven.

### **Vs28**

I don't know why but when I read this I couldn't help but see this guy as a "Yoda" kind of scribe, "...mmm; answered well You have!" and Seeing the wisdom of Jesus he has a question for Him. and Considering the context of how this plays out it seems that this particular scribe had no mal-intent but was sincere in his pursuit. The question; "Which is the 1<sup>st</sup>, (or the foremost,) commandment?" Which commandment has the highest priority attached to it?

### **Vs29-31**

He asks for 1 Jesus gives him 2. and The basic thrust is love God and love others, make sure the vertical plane is where it needs to be, then the horizontal plane will fall in line. You need to know God, to love God, and to love others. Jesus makes it real plain that it's not about rules it's about relationships and that in reality love fulfills the whole of the law.

and The 1<sup>st</sup> thing Jesus asserts is the unity found in the Godhead, He recites Duet 6:4, the "Shema" meaning "To hear, or give attention." and In reality it's speaks of the compound unity of the Godhead. It says, "Hear O Israel, the Lord (Yahweh, the covenant name of God) our God (Elohim, which is the plural form for the word "God" "El" singular, "Elohim" plural) is one (echaad = a compound unity). It's the same word that's used in speaking of a marriage when God said that 2 would become 1 flesh, speaking of a compound unity. and Israel being delivered out of Egypt where there were hundreds if not thousands of so called gods. God was making clear to them that there was only 1 God and that apart from Him there was no other. However it the scriptures also make it clear that as 1 God He's represented in 3 distinct persons, however there's not 3 Gods, only 1, it's the mystery of the Tri-unity, or the Trinity, the compound unity of the Godhead.

Jesus says, "We serve 1 God, and of paramount importance is that we love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength." Which is to say that God calls us to love Him with a love that is personal, comprehensive and whole-hearted. with all of the capacity and power that you have, you're to give Him the entirety of your heart, the fullness of your mind, all of your soul and all of your strength. You and I are to love God with every fiber of our being. Now that's pretty all inclusive isn't it, there's no room for negotiation in the word "all." He doesn't want *some* of your heart, *most* of your mind, a good chunk of your soul, and the largest majority of your strength, He wants it *all*. and He wants it with in the context of love, you can obey God apart from loving Him, but if you love Him you'll want to obey Him. God is looking for your love, not some of it, but all of it.

That's the 1<sup>st</sup> commandment, or the commandment that takes the highest priority, that's the greatest thing that you could ever take in, personalize and internalize.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> is like unto it we're to love our neighbor as ourselves. Who's your neighbor? Let me make it simple, whoever is with in your proximity at any given moment. Treat others with the same care and concern as you'd have for yourself. It's the "do unto others as you'd have them do unto you" mentality. It's all about loving God and loving others (in that order) if I'm not right in my relationship with God, I'll be off in my relationship with you. and I think we'd do well to be reminded of 1<sup>st</sup> Cor 13 at this point which teaches us what? That it's love that legitimizes our actions. It doesn't matter what you know, or how great a sacrifice you may make for the benefit of others if it's done with out love it counts for nothing in the scope of eternity.

### **Vs32-33**

Wow, this is like some kind of anomaly, this scribe gets it. and He's light years ahead of so many today that think that if they do more good works than bad then God will open the gates of heaven to them. He says here that love is greater than any sacrifice, any good work that one might perform. A thousand burnt offerings given out of legal obedience is nothing in the sight of a single act of love toward God or toward man in the name of God.

### **Vs34**

Jesus is seeking to provoke this man, to penetrate his soul and cause him to continue in seeking after God in this manner. Not after the letter, but in love. You come to that place where you're not seeking rules *from* God, but a relationship *with* God and you are on the threshold of eternal life. It's easy that religious ceremony and dedication is more important than love for God or love for our neighbor, but just the opposite is true.

Jesus says, "You're almost there, you're not far from the kingdom of God." But a comment like that shouldn't encourage a sense of safety, but rather a diligent seeking. Why? Because (listen) almost saved is still altogether lost... You might stand on the threshold but if you don't go through the door it does you no good. You've got to commit to Christ.

Well, with that they discontinue the questions, but now Jesus has one for them, notice.

### **Vs35-37**

Here's the point; Jesus is pointing out the unique nature of the Messiah. The scribes readily consented to the fact that the Messiah would be the Son of David, of the lineage of David because the scriptures clearly declare it. But Jesus is saying, "If the Christ is David's Son, how can He also be his Lord?" The idea being that you don't concede to your son as being above you, it's dad, then *granddad*, then *great granddad*. Even in our culture we recognize to an extent a patriarchal frame of mind. and Greater respect goes to those who went before you not those who come after you. Well, their culture was huge on this, you're not going to bow before your son, much less someone generations after you. But David under the inspiration of the Spirit (notice Jesus acknowledges David's inspiration of the Spirit) "The Lord (the Father) said to *my* Lord (the Messiah) sit at My right hand till I make Your enemies Your footstool." So if David calls Him "Lord" how can He be his Son? The answer is simple, He's not only the Son of David (which they acknowledged) He's also the Son of God (which they refused to acknowledge). He's pointing out the fact that the Messiah is both God and Man.

## Vs38-40

What's the primary problem here? Jesus pinpoints it in Vs 38, did you catch it? It's their *desire*, the problem is the position, or the motive of their heart. It's to gain the praise of the public (Vs 38), they jockey for positions of power and prestige (Vs 39) and they're all pompous and pious in their long prayers (Vs 40). and The problem isn't that their prayers are long but that it's all pretense, it's all show and no substance. They're lifted up with pride and yet the bible says that God *resists* the proud but gives grace to the humble. They're not genuine in their endeavors they're masking ulterior motive.

Jesus says, "They'll receive *greater* condemnation." "Wait, are you saying there's various levels of condemnation?" According to Jesus there is. Now believe me when I tell you that the *least* level of condemnation is worse than your worst nightmare. The ultimate resolve of the one who rejects Christ is to the lake of fire where the smoke of their torment will ascend day and night forever and ever. No light, just eternal darkness, the worm never dies and the fire is never quenched (that's what the bible says). What's beyond that? I don't know, I don't want to know; best to be found loving the Lord, drawing near to the Lord with all that's with in you.

## Vs41-44

Couple things here briefly before we close. 1<sup>st</sup> of all note back in Vs 41 that Jesus didn't pay attention to *what* they gave, but rather *how* they gave, it wasn't the amount that He paid attention to so much as it was the motive. and We should understand that when it comes to the motive we're not going to deceive the Lord.

We're not going to toss in a couple dollars and say, "Widow's mite, God's not looking to the amount, but the motive" that's true and your motive in that moment is to be a cheapskate and rip God off for what's rightly His.

What she gave amounted to less than a penny, but what we need to see is this; *it was all that she had*, she didn't give out of the overflow of her surplus but rather from her very sustenance, her livelihood, it cost her dearly to give to the Lord. We're back to the motive, her motive wasn't to toss in a little out of her surplus, but to hold back nothing of her sustenance. and What this shows us is that God doesn't measure value by the amount, but rather by what it cost us personally. Remember David said that He wouldn't give to God that which cost him nothing. and This widow challenges the mentality that says, "When I have a little more then I'll give." She had nothing yet she gave willfully. That means that if you have a little, or you have a lot God can be just as pleased with your giving because it's your heart He's searching.

Someone said that God doesn't look so much to what we gave Him but rather how much we leave for ourselves. I'm not sure that's true but it's convicting nonetheless.

Now, it's not that God wants your money, He doesn't need your money, if He did Jesus would've focused on the amount rather than the motive. But He does want you, all of you. and You can tell most often the position of a person's heart by what they do with their money. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. It's not sin to have nice things, to be blessed in a material way or any of that. But if your resources are consumed on you, and you toss pennies comparatively toward the kingdom to ease your conscience that's indicative of a problem. For some people to give even 10% is a huge sacrifice, because maybe they've gotten themselves into a place, or life has handed them a position of struggle and difficulty. God knows that, He sees your heart. For others to give only 10% just might be sin because God has

blessed you so tremendously, and there's so much God could use you in the kingdom for practically but you won't surrender to the Lord in that way.

and Understand that the last thing I want to do is guilt or manipulate anyone in anyway. However I won't apologize if the Spirit is dealing with you on this level. Ultimately what we see in this woman is what? Complete surrender, giving her all to God. and There's a sense in which Jesus came to do the same for us, He gave His all and held back nothing upon the cross. and In the same way may we learn what it means to go all in as unto the Lord, to surrender the whole of who we are to Him. Whatever that may mean for us as a body, or as believers individually. So let's pray to that end and ask the Lord to teach us the meaning of surrender.

#### Prayer Points:

Lord we recognize that with this widow it was displayed with money but that the lesson that's here to learn ultimately is that she was surrendered to You completely. All that she had was Yours, and we want to be in that place where we not resist You, or fight against You, but are completely surrendered *to* You. Help us to love You with all that we are, and to love others as ourselves. May our lives reflect substance not a show, for Your Name's sake and for Your glory.

And while we're praying toward surrender it could be that you've never surrendered your heart to Christ to begin with. and Today God is dealing with you on that level. Well Jesus surrendered completely for you, laid down His life for you, shed His blood for the forgiveness of your sin. If you're willing to turn *from* your sin and look *to* and trust *in* Jesus, then Jesus will take away your sin and give you everlasting life. It's so important that you make that commitment, almost saved is altogether lost.