

SERMON | JESUS AND MONEY

SERIES | BOOK OF MARK

STUDY GUIDE | DAVID STOCKTON | SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 2024

SERMON SUMMARY

We have several storms overhead. The financial storm, political storm, and attacks on youth, the Scriptures, and Christians. We want to be good stewards and keep our hearts cheerful and generous, whether we have much or little. We want to be debt free, so we can serve and give wholeheartedly. We want to discern the way of Jesus, where it intersects with politics, and where it does not. We want to protect and lead the youth in the truth of God's Word, as they face the ideological wars around them. We don't want to be caught unaware and unprepared, because the reality is, these storms are here, and continuing to develop in greater magnitude. We need to get our financial house, political house, and our sexual and familial house in order.

In the Book of Mark, we see five pericopes about Jesus and money: the rich young ruler, Jesus clearing the temple, paying taxes to Cesar, the widow's offering, and Jesus anointed at Bethany. These examples in Scripture teach us about how to get our affairs and hearts in order, as we align with the wisdom of God's instruction.

The Rich and the Kingdom of God (Mark 10): The rich young ruler wanted treasure in this life and in heaven equally. Jesus loved him and knew he loved his treasure more than God. Jesus teaches that anything is possible with God, not with treasure. God is more valuable than anything we could ever attain on this earth. Tithing and offering generously, helps us curtail our love of money, and directs our hearts toward treasuring God above all else.

Jesus Clears the Temple Courts (Mark 11): Jesus knew horrible, greedy, and manipulative things were being done, and would be done, in His name, and in His church. Jesus was angry. Massive judgment is held in reserve for those who rob God's people. God's house is first and foremost a house of prayer, not a market to rob people.

Paying Taxes to Cesar (Mark 12): Here we have Pharisees and Herodians again. Those who want to bring in their utopia by legislating and enforcing righteousness, and those who think we should just start calling unrighteousness, righteous. They are working together to try and trap Jesus in regard to money. Jesus taught us to pay taxes and to understand that right now, we are citizens of two kingdoms. One is vastly more important than the other, but both matters. The picture of Cesar on money alludes to the reality, that we live in a world with government and laws, and it will do us well to do right in regard to them. But just like the image of Cesar is on the money, Jesus knew each and every person is made in the image of God. So, our money might belong to someone else, but our entire lives belong to God. Voting is hard these days because it doesn't feel like a privilege. Paying taxes is harder these days, because the government doesn't have a lot of approval for what they are doing. Yet, we are American, and it is a privilege. We should participate, but never let our identity as an American, trump our identity as a Christian, and to be aware of the ideological leaven of Christendom. God is not after our money. He wants us and our heart.

The Widow's Offering (Mark 12): The big givers never felt the gift, but she felt it. They gave out of their savings accounts, but she gave all of her food budget. It is such an interesting picture here with Jesus sitting down and watching the offerings being put into the temple treasury. God does care about our money and what we do with it. He does pay attention to each time we give our tithes and offerings. He looks at the heart of those who are giving. A heart of trust and sacrificial love. A cheerful, grateful, generous, and humble heart. Or the opposite, a frustrated, prideful, legalistic, or fearful heart. There is nothing bad about big givers or small givers. Jesus is giving His

stamp of approval to the giving of tithes and offerings to the local community of worship. But the attitude of the heart is what Jesus focused on.

Jesus Anointed at Bethany (Mark 14): Here is the opposite of the rich young ruler. We see a lower-class young lady, who is selling everything she has, and giving it to the poor Savior, who has no place to lay His head. Jesus does not think this is wasteful. Jesus sees this as a woman who is free from the love of stuff and greed. She is treasuring Jesus above all else. This is most likely a dowry. That means she is treasuring Jesus above money, her most treasured possession, and her future, sexuality, marriage opportunity, and everything else.

We are to treasure Christ above all things, and it will be well with our soul, no matter what storms we face.

SCRIPTURE READING

READ THIS WEEK'S BIBLE PASSAGE: Mark 10:17-27, 11:15-18, 12:13-17, 12:41-44, 14:1-11 (NIV)

The Rich and the Kingdom of God

¹⁷ As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ¹⁸ “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.’” ²⁰ “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.” ²¹ Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” ²² At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. ²³ Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!” ²⁴ The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” ²⁶ The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can be saved?” ²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.” – Mark 10:17-27

Jesus Clears the Temple Courts

¹⁵ On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, ¹⁶ and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. ¹⁷ And as he taught them, he said, “Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’” ¹⁸ The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching. – Mark 11:15-18

Paying the Imperial Tax to Caesar

¹³ Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. ¹⁴ They came to him and said, “Teacher, we know that you are a man of integrity. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not? ¹⁵ Should we pay or shouldn’t we?” But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. “Why are you trying to trap me?” he asked. “Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.” ¹⁶ They brought the coin, and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?” “Caesar’s,” they replied. ¹⁷ Then Jesus said to them, “Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.” And they were amazed at him. – Mark 12:13-17

The Widow's Offering

⁴¹ Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. ⁴² But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. ⁴³ Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. ⁴⁴ They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on." – Mark 12:41-44

Jesus Anointed at Bethany

14 Now the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were scheming to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. ² "But not during the festival," they said, "or the people may riot." ³ While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. ⁴ Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? ⁵ It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly.

⁶ "Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. ⁷ The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. ⁸ She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. ⁹ Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her." ¹⁰ Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. ¹¹ They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over. – Mark 14:1-11

BIBLE PASSAGE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you in these passages? Did the Lord highlight anything to you? What do these passages teach you about the character of God? What do these passages teach you about mankind? What do these passages teach you about how mankind should respond to God? What do these passages teach you about how to respond to others?

Read these passages again (use a different translation if helpful). How did these passages help to convict, correct, or encourage you?

GROUP DISCUSSION

DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS WITH YOUR GROUP

1. How is your financial house these days?
2. Do you deploy your money in ways that show delight in God, trust in God, and dependence on God?
3. Which of these teachings moved your heart in merciful conviction? Why?
4. What step can you take to treasure Christ above all things?

PRAYER

Take some time for prayer requests and pray over one another before wrapping up.

