

(Through the Bible) Mark 12

by Chuck Smith

Jesus teaches about his authority, the failure of the religious leaders, and the importance of understanding God's plan of salvation through a series of parables and interactions.

Duration: 1:13:30

Scripture: Psalm 118:22-23, Isaiah 5:1, Matthew 21:42-43, Mark 12:1-9, Acts 13:46, Romans 11:11

Topics: "Loving God", "Stewardship"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the importance of knowing and loving God. He emphasizes that God should be the center of our existence and that our lives should revolve around Him. The preacher also talks about the parable of the vineyard, where the owner sends servants to collect the fruit but they are mistreated and killed. Finally, the preacher expresses his concern about the gimmicks used to raise funds in some ministries and emphasizes the importance of giving with a sincere heart. The sermon references the Bible, particularly the commandment to love God and love our neighbor.

Transcript

Mark's Gospel, chapter 12. Now, we remember that Jesus is in the temple. This is the day after he had cleansed it again.

It is on Tuesday. It is his final week. Sunday, he had made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem on the donkey.

Monday, he came in and cleansed the temple. Now, Tuesday, he returns to the temple with his disciples, where immediately he is challenged by the religious leaders concerning the authority by which he has done these things. Now, he speaks to them in a parable.

And he said, there was a certain man that planted a vineyard and set a hedge about it and dugged a place for the wine fat and built a tower and he led it out to husbandmen and went into a far country. Now, if you can hold your place there, Mark, and turn to Isaiah, chapter 5. I think that you'll see how they were able to see exactly what Jesus was getting at. Verse 1 of Isaiah 5 Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard.

My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill and he fenced it, gathered out the stones, he planted it with the choicest vine and built a tower in the midst of it and also made a winepress and he looked that it

should bring forth grapes and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard, what could have been done more to my vineyard than I have not done to it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes? And now go to, I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard, I will take away the hedge, it will be eaten up, I will break down the wall thereof and it shall be trodden down, I will lay it waste, it shall not be pruned nor digged, but there shall come up briars and thorns and I also will command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel and the men of Judah his pleasant plant.

And he looked for judgment, but behold, there was oppression. He sought righteousness, but there was a cry of those who were oppressed. So, when Jesus said to these leaders, there was a certain man who planted a vineyard and set a hedge about it and digged a place for the wine vat and built the tower, their minds connected with Isaiah.

And he led it out to husbandmen, went to a far country, and at the season or the time when he should be reaping the benefits of that vineyard, he sent to the husbandmen a servant that he might receive from the husbandmen the fruit of the vineyard. And they caught the servant and beat him and sent him away empty. So, he sent unto them another servant and they cast stones at him and wounded him in the head and sent him away shamefully mistreated.

So again, he sent another and him they killed. And many others, some of them they beat and others they killed. Having yet therefore one son, his well beloved, he sent him also last unto them saying, they will reverence my son.

But those husbandmen said among themselves, this is the heir. Come, let us kill him and the inheritance shall be ours. And they took him and killed him and cast him out of the vineyard.

What shall therefore the Lord of the vineyard do? The parable is very obvious. It is against the religious leaders, the husbandmen, whom the Lord had set over the vineyard, the nation of Israel. And the Lord sent to them the prophets, his servants.

But the prophets were mistreated. They were beaten, they were stoned, many of them were killed. Finally the Lord said, I will send my only son, or my well beloved son.

And so Jesus separates himself in a total different capacity from the servants, the prophets that have been sent. Finally the son has come. And the religious leaders have determined to get rid of him in order that they might somehow take possession of the vineyard.

The question, what will the Lord of the vineyard do? Of course God is the Lord of the vineyard. He will come and destroy the husbandmen and will give the vineyard unto others. And so here we see as last week when Jesus cursed the fig tree and it withered and died because it failed to bring forth fruit.

The nation of Israel had failed to fulfill the purposes for which God had established them as a special people unto the Lord. They failed to bring forth that fruit that God was desiring the nation to produce. So what will the Lord do? He will take away the privileges, the opportunities and he will give them to others.

And so we see the door opened to the Gentiles and Jesus here is prophesying and predicting that God is going to do his work not among the Jews in this age, but more among the Gentiles and thus we see the work of God's Spirit in a powerful way among those Gentile believers in Jesus Christ. And then the Lord

quoted to them the Psalm 118 which is a Psalm that was predicting the triumphant entry of the Messiah. And have you not read this Scripture? The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner.

This was the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes. This particular Psalm 118 the stone set of not by the builders or rejected by the builders becoming the head cornerstone is a often quoted Psalm in the New Testament. Peter quoted it when he was talking to the religious leaders in the fourth chapter of Acts.

Paul quotes it in his epistle to the Romans and also his epistle to the Ephesians. Jesus here makes reference to it. Obviously it is a reference to Jesus, the stone.

Now you remember that there was that prophecy in Daniel of the stone that would come not cut with hands striking the image in its feet and growing up into a mountain covering the earth. The stone being Jesus Christ. Rejected by the builders, the religious leaders and yet in reality it is the chief cornerstone.

There is an interesting story of the building of Solomon's temple. The stone was all quarried away from the temple and was brought to the temple site and then set one upon another. So perfectly were these stones hewn and so well designed that they did not need mortar for them.

But they just would interlock and would lie flat and in fact these stones you can't even put a knife blade between them. They are hewn so perfectly. And so each stone was quarried and then smoothed in the area of the quarry which is actually on the north side of the city of Jerusalem.

And then it was brought to the temple site and each stone was marked for its place and set into the building. And as the story goes a stone was sent from the quarry and the fellows who were doing the building didn't understand where it went. It seemed like it didn't fit in the natural progression of the building and so they didn't know what to do with it and they tossed it aside.

And of course in the years as they were building the temple finally they came to the completion of the building but the chief cornerstone was missing. And according to the story they sent to the quarry for the chief cornerstone. We want to complete the building we need the chief cornerstone.

And the foreman checked his records and said it's already been sent. And they said we don't have it. And he said well we've already sent it to you.

And someone remembered that stone that was tossed over and now the bushes had grown up and over it and they dug the thing out and sure enough the stone that was rejected by the builders became in reality the chief cornerstone of the building. And thus this psalm but yet tremendous prophetic significance the stone that was said of not by the builders has become the chief cornerstone. This is the work of the Lord.

It's marvelous in our eyes. And they sent a psalm, Psalm 118 to them a psalm by which he is asserting that he is indeed that stone, the Messiah. And so they sought to lay hold on him.

He had directed the parable against them and they recognized that. And they wanted to lay hold on him but they feared the people for they knew that he had spoken against them. So they left him and went their way.

And then they sent unto him certain of the Pharisees and the Herodians to catch him in his words. And when they were come they said unto him, Master we know that you are true and you don't care for man

and you don't regard the person of men but you teach the way of God in truth. Quite an acknowledgement.

True it was flattery to try to throw him off guard. And then they offered their question which was designed to entrap him. Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not? Judah was a Roman province.

As a Roman province you were directly appointed by Rome and the Roman government excised taxes from them that were paid directly to the Roman government and there were three basic taxes. First of all you were taxed on the land that you had and you had to give one tenth of your crop to the government. That is your grains and all from the fields.

You had to give one fifth of the fruit which grew from the trees that were there on the land. Secondly there was a straight across the board five percent income tax. And then thirdly you had to pay each year a denarius to the government just for the right of existing.

This was a tax upon everyone. A denarius because you lived. And so the Jews hated this taxation.

They did not really recognize the Roman authority over them. And this question then was a very clever question designed to entrap Jesus for no matter how he answers he's a loser. If he answers it is lawful to pay and all of these Jews that hate these taxes so much will turn away and not listen to him again.

If he says it is not lawful to pay the taxes to Caesar then they'll run right down and report on him and have him arrested as a leader of sedition. So they felt that the question was one from which he could not escape. It took him quite a long time to figure that one out.

Shall we give or shall we not give? But he knowing their cunningness said unto them why are you trying to tempt me? Bring me a denarius that I may see it. Now this was the denarius that they had to pay for existing. And of course it had a Roman emperor who at this time was Titus there on the Caesar.

They were all called Caesar but this was Titus and his little image upon it. Interesting to me that Jesus didn't carry a coin. He asked for one.

And he held it up. And he said whose is this image or superscription? And he took the picture and under it the superscription Pontifus Maximus. Who is this? He said Caesar.

So he flipped the coin back and said if it's Caesar's give it to Caesar. But give to God the things that belong to God. Now in reality these coins were all considered to be Caesar's.

The government's. It wasn't that it was all the government's. Even as your money all says Federal Reserve Note or whatever.

It's really the government's loaning you this medium of exchange. Or letting you use this medium of exchange. So Jesus thoroughly escaped the trap that they were setting for him.

And they marveled at him. Then there came to him some of the Sadducees. The Sadducees were the priest for the most part.

The high priest at this time was always the Sadducee. They were the materialist. They were not really spiritual men at all but the materialist.

But they had gained control of the whole religious system. And they did not believe in spirits. They did not believe in angels.

They did not believe in the resurrection from the dead. But Moses wrote unto us if a man's brother die and he leaves his wife behind him and leaves no children his brother should take his wife and raise up seed for his brother. Now this was a part of the Mosaic Law.

It is given to us there in Deuteronomy. And it's a very interesting law to die in Israel. Basically the law is like this.

If you married a woman and before you could have children you died it was your brother's responsibility to marry her and the first son that was born would be named after you so that your name would not die in Israel. Now say your younger brother doesn't want to marry her. She gave my brother such a bad time.

No way. Then they would come to the gate of the city where judgment was always made. You read them in the gates of the city.

That's where they always made the judgments. The elders of the city would be there in the gates to pass judgment. So they would come to the gate of the city before the judges, the elders there and the fellow would say I want to marry her and he'd take off his sandal and hand it to her.

Sort of like saying, hey woman you're an old dirty shoe as far as I'm concerned. You know. No way.

And she would spit in his face and he would be released from the obligation of marrying her. But he was called the man from whom the shoe was loosed in Israel. That's sort of a dirty title.

In other words he wouldn't fulfill the family obligation and that was a very important thing to them. Now in the book of Genesis and this goes back before the law actually in the book of Genesis we find the case of Judah the son of Jacob and his son married this gal Tamar and he died not having any children so Tamar's brother took her to wife and he died not having any children and so the other brother was supposed to marry her but Judah said well no I'm a little worried about the tea that gal fixes. And you know two sons died and he said this is my last son I don't want to lose him he's too young wait a while before let him marry you.

And the story of Tamar interesting story in Genesis when Judah was coming by the old man he says how much you charge you know and so she gave the price and he said oh I don't have it with me but here you know I'll take my ring and this is where we get the idea of giving a ring it's a pledge to guarantee that I'm going to keep the covenant I make I promise you you know I'll pay you and of course she covenanted for a little goat he says I'll send it back to you know and so he gave her the ring and said you know and the idea is I'm going to keep the promise I'll send the goat and when the goat comes she gives the ring back well he went in unto her you see she felt that she's getting cheated because he didn't give the third son and so she was all veiled and everything else so he went in and

then went on down and he said to his herdman hey take a goat back to the prostitute that's back there in that corner you know and get my ring back and so the guy came back with a goat and he looked around and he said to the fellows around there hey where's the prostitute that hangs out in this corner there's no prostitute around here so he came back to Judah and said man I couldn't find it he said there's no prostitute around there he said have her stoned to death so Tamar came in and she said by the man who owns this ring I'm pregnant Judah of course had it you know what could he do so the interesting thing to

me is that as the lineage of Christ is traced back it traces back through Tamar that's interesting isn't it that God would bring his son through this lineage he was able to

identify with sinners another case of it in the Old Testament is in the book of Ruth Elimelech with his wife Naomi sold their parcel and moved with their two sons Malon and Chileon over to Moab and in Moab Malon and Chileon married some young girls in Moab and Elimelech died and the two sons died and there were no children so the name was about ready to die Naomi of course came back with Ruth and later on Boaz who was a brother to Elimelech married Ruth and raised up he became what they call the Goel the family redeemer he's the one that redeemed the family name by having a child through Ruth whose name was Obed whose son's name was Jesse whose son's name was David and in tracing the lineage of the line of Christ it goes back through Ruth and Boaz so this idea of a kinsman redeemer is

tied into the lineage of Jesus which I think is significant because that's what he came to be he became a man that he might be kin to us but his purpose was to redeem us man couldn't redeem himself and he might become our kinsman redeemer and in two places in his lineage that particular Jewish law was kept, fulfilled so here the Sadducees they go an extra step they create a hypothetical case where a there were seven brothers and the first took a wife and he died without any children so the second took her and died without any children and the third likewise and all seven married her and died without any children and finally the woman died now in the resurrection when they shall rise shall she be of them for all seven were married to her now you see they were creating a hypothetical case

by which they were trying to show that the idea of the resurrection from the dead could only create a lot of problems and here is a big problem because you can see seven guys now fighting over the one woman all seven but none of them had any children and they pictured this big confusion at the resurrection of course there are others who have foreseen great problems with the resurrection say you have a kidney transplant who gets the kidney in the resurrection our bodies are made up of chemicals and when a person died out on the prairie and they dug a hole and buried him the body decomposed into the various chemicals and the little prairie grass sent its roots down and fed off of the chemicals from the decomposed body and those chemicals were drawn up through the root and into the prairie

grass and the cows came and ate that prairie grass with the chemicals and someone milked the cow and got the chemicals out of the milk and drank the milk and assimilated and it became a part of his body now in the resurrection what body will get these chemicals these same difficulties that people have hypothecated all stem from the same ignorance that Jesus said you fellows err because you don't know and you don't know the power of God your mistake lies in the fact that you don't know the scriptures you're ignorant of the scriptures and that's where your problem is for when they shall rise from the dead they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are as the angels which are in heaven now as touching the dead that they rise Jesus is affirming the resurrection of the dead here have you

not read in the book of Moses now the Sadducees being the materialist rejected all of the old testament except for the five books of Moses and they said there is no place where immortality or resurrection is taught in the Pentateuch that all came along later with the prophets and all but there's nothing in the Pentateuch where Jesus takes them to the Pentateuch have you not read in the book of Moses how in the bush when God spoke to Moses he said unto him I am the God of Abraham the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob Jesus said he's not the God of the dead but of the living and with their own book of Moses he really cut them down now there was a certain scribe that was there and he was watching this whole transaction interchange of thoughts and ideas and he was captivated by Jesus and the

answers that he gave when he heard them reasoning together he perceived that Jesus was really coming up with answers and so he asked him an honest question these first two questions were dishonest questions a dishonest question is a question that is not looking for an answer it's looking for an argument an honest question seeks an answer I want to know I ask a question that's honest I have a point I want to prove I'm not wanting your answer I don't care what you answer your answer is wrong and I'm going to prove it to you and there's a lot of times that we are questioned by people and the questions are not sincere they're not honest questions and one of the first things and I can tell quite often by the question itself whether it's an honest or dishonest question when a person says why

don't you baptize people with the name of Jesus I know that's not an honest question they really don't want to know why we don't take you right down to the beach tonight and baptize you if you've accepted the Lord here this evening they don't want to really know that what they want to do is get in a big controversy with you because they do believe in baptismal regeneration and should you die before next Saturday and your chance to get baptized you'll be lost so emergency baptisms get them in the tank as quick as possible dunk them and so they ask that question and you know it's not an honest question I really don't like to get into a controversy over the scripture the minute I can discern that a question is not an honest question I'll quit talking I'm not interested in getting in a

dispute or an argument still that could apply to me as well as the next fellow this fellow has an honest question burning in his heart it is a question that should concern every man who has become convinced of the existence of God you say you believe in God hey you can't rest there you can't stop there you see if you believe that God does exist if you develop from that basic concept that God exists you start going out from there and you've got to handle a lot of things I grew up in a very godly Christian home I believed in Jesus Christ from day one from the time I was 13 days old I was carried to church slept in the pews grew up in the whole environment and atmosphere that's what a Christian must do I came to that place in my own growth and development and maturing where I had to create

my own relationship with God and develop my own foundation and my own theology and my own building you might say of faith and as I was going through that period intellectually by my studies by my philosophy classes and biology classes and all there was a short period of time when I was questioning everything and I began to question the existence of God and I wondered if I really believed that God did exist maybe there is something to atheism maybe it is all just something that has been conjured up by man and I went through a couple of weeks of real misery as I was sort of in this place of floating and almost sinking as these thoughts were coming and maybe it is just all you know man's concepts and ideas as he needs to believe in something and as I was going through this in my mind I

started to sink and then I thought well it is easier to believe that God exists than to not believe that He exists as I looked at the world around me the universe around me it is easier to believe in the existence of God than not to believe in the existence of God if you don't believe in the existence of God then there are so many things that you've got to explain the imponderables, how can you see, how can you hear how can you walk, how can you feel how can you remember how can you have all of these capacities just by random blind chance so I said well all right I believe in God he said well that is not much well if you are sinking it is an awful lot to let your foot hit on something solid and I thought well yes I believe in God but wait a minute I couldn't stop there just in the belief

in God I couldn't stop there if God then does exist that is the observation of creation around me and myself and as I observe creation I see the design and I see the purposes I see the delicate balances in nature I

see the oxygen nitrogen cycles I see the water dry land proportions two thirds to one third all of these are by design they must be because they are all necessary for man's existence if God had a design and a purpose for all things then he must have had a design and a purpose for me and if God has a purpose for me then what is God's purpose for me and that is at the point that this man was who came to Jesus what is God's purpose for me this is basically what is his question what is the first commandment really what is the most important thing first being in order not what is

the very first commandment God gave the first commandment was don't eat the tree in the middle of the garden but first in the order that is the most important commandment of God what is it and Jesus said hear oh Israel the Lord our God is one Lord he goes back to Deuteronomy and what is known as the Shema the here it is that portion that the Jews roll up in these little boxes that they tie on their wrists that they put on their foreheads they all have this Shema in it hear oh Israel the Lord our God is one Lord it used to be in their feast days when they would gather in the Temple Mount that they would start chanting this and it would build and build and build as they would chant together hear oh Israel the Lord our God is one Lord it is interesting to me that even in this declaration of

the primary commandment that the word one the Lord our God is one Lord the word one is the Hebrew word Akkad which is a compound unity there is another Hebrew word for one Yaqid which is an absolute unity now but I have one hand now in the one hand there are the four fingers and the thumb so you have one hand but in it is a compound unity there are better examples of compound unity you have one egg but it is composed of a shell a white and a yolk yet it is one egg compound unity the two shall be one speaking of marriage there is two but they become one the compound unity so the Lord our God is Akkad a compound unity is one Lord it is also interesting to me and it is a baffler to the Jehovah Witnesses that here and elsewhere in the New Testament the name Yahweh is translated into the Greek

Kurios the title that was commonly given to Jesus Christ now if there is so much on the Jehovah's or Jehovah Witnesses and there is so much to that name Jehovah evidently Jesus and the New Testament writers didn't know that because instead of translating the name Jehovah into Greek they use the Greek word Kurios which is the Greek word for Lord which is the title that was given to Jesus Christ and we read that God has given him a name that is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Kurios which is the translation for Jehovah so interesting problem that they have to wrestle with Jesus is saying the primary thing the most important the basic thing is that you must know the true and the living God that is first

knowing the true and the living God but with so many religions this was my next step as I was building my own faith and relationship with God and so I studied for a time Mohammedism I studied Buddhism and I began to make a serious study of the Bible if God does exist and God did create me for a purpose then it would be necessary for God to reveal himself to man early in the history of man and God would of necessity have to perpetuate that revelation to the present day so I immediately rejected all of the religious systems of the past that have fallen by the wayside I didn't bother to look into Greek mythology or Roman mythology or these other religions that have already you know are parts of the history of man but are not current today because that would be an admission that God wasn't

capable of keeping the revelation to the present time and that God wasn't interested in man today he was only interested in the early man and he doesn't care what happens to us today all of these new religions that are coming out in recent years these men who finally have received the true revelation of God it's been hid from all men up until now until we're blessed by this prophet who has now the true understanding

of God and it brings us this new light and a new way and I rejected all that because that immediately then dismisses all of those people that have been born and died up to the present time as if God doesn't care about them but suddenly God is now interested in man I couldn't buy that it had to be a revelation of God that began early in the history of man and was maintained to

the present day and that's why I chose the three that I did but as I studied, the more I studied, the more I became convinced that the Bible was indeed the revelation of God and today I have no question, no qualms, no doubts that it is indeed the revelation of God to man separate, apart, distinct and in many cases in opposition to the religious systems of man for the religious systems are man's attempt to reach out to God where Christianity is God's attempt to reach man in the religious system, man being good enough to be accepted by God and if man can be good enough to be accepted by God he has to just trust in the grace of God there's no good work that you can do it is not by works of righteousness that we have done but by His grace alone so rather than a system of works that can bring

you to God it bypasses all that and says there's nothing you can do to be worthy of God you can only receive His grace, His love, His mercy that He extends to you through His Son Jesus Christ you can't reach Him and of course as I read the Bible I became fascinated with that prophetic aspect of the Bible which the Bible itself declares is the built-in proof of its origin, that the Bible originates with God that you might know that I am God and there is none other like me I'm going to tell you things before they happen so that when they happen you will know that I am indeed the Lord Jesus said I've told you these things before they come to pass so that when they come to pass you will know that prophetic element that we can even up until the present time read and know that God has spoken of

the very days in which we now exist and has prophesied in advance things that we see in the world around us the fact of the nation of Israel whether or not the Arabs want to recognize that they are there God's Word said they would be there and the nation the movement that you read about all the time towards electronic funds transfers and you're seeing the systems inaugurated in the stores when you go to these stores that are now using these scanning cash registers God said I've told you in advance so that you might believe and so that built-in proof system the most important thing for any man is to discover hear O Israel the Lord our God is one Lord it's important that you know who God is secondly you must come into a loving relationship with Him and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with

all thy heart the deepest area of your life with all your soul that conscious area of your life within the mind and with all thy strength love God supremely God must become the center of your existence the center of your life and all men's lives revolve around some axis there is that center to every man's life and it is important that you look into yourself and find out what is the center of your life upon what does your life revolve what is the axis upon which your life is revolving and with most people it is self for most people are living self-centered lives but the Bible assures you that the self-centered life is destined for emptiness and frustration and the book of Ecclesiastes gives you a classic example of Solomon who lived the self-centered life did everything for himself and

ended up with that plaintive cry vanity vanity or emptiness emptiness everything is empty and frustrating he did it all he had it all but because it was centered around himself it was unfulfilling and he ended as a bitter cynic as does that person who lives for himself when you get to the end of the road you say it wasn't worth it life is a mistake tragic mistake it's a farce there's no meaning there's no purpose I began as an accident I go out as an accident and there's no reason oh how empty how futile that's because you've got yourself at the center of your life you need to get God at the center of your being and that's what Jesus is

saying is the most important that's primary get God at the center of your life and come into a loving relationship with him thou shalt love the Lord thy

God now the second commandment in order, in priority similar to the first it's love your neighbor as yourself you cannot do this unless God is at the center of your life you see he's striking at that self-centered life because now instead of loving yourself supremely you've got to love your neighbor as you love yourself you can't do that unless you love God supremely and it's only as you love God supremely that you can fulfill the second loving your neighbor as yourself but in this is all the law and the prophets this sums up the whole Old Testament it's what it's all about a loving relationship with God that you might have a meaningful meaningful relationship with your fellow man God at the vertical axis of your life in order that the horizontal plane might be in balance now people get

all messed up in this horizontal plane their interpersonal relationships are just messed up completely and so you go to a shrink and you try to understand yourself and why do I react and why do I respond and why do I yell and why do I scream and why do I drive people away and why do I act in such an anti-social way and all and he tries to delve into your psyche and all and to tell you if you'll just do this and that and take a little Valium and all and it won't make any difference and you know and so he's trying to help you to balance out these interpersonal relationships out on the horizontal plane and so no sooner do you get one in the focus and you sort of balance it then the whole thing you begin to go overboard and the other side is way up and get up on the other side and jump up

there so that I can balance this thing out and so you see people spending their lives trying to keep things in balance and it's always just sort of topsy-turvy you gotta come to the center axis man it's out of kilter your relationship with God is just way off and if your axis is tilted then the horizontal plane spinning around that axis is going to be just in the crazy you know whirl up and down up and down, up and down, up and down until you say oh God stop this thing I want off first thing get right with God know God, love God the second then will fall into order loving thy neighbor as thyself now this fellow was intrigued with the answer he thought alright I'll buy that and he repeated it just to confirm it in his mind and he said Master that's good you've told the truth for there is

only one God and there is none other but He and to love Him with all of the heart and with all of the understanding and the soul and the strength and to love the neighbor as yourself is more important than all of the burnt offerings or sacrifices that you could ever give and Jesus when he saw that it was sinking in and he answered discreetly said to him you're not far from the kingdom of God you're not far from the kingdom of God because the moment God comes at the center of your life you are in the kingdom of God that's what the kingdom of God is about it's having the king on the throne the moment you bow and submit your life to God as king as the lord of your life then you're in the kingdom of God you see but no man can serve two masters no man can have two kings and if you are sitting

on the throne of your life if you're living a self-centered life then you're not in the kingdom of God and you can't be in the kingdom of God as long as you're living a self-centered life it's not until you're living a God-centered life that you've really entered into the kingdom and this fellow was beginning to see the picture and Jesus said hey you're not far from the kingdom get God at the center of your life and you've come into the kingdom of God after that they just didn't dare ask him any more questions and so Jesus while he was still there in the temple said to the scribes how is it that you scribes say that the Messiah is the son of David now this of course was something that was taught that the Messiah will be the son of David because there were many predictions in the Old

Testament he will sit upon the throne of David he'll be the root out of the stem of Jesse and so forth and God promised to David you know I will build you a house and by this David understood that the Messiah was to come through his seed and so how is it that you say that the Messiah is the son of David when David himself through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and Jesus here recognizing the Holy Spirit as the one who inspired the writing of David David by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in Psalm 110 said the Lord or Jehovah Yahweh said to my Lord sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool David therefore himself called him Lord from whence then is he his son in that patriarch society the father always ruled as long as the old man was alive he ruled his word

was law even when his sons were 80 90 years old if he was still alive his word was the law and in that culture there is no way that a father would call his son Lord that would be a total antithesis to the culture and society itself and so how is it that if the Messiah is the son of David how is it that David called him Lord through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit how can he be his son now the common people heard him gladly and he said unto them in his doctrine beware of the scribes which love to go in their long robes and they love the salutations in the market places oh rabbi rabbi doctor doctor they love the chief seats in the synagogue and the uppermost rooms in the feast and yet these scoundrels devour widows houses they take advantage of the little old women on social security

with their letters that they write of the desperate need that God has for their social security check this month or God is going to be broke and God's business is going to fail unless they sacrifice I've got stack of letters in there that you can't believe you can't believe the junk that these men write I know that there's got to be a hot spot seven times hotter for a pretense they make these long prayers and hey all right Jesus said it they're going to receive the hotter spot free translation they shall receive the greater damnation go to it Lord it's hard for me to express how I feel about those who would take advantage of people for religious purposes under a religious guise I really had no intention when I was a young man of being a minister I had very set ideas I was always sort of a

goal oriented person and I knew from the time I was in junior high school that I was going to be a neurosurgeon and I had studied all about the brain from the time as a kid I'd check out all of the books from the library and read about the brain fascinated with the human brain and I just knew I was going to be a neurosurgeon taking all the courses to prepare me for that profession and I had a big thing against most of the ministers that I knew I didn't feel that they were true honest normal people I saw a lot of hypocrisy and it troubled me and that's one of the reasons why I never wanted to go into the ministry but when the Lord began to speak to my heart concerning the ministry I said oh no way you know don't be one of those guys I'm too normal Lord you know I don't like to wear ties I

don't like to dress up in suits all the time I love sports and Lord said who asked you to wear a tie all the time who said you can't enjoy sports who said you can't be normal you'll find me a very normal person I don't try and create some you know illusion that I'm super spiritual or better or God help us but then this thing of this gimmickry on money this is the thing that really bothered me thoroughly and I said Lord I could never ask people for money and the Lord assured me that he would be my supply that he'd take care of my needs and so this is the thing of the ministry that I just it galls me this the many many gimmicks that are used for raising funds or for extracting or extorting money out of people let's go on Jesus went over and watched them give by the treasury and he was

beholding how the people cast the money into the treasury and how many that were rich cast in their large gifts now Jesus had earlier sort of come against this he said you know when you give don't be like the

Pharisees who like to sound a trumpet before them and make a big display over what they're giving to God he said don't let your right hand know what your left hand is doing just give to the Father in secret he'll reward you don't look for the reward of man the awes and the oohs so he watched these rich people casting in these large amounts with great ostentation but there came a certain poor widow and she threw in two mites which make a farthing I have some mites at home and I wanted to bring them tonight and it was my intention to bring them to show you a mite you can buy a hundred

of them for a penny over in Israel they're worth about one one hundredth of a cent this little gal threw in two of them and Jesus called his disciples to him and he said to them I'm going to tell you the truth about this little woman this poor widow has cast in more than all of those which are casting their money there into the treasury for they all gave from their abundance but she out of her need did cast in all that she had even all of her living God doesn't measure your gifts by the amount never but by what it cost you by that measure God always measures what we give to him what did it cost me to give David said I will not give to the Lord that which cost me nothing Paul the apostle talking to the church of Corinth suggested that we examine ourselves he said for if we will judge

ourselves then we will not be judged of God as you look at yourself tonight as you examine your heart can you honestly say that your heart your life is centered in God that he is the center of your existence that your life is revolving around him if not then you're far from the kingdom and you are heading down a road that can only bring despair emptiness and frustration I would encourage you discover the true and the living God make him the center of your affections love him with all of your heart with all of your soul with all your mind with all your strength and you'll find out how God intended man to live rich fulfilled as you walk with him thus may you walk this week with God at the center of your life may you be filled with his spirit and may God by his spirit guide you strengthen

you help you in Jesus name

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