

The Temple Visits

by W.F. Anderson

Jesus' last visit to the temple is a powerful example of true sacrifice, submission, and service, and teaches us the importance of learning from His teachings.

Duration: 29:10

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Mark 4:1-20, Mark 4:35-41, Mark 12:28-34, Mark 12:38-44, Luke 10:25-37

Topics: "Discipleship Lessons", "Faith And Obedience"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the disciples' slow understanding of the word of God despite the teachings and miracles of Jesus. He refers to the parables in Mark's gospel as a means to instruct the disciples about the Lord's identity and the impact of his word. The speaker highlights the disciples' failure to grasp these teachings, even after being tested in various situations. He contrasts the disciples' lack of understanding with the example of a poor woman who demonstrates submission, service, and sacrifice by giving all she has to the Lord.

Transcript

Would you turn to Mark's Gospel, Chapter 12, please? The Gospel according to Mark, Chapter 12. Reading from verse 41. After much of McCabe's experience thirty years ago, it might be well if you'd better put up a book table back there.

Somebody carries something from the conference anyhow. Mark, Chapter 12, verse 41. Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury, and many that were rich cast in much.

And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abundance, but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

This was the last time the Lord Jesus Christ was ever in the temple in Jerusalem during his earthly ministry. The very last incident that closed his public ministry in the temple was the incident of this poor woman who put in two mites in the treasury. The very first time the Lord Jesus Christ was ever in the temple, there was a widow there as well.

When he was about six years of age, and his mother brought him into the temple, and Simeon took him up in his arms and blessed God for him, a widow woman by the name of Anna came into the temple at that very moment. And learning of him, she prayed and gave thanks to God, and spoke of him to all those in Jerusalem who looked for the Gentians. And now the last instance in our Lord's life connected with the temple, there was a widow there as well.

In the first instance, the Lord Jesus Christ, as an infant of no more than six weeks of age, would have been completely unaware of that woman who spoke so well of him. And in the last instance, the widow, the woman herself, was completely unaware of the Lord Jesus Christ. She did not know that he saw or suppose of what she had done.

In that first instance, it was a prophesying woman because Luke tells us she was a prophet. In the last instance, it was a poor woman who had but two mice for all her living. In that first instance, that widow gave thanks to God.

She gave the fruit of her lips. In the last instance, the woman gave the fruit of her life. All her living, she gave everything she had to God as a gift.

And in this last instance in the Lord's ministry in the temple, when he closed his public ministry to the people of Israel, this woman is the one bright spot in the last week. From the time the Lord Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem until his crucifixion, this woman was that one bright spot. I'm taking it for granted that John's chronology is correct when he puts the anointing of the Lord by Mary of Bethany prior to the triumphal entry, so that in this last week, this woman's act was a grasp of refreshing water for the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I want to look at what she did as the answer to two things. First, the hardness of the disciples. And secondly, the hatred of the religious leaders.

And what this woman's gift meant to the Lord Jesus Christ in the light of those two things. And if our hearts are filled with the Lord Jesus Christ as we've been so beautifully exhorted already today, then this to me will be the automatic result. What this woman did will be the result of a heart filled with the Lord.

One of the most important pieces of work the Lord Jesus Christ did in his earthly ministry was to train twelve men, one of course of whom was a traitor, but to train twelve to carry on the ministry once he would ascend to the right hand of the Father. And as you trace through the Synoptic Gospels particularly, you notice the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in training these twelve men. You find it so forcibly brought to our attention in Mark's Gospel.

In the first eight chapters, after the Lord Jesus Christ has called his disciples and chosen twelve and then takes them with him, that they might be with him, that he might send them forth to preach and to cast out demons and so on. You notice how over and over again he teaches them certain things. He illustrates those teachings by miracles.

He gives them parables to inform them, to instruct their minds, uses common everyday terms and items of life to try to bring before them the truths that are so necessary for them to know before they can successfully carry on the work of the Lord. And the first thing they have to learn is the thing that's been brought before us today already, who this man Jesus is. And patiently the Lord Jesus is trying to instruct them in the first eight chapters of Mark's Gospel as to who he is.

Miracles are performed in the sight of his disciples that they might see through that parable accident who this man is whom they're following and how slow they were to learn it. You remember in the fourth chapter of Mark's Gospel where the Lord gives the parables that should have instructed these men not only as to who the Lord is but as to the effect of the word. Why were so many people rising up in opposition to the Lord Jesus Christ? And in that parable of the sower the Lord teaches his disciples why.

Why is it all don't flock to him as they have done? The parable of the sower is the answer. But after all those parables, after all the miracles, when they are put to the test, the close of chapter four, they fail miserably. Out in that little boat on a storm-tossed sea with the Lord Jesus Christ asleep in the hind of part of the vessel filled with fear they come to wake him.

And mind you they were in danger. The ship was filling with the water we're told. They were in danger.

And being experienced fishermen knowing that sea as they knew the back of their hands they realized the danger they were in. And yet they couldn't trust the one with whom they'd been walking for all these months. And when the Lord stilled that tempest the men rebuked the disciples.

You remember their question in their hearts? What manner of man is this? Who is this that even the wind and the sea obey him? They didn't yet know who he was. You remember after feeding four thousands he got into a boat again with his disciples and crossed the sea. And when they reached the other side and were walking in the region of Bethsaida the Lord began to warn his disciples beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Herodians.

And the disciples began to argue or think among themselves He's saying that because we'd forgotten to bring any bread. They had only one loaf with them. And on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee that could be tragedy.

On the western side, no, because it was a populous land and bread could have easily been secured. But where they were going on the northeastern side of the Sea of Galilee it would have been very difficult to secure bread. And here were twelve disciples in the Lord thirteen men with one loaf of bread.

And when the Lord mentions leaven all they can think about is a loaf of bread. And then he marks a count on nine pointed questions. The Lord says to his disciples Do ye not yet understand? I have fed five thousand.

How much did you have left? Twelve. I fed four thousand. How much did you have left over? Seven large handfuls.

And you're worried about having only one loaf of bread when I've yet grasped who I am. And it may have been those questions that opened the minds of the disciples because it's in that same eighth chapter that the Lord Jesus asks them Who do men say that I am? And there was their very response. And then finally the Lord turns to them But who do you say that I am? And finally the light has broken in upon Peter's soul.

Thou art the Christ. He had learned the first thing the Lord was trying to teach his disciples. Now immediately for the first time the Lord plainly tells them he's going to die.

Once they have learned who he is they must next learn why he had come. And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must be rejected and suffer many things and be killed and the third day rise again. Three times in Mark's gospel chapters eight, nine, and ten the Lord Jesus Christ plainly unfolds to his

disciples his approaching death and in increasing detail he tells them of the events that await him in the city of Jerusalem.

On all three occasions they fail to understand. In chapter eight the response is given by Peter This be far from thee, Lord. No, Lord.

I've just discovered who you are. You're the Christ for whom we've been waiting. You can't talk about dying now.

In chapter nine as they're on their way up to Jerusalem and the Lord walking on ahead of his disciples deep in thought about his approaching death the disciples Mark describes in coming a little behind him amazed and then behind them the multitude. And as they went the Lord began to teach them again of his suffering and death and resurrection in Jerusalem. And they were afraid to ask him.

And when they reached the house the Lord says, What were you disputing by the way? And they were ashamed of the reason for they had been disputing which of them was the Christ. And all the time the Lord had been teaching them of his death they were concerned with which one of them would be the chief among the twelve apostles. In chapter ten when the Lord for the third time plainly tells them of his coming death he is almost interrupted by the eagerness of James and John to make a request of him they rush aside and the Lord has this strange teaching of an approaching death.

And they would ask him that in his coming glory they might sit one on the right hand and the other on the left. Their only interest in it. Each time the Lord teaches them a lesson.

In chapter eighty he teaches them the lesson of sacrifice. He that would sacrifice his life will lose it. But he that loses his life for my sake and for the gospel's sake if any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and that's the voluntary association of the Christian with the death of Christ.

Let him take up his cross and follow me. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? I am persuaded we should translate it life it's the same word he's just been talking about. Whosoever will save his life whosoever will lose his life it's the same word.

What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his life? What shall a man give in exchange for his life? And he teaches them a lesson of sacrifice. And he asks two questions. What will a man get? Is the first question.

And what will a man give? Is the second question. If a man is willing to sell his life he may in the language of the Lord Jesus gain the whole world. But now the second question the Lord asks is what will he give in exchange for his life? When that disciple comes to the end of his earthly journey and he discovers he has done the wrong thing with his life though he has gained the whole world he's gone in for things of time and not for things of eternity and the result of his diligence and the use of his life for the things of time is that he has done the whole world and now his life has come to an end and he realizes he made a mistake.

What is there that he can give to get that life back again? Will we as disciples learn something today? You must lose your life. You must lose it. You are going to lose it now so far as the estimation of the world is concerned or you're going to lose it in the day of the Lord's glory but lose it you must.

You can save it now and go in for what you want but in the day of the Lord's glory you'll discover you've lost it. Or you can lose it now and discover that same thing but they couldn't understand. In chapter 9 the

Lord teaches them the lesson of submission.

He takes a little child to become as a little child and while you disciples will argue about which should be the greatest the lesson is the lesson of submission to no place. In chapter 10 he uses himself for an example. Even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life around him for many.

And he taught them the lesson or rather the lesson of service. The first time he taught them the lesson of sacrifice. The second time the lesson of submission and the third time the lesson of service.

Now over against the hardness of the disciples in not understanding here is this woman who didn't even know him who only knew the Lord God of Israel who knew nothing of his Son whom he had sent into the world but her heart taken up with the Lord God of Israel was the answer in every respect to the hardness of the disciples. She had learned the lesson of sacrifice. She gave everything she had all her living.

She had learned the lesson of submission. She had come unobtrusively. For as the wealthy came and as the Lord described them when they gave alms they blew a trumpet so that all could see it may have been the Lord had reference to the trumpet-shaped mounds on the thirteen chests that sat in the court of the women where the people could give their money.

And that the rich as they came in would swing their coins against that brazen mouth so that all could hear the rattle of it. And those standing by who were watching people give could admire publicly with their praise But if the Lord hadn't called to the disciples' attention what this woman had done no one would ever have known. She'd learned that lesson of forgiveness.

And as we shall see I trust if we have time she had learned the lesson of forgiveness to the Lord and to her fellow men. For those chests were divided into two sections nine of them were marked for the Lord four of them were marked for the poor. I don't know what she could have done.

She could have kept one for herself in her poverty-stricken state. And I'm guessing you understand it's imagination. I hope it's a sanctified imagination.

But I rather imagine she put one of those mites in a chest marked for the Lord. And one of those mites in a chest marked for that she had learned the lesson. She was also refreshing to the Lord's heart in that she answered the hatred of the religious leaders.

As you read the life of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel of Mark you'll find the opposition to Him beginning in chapter 2 and reaching a real crux and climax in chapter 11. In chapter 11 when the Lord Jesus Christ enters the city of Jerusalem on that first day according to Mark's account He simply entered the temple and looked around the whole city and the next day He came in and cleansed the temple. A den of robbers came with thieves and the chief priests furious at what He had done determined how they might destroy Him.

He had robbed them of their ill-gotten gain. He had in charge of the sale of the animals for sacrifice. Of raking off a 15% return on the changers of money.

And now it was all gone in one stroke. The righteous indignation of the Son of God as He cleansed that temple from its filthiness came to His cause. And now they lay a deliberate plan by which they can destroy Him.

They first attempt to arrest Him but failing in that they seek to disgrace Him publicly. Four times at the close of chapter 11 and in the chapter 12 of Mark's gospel certain people try to trap the Lord in deliberate question. The chief priests sent certain ones publicly to impale the Lord on the horns of a dilemma from which He could not escape.

The first question they ask themselves at the close of chapter 11 they ask the question By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority? And it was a question of authority. Now the Lord's response was not cleverness. The Lord wasn't being clever.

When He asked them in return the baptism of John was it of heaven or of men? And they found a question they couldn't answer. For if they were to say it was of heaven He'll say then why weren't you baptized? If it were to say of men the people holding John to be a prophet would have stoned them. Now the Lord wasn't simply trying to escape their question.

He was answering it. There has always been a man sent from God. With the authority of heaven that is ministry you reject it.

You have already publicly rejected the authority of heaven. And publicly He showed them that if seeing authority they could recognize that they refused it. And if the refusal was due to ignorance then they couldn't recognize authority when they saw it.

A question of authority. They were the rulers of the temple. What right did He have to come in and interfere with the way they were running God's house? For the Lord refused that in chapter 12 in the early verses of the parable of the vineyard.

God sent messengers stoned, beaten, killed. What is His authority? Having therefore one son He sent Him. There's His authority.

God had sent His son to get the fruits of the vineyard of Israel from its keeper. These very chief priests. There was His authority.

But those whom they sent formed an ungodly coalition of Pharisees and Herodians who doctrinally were at each other's throats. The Herodians professed outwardly to desire subjection to the empire of Rome through Herod the Tetrarch. The Pharisees, intense nationalists selfish with a disgrace to the people of God to be subject to Caesar at all.

But they can unite in a common hatred of the Lord Jesus Christ. Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar? Now if He says yes, it's lawful to give tribute to Caesar then His public entry into Jerusalem is a farce. The cries of the multitude hosanna! Blessed be the kingdom of our father David.

It's all a farce. If He says yes, He raises the ire of the people against Him. If He says no, that's all they need to put an accusation before Pilate here is a man who is teaching rebellion against the authority of Rome and he calls for a silver coin which couldn't be found in the precincts of the temple only Jewish money could be used there.

And I wonder what went on during that wait in the silence of that crowd while someone went out to get that silver coin and when it was brought in the Lord held it up whose image in superscription is this? Caesar's. For whatever bears Caesar's image you render to Caesar. And then the crux of it whatever bears God's image you render to God.

And man was made in the image and likeness of God. And had they given to God what belonged to God they would never have had to give to Caesar what belonged to Caesar. The next question was raised by the Sadducees immediately upon the heels of the Ottomans.

The Sadducees did not believe in resurrection neither angels nor spirits and they asked a fantastic question in the resurrection whose wife would she be? And they thought the only answer the Lord could give was to admit his error in believing in a resurrection because here's a possible situation with an impossible solution. There couldn't be any resurrection from the dead. This woman had had seven husbands.

That would create an impossible situation if you laid all seven on them at one time. Oh, I marvel at the wisdom of the Lord. I marvel at the... Out of a passage I suppose no one of us would ever have dreamed of as proving the resurrection.

I am the God of Abraham... Not I was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Not I was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

For Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have been dead for centuries and out of their own scriptures for they believed the Pentateuch. Out of their own scriptures he answered them. And the last question asked the Lord was asked by a scribe.

Which is the greatest commandment? That was a perennial question among the doctors of the law and the Lord summed it up very nicely taking his text from the Old Testament. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength. And the questions were finished.

You remember the Lord asked the question but it's not to remain to our subject this morning. And now passing from that court the court of the Gentiles where the multitudes could gather to hear his teaching he went into the court of the women where the treasury was kept and he sat down over against the treasury and watched how not what he watched how they gave.

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