

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Mark 12: 35-44

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. We'll continue to read Mark chapter 12, verses 35 to 44.

Jesus, as the Passover Lamb, had to undergo inspection to prove that He had no defects before He could be placed on the altar. Mark records four rounds of testing that took place in the temple. After they had tested Him, Mark 12:34 says that from then on, no one dared to ask Him any more questions. This indicates that Jesus completely passed the inspection of these four rounds of testing. When people approached Jesus with malicious intent to question Him, He would either point out their misunderstanding or incompleteness in their knowledge. However, when people no longer dared to ask Jesus anything, He began to teach them. This reflects our condition as well.

Most of the time, we come to Jesus only when we encounter difficulties that we cannot handle on our own, seeking answers to our questions. Jesus can only respond to your questions with some insight and revelation. However, such understanding is partial and situational. If you only come to Jesus in such circumstances, your understanding of Him will not be complete. It is only when we have no difficulties and are willing to come before the Lord Jesus to hear what He has to say to us that He can reveal Himself to us according to His will.

Verse 35: "Then Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the temple, 'How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David?'"

Jesus' teaching often begins with questions, and likewise, we often approach Jesus with questions, bringing to Him the things in our lives that we find unpleasant or difficult to understand. However, these questions are often trivial matters. In contrast, Jesus' questions are profound. What did Jesus ask? He asked why the

scribes said that Christ is the Son of David. This is a significant matter concerning the identity of Christ. The scribes were experts in Scripture, and their assertion that Christ is the Son of David must have had biblical grounds. For example, in Jeremiah 33:14-16, the Lord says, "The days are coming... I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness... In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this is the name by which He will be called: the Lord our righteousness." Here, it is clearly stated that God will raise up a Branch of righteousness, which is a descendant of David. This passage foreshadows the coming Messiah, who is Christ, the descendant of David.

Similarly, in Isaiah 11:1-2, there is a prophecy about the Messiah, stating, "A Branch shall grow out of his roots... The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him." Here, it speaks of the Messiah being the Branch from Jesse's roots, and since Jesse is David's father, it is evident that the Messiah is also descended from David. Therefore, the scribes' understanding was not wrong; Christ is indeed the Son of David, supported by the facts of the Old Testament Scriptures. Then Jesus goes on to quote another passage.

Verse 36: "For David himself said by the Holy Spirit: 'The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'""

Jesus here is quoting Psalm 110:1, where it says, "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" Jesus means that the first "Lord" refers to Yahweh, the protector God; the second "Lord" is the "my Lord" spoken of by David, which should be the Messiah, also known as Christ. So, it's the Father God saying to Christ, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." Psalm 110:1 prophesied Jesus Christ sitting at the right hand of the Father after His resurrection and ascension, with God making His enemies His footstool.

Verse 37: "David therefore himself calls Him 'Lord'; how is He then his Son?" And the common people heard Him gladly.

At this moment, Jesus presents a challenging question regarding the identity of the Christ: if David calls the Christ "Lord," then how can the Christ also be David's descendant? Because if David acknowledges the Christ as his Lord, then the Christ must exist before David and be greater than him. How, then, could the Christ also be David's descendant?

As a descendant of David, the Christ must come after David and be lesser than him. On one hand, Christ is David's Lord, and on the other hand, Christ is David's descendant. Both of these assertions have biblical basis and should not be incorrect. How do you reconcile these seemingly contradictory facts? The scribes present are left speechless, with no answer. The people find this remarkable; they enjoy hearing Jesus' teachings because His words are filled with illumination, life, and authority, unlike the scribes who merely repeat what they've been taught. Jesus, at that moment, only presents the question without providing an answer, and Mark does not add his own interpretation.

Dear brothers and sisters, can you reconcile these two matters? Thank the Lord that we have the Bible in our hands, which is the sum of God's Word. As long as you are willing to study the Scriptures, you will quickly find the answers. But Jesus left behind a question; its purpose was not only for the audience to understand how to reconcile, but also to understand Jesus' burden through this question. Let's first see how to reconcile these two matters.

In John 1:1, it says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Christ is the Word that existed from the beginning, the second person of the Holy Trinity; He is naturally before David and greater than David. Then, in Galatians 4:4-5, it says, "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons." This Word, who existed from the beginning, came down to earth as a human, born of a woman and born under the law. The purpose? To redeem those under the law. So, Jesus Christ

is not only the Word from the beginning, but also, for the plan of God's redemption, He came to earth as a human, born under the law and born of a woman.

As a human, Jesus has a genealogy. In Luke 3:23-38, it records the genealogy of Jesus Christ, which is the genealogy of His mother, Mary, proving that Jesus is indeed a descendant of David. And in Matthew 1:1-16, it presents the genealogy of Jesus Christ in name, which is the genealogy of His foster father, Joseph. From this genealogy, you can see that He is also a descendant of David in name, and He is also in the lineage of kingship. If we examine Romans 1:3-4, it says, "concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." This verse hides a very important truth: after Jesus rose from the dead, He was declared to be the Son of God with power. But since Jesus was already the Son of God, why did He need to be declared as such with power? It turns out that Jesus' humanity had to pass through death and resurrection, and His human nature was then exalted, becoming a Son of God as well, so that His humanity could enter into eternity. Jesus went through this process for all the saints, so that He could fulfill what Hebrews 2:10 says, that He wants to lead many sons to glory, calling them brethren without shame.

Jesus left behind this burden in His words, so that people, after careful consideration, not only could reconcile these two matters, but also could learn to know Christ in all things from within. In fact, this is also the central burden of the church in the temple, that people learn to know Christ from within. Next, Christ will raise two matters, both of which are developed according to this central burden.

Verse 38: "Then He said to them in His teaching, 'Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces,'"

The scribes were highly respected in Jewish society because they studied and taught the law, which was considered the word of God. When they were in the temple, they wore long white robes adorned with fringes, which prominently displayed their status. Not only did they wear these robes while serving in the

temple, but they also liked to wear them outside during processions, showing off their noble status to the people. They also enjoyed being greeted with respect in the marketplaces, demonstrating their popularity and esteem among the people. All these outward displays were sources of pride and joy for the scribes.

Verse 39: Jesus said, "They love the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces."

In the synagogue, which is a place where Jews study the law and worship God, the scribes liked to sit in the most honorable positions. As for banquets, they were places where people enjoyed and rested in their daily lives. Even at banquets, they insisted on being given the chief seats. They were very concerned about their positions and outward appearances, always seeking to be seen as superior.

Verse 40: "who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."

They like to pretend to make very long prayers, making people think they are devout, but in secret, when no one is watching, they devour widows' houses. When a widow loses her husband, she loses her means of support and can only rely on the property left by her deceased husband to survive. And at that time, most women were uneducated and easily deceived. Astonishingly, the scribes abused the respect people had for their position, usurping widows' property, depriving them of their means of livelihood. This is truly despicable. Jesus said that these people would receive a heavier punishment. Jesus clearly tells the people here not to judge based on outward appearances but to pay attention to what people do in secret. Jesus first mentioned a negative example, and then He mentioned a positive one.

Verse 41: "Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much."

At this moment, Jesus decided to leave the temple. He began to walk out, first arriving at the women's court, where the treasury was located at that time. The women's court had thirteen offering boxes arranged in the colonnades. The openings of these boxes were shaped like trumpets, so when coins were dropped in, they made a clanging sound as they fell into the box. At that time, offerings were made publicly. Jesus came to this place to observe how people were contributing to the treasury. He saw several wealthy individuals making their contributions, dropping in large amounts of money, causing a lively clatter as the coins tumbled into the boxes. Whenever there was a series of clinks, people looked on with admiration at the wealthy contributors. These wealthy individuals, in turn, proudly accepted the admiring glances of the crowd, waving to acknowledge their attention.

Verse 42: "Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans."

The poor widow had only two small coins. The term "small coins" in the original text is "Lepton," which was the smallest denomination of Jewish bronze coins at that time. Two small coins equaled one large coin, with the original term for "large coin" being "Quadrans," the smallest denomination of Roman bronze coins at that time. These two small coins were all the widow had. She could have offered one small coin and kept the other for herself, but instead, she threw in both small coins. After observing for a while, Jesus began to speak.

Verse 43: "So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury;'"

At this moment, Jesus called His disciples to Him. The disciples had been following Jesus closely all along, but during various trials and tests, they had remained silent. Now, as Jesus prepared to leave the temple, this was His final lesson to the disciples within the temple. Whenever Jesus says, "Assuredly, I say to you," it signifies that

what follows is of great importance, and we should pay close attention. So, what did Jesus say? He pointed out that the poor widow had contributed more than all the others. Despite only offering two small copper coins, her contribution produced a significant sound. These two small coins amounted to more than what the wealthy individuals had given. Though the wealthy had contributed coins that created a series of attention-grabbing sounds, Jesus taught His disciples here to not judge based on outward appearances. Instead, they should focus on the heart. Rather than always looking to the wealthy in the church, they should pay more attention to those whose hearts are devoted to serving and loving the Lord, those willing to give and serve with a genuine heart.

Verse 44: "For all they put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood."

The wealthy individuals gave from their surplus, a small portion of what they had. But what about this widow? She gave everything she had, all her livelihood, from her own insufficiency. Jesus teaches us here that true giving is not measured by how much you put in, but by how much you have left. Although the wealthy contributed a lot, they still had plenty left. Yet, the widow's contribution, though small, was her entire means of support. By examining what people still have, we can discern whether their hearts truly love the Lord, whether they genuinely desire to give and serve the church and the Lord.

This principle applies not only to financial giving but also to the giving of time, which is perhaps even more valuable because it is the most precious resource in one's life. Especially for those who are employed, they carry many responsibilities in their daily lives. How much of their discretionary time they dedicate to the church also reflects their love for the Lord.

During my service in the church, I often witness employed believers setting aside time from their busy lives to serve: some prepare sermons, some practice hymns, some prepare meals, some engage in children's ministry, and some participate in financial stewardship. Each time I witness such acts, I am deeply moved. I

understand that it's not about how much time you give but about how much you have left in your discretionary time. The widow gave her all, leaving nothing behind. What about you?

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You! Through Your teaching in the temple, help us truly know You. To people, You are seen as David's descendant, but inwardly, You are the eternal God, David's Lord. Moreover, after Your death and resurrection, You brought humanity into divinity, opening up a new and living way for us. One day, we will all follow You into glory. What a wonderful gospel! Through all these things, You teach us not to look at the outside, but at the inside. Especially in matters of giving and serving, it's not about how much we put in, but how much we have left. Lord! Please examine my heart again, help me learn the lesson of giving, keep my heart increasingly loving You, increasingly willing to offer everything for You. May I increasingly love all people to serve Your church. Bless the church and church life where I am. I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen!