

Sunday, November 27, 2016
Pastor Don Denyes

Introduction to Mark 12:18-34

Some have said that the Bible is irrelevant because it was written long ago in a culture that is mostly foreign to most, completely foreign to some. It speaks about religious issues with which a lot of religious civilization has not dealt in hundreds of years. Moreover, it has not changed. Certainly as society evolves, our understanding of things must change as well.

And yet, the Bible still addresses the most pertinent questions of life: who are we? How did we get here? Who is God? What is He like? What hope can we have in the midst of a dark and troubled world? The Bible answers these questions and many more. In that way, our culture is no different than first century Palestine. We are still humans searching for meaning and searching for life beyond what we see around us. Jesus answered some of those very questions in His day and the answers reach down and speak to us just as much today...

Context

Jesus is in Jerusalem preparing for the Passover feast. This would take place at the end of the week (what we know as Good Friday). As has been discussed throughout the book of Mark, however, this is no ordinary annual feast. This is the feast where the various factions among the Jewish religious and political leadership would conspire to kill Him. Pharisees, Sadducees, elders, and scribes—each would play its own part to demonstrate that there is no aspect of human life (both public and private) which is not naturally against God and His message.

Structure

- I. Jesus discusses life after death (18-27)
- II. Jesus discusses the meaning of life (28-34)

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read Mark 12:18-34

“More Questions!”

11:28: By what authority are you doing...?

12:13: Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar?

I. Life After Death? (12:18)

- Antagonistic Question
- Nature of Life in Eternity
- Nature of God and His people

II. Life Before Death? (12:28)

- Honest Question
- Greatest Law?
- Love for God foremost, then others

Scriptural Ignorance

v. 27 You are badly mistaken!

Scriptural Knowledge

v. 34 You are not far from the Kingdom!

Discuss

- 1) What are some common cultural understandings of the meaning of life? What about life after death? Where do you think these ideas come from?

- 2) Jesus blamed the Sadducees unbelief in the resurrection on the fact that they did not know the Scriptures nor did they know the power of God. Besides the resurrection, what are some of the ways Scripture describes the power of God?
*Try to name as many ways as you can.

- 3) How does God's power give us hope not only for the ultimate resurrection from the dead, but for living out what He has commanded us to do in the meantime?

- 4) Pastor Don noted the differences between how the Sadducees approached Jesus manipulatively, but the scribe came earnestly seeking an answer. Which more accurately describes your relationship to God? What does it look like for someone to try to manipulate God?

- 5) There are many issues that arise in the Christian life, but none is more fundamental than how we love God. What does it look like to grow in our love for God? How can you tell when you have/are growing in that way?