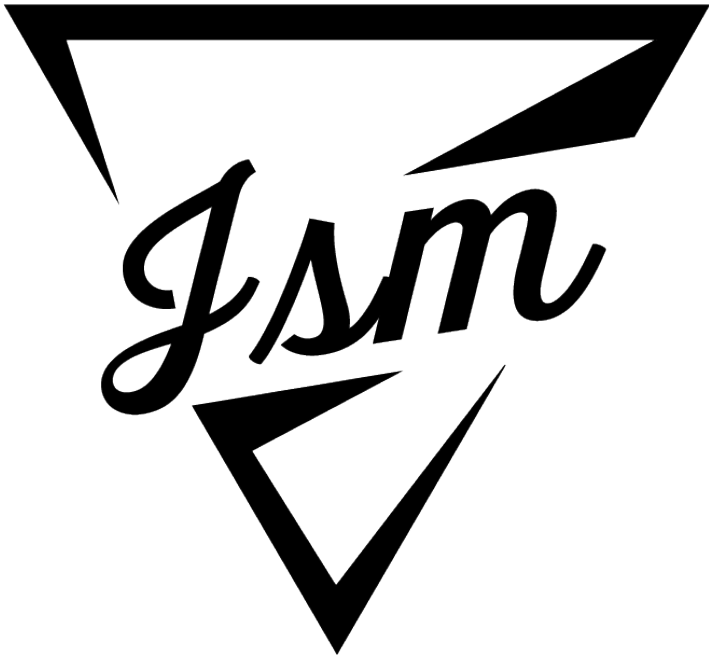


GOSPEL OF MARK

JOURNEY STUDENT MINISTRIES

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE



PRAY TOGETHER

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Amen.



READ THE TEXT

Mark 12:35-44 NIV

35 While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, "Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David? 36 David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared: "The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet." 37 David himself calls him 'Lord.' How then can he be his son?" The large crowd listened to him with delight. 38 As he taught, Jesus said, "Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, 39 and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets.

40 They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely." 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."

COMMENTARY

The crux is the first line, “ ‘The Lord said to my Lord...’ ” Psalm 110 was originally a coronation hymn that would have been sung, chanted, or recited at the inauguration of the kings of Judah and Israel. The opening line in Hebrew reads “ ‘The Lord (Yahweh) declared to my lord (adonai).’ ” The first Lord refers to God and the second to the king; that is, at his coronation the king of Israel was inducted as God’s vicegerent and seated symbolically at God’s right hand. The right hand signified honor and closeness to God, and legitimacy to rule with dominion and justice. The Psalm thus originally referred to God and the king of Israel. With the destruction of the monarchy in 586 b.c., Psalm 110 was reappropriated, with the rights of the king frequently being transferred to the Messiah, whose kingdom would not fail as had the Davidic monarchy. It was this subsequent interpretation that is reflected in Jesus’ quotation of Ps 110:1 and question in v. 36, where the first Lord refers to God and the second to the Messiah. A comparison of the two interpretations of the Psalm may arouse suspicion or skepticism in us today that the interpretation assumed by Jesus is less valid than its original sense, or even bogus. It surely cannot have seemed so to Jesus.

It is more probable that in his day the true and ultimate meaning of Psalm 110 was understood with reference to God and the Messiah, of whom the earthly Israelite monarchy had been a shadow or preparation. Thus, to return to the implication of the Psalm in Jesus’ question, if David, who was believed to be the author of the Psalm, said, “ ‘The Lord [= God] said to my Lord [= Messiah]: Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet,’ ” then the Messiah is obviously superior to David, and not merely a descendant, as Judaism popularly held.

In Jesus’ preceding argument with the Sadducees (12:18–27) he asserted that the resurrection is not simply an extension of earthly existence; here in the question about David’s son he argues that the Messiah is not simply an extension of his Davidic precursor. The Messiah will indeed be a recognized descendant of David, but he will surpass David’s lineage. “Son of David” may assert certain truths about the Messiah, but it falls short in essential ways of capturing his identity. The quotation from Psalm 110 is used here, as it was later used throughout Christian writings, ultimately not as a description of Jesus’ purpose and work, but as a description of his transcendent status, sitting at God’s honored and authoritative right. That is signaled in Jesus’ final cinching question, “ ‘How then can [Messiah] be [David’s] son?’ ” It is the same question Mark poses to his readers. The answer, of course, is that the Messiah is not simply David’s son; he is God’s Son.

THINGS TO NOTE

In the temple, others gave what they could spare, but the poor widow spared nothing. Others gave from their surplus, but she gave from her need, " 'all she had to live on.' "The nameless widow concludes Mark's account of Jesus' public ministry. The sacrifice of " 'all she had' " is the keystone in Mark's arch of faith. The initial call of Jesus to the fishermen beside the sea to leave all and " 'Come, follow me' " (1:17) is perfectly fulfilled in the giving of two simple lepta, which symbolize an undivided heart.

The chief purpose of the widow is as a model of discipleship. No gift, whether of money, time, or talent, is too insignificant to give, if it is given to God. And what is truly given to God, regardless how small and insignificant, is transformed into a pearl of great price. What may look like a great gift, conversely, may in reality be little in comparison with what one could give. The widow's giving " 'all she had' " is a true fulfillment of the call to discipleship to follow Jesus by losing one's life (8:35). The final Greek words of the chapter might be paraphrased, "she lay down her whole life." That is what Jesus will do on Golgotha.

APPLY THE TEXT

1) What is the significance of Jesus' argument around Psalm 110? If Jesus is God, how does it impact our relation to him and his word?

2) What is holding you back from giving "all that you have" like the widow? What reservations or aspirations do you have that you're struggling to offer to

3) What might God be inviting you to learn from these stories and implement in your own life?

