

Mark 12:35-37

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Preacher: Nathan Raynor

[0 : 00] And amen. Please take out your copy of God's Word. Turn to the Gospel according to Mark, chapter 12.! Gospel of Mark, chapter 12. We're going to begin today in verse 35.

And as Jesus taught in the temple, He said, and for His glory and for our good, we would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands.

Let's pray together. Father, we do praise You this day that You condescended to become an author, that You used men who were carried along by the Spirit to pen words that have bearing for us today.

And so as we look at these three verses, this teaching of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, I pray that You will work a miracle in us, that You will, by Your Spirit, rightly apply the truth contained in these verses to our hearts.

Change us, Lord. Don't let us leave here looking like we did when we came in. Make us more like Your Son so that His name will be exalted in the region we live in and in the nations.

[1 : 42] And we pray this in the precious name of Christ. Amen. So if we continue our verse-by-verse exposition of the Gospel according to Mark, we are now in chapter 12, and this is Wednesday of the Passion Week.

We've been in Wednesday of the Passion Week for quite a mile. We saw at the beginning of chapter 11 on Monday, Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Tuesday, He takes over the temple by turning over the money-changers tables, by stopping the court of Gentiles from being used as a thoroughfare.

And on Wednesday, He's kind of set up camp in the temple, and He's been confronted by a number of groups of people, the Pharisees with the Herodians, the Sadducees, and then a scribe or a representative from the scribes.

And He's encountered these confrontations back to back to back. Now, we kind of conclude those confrontations, which we did last week, and you'll see in verse 34 of chapter 12, the very end, Mark records, and after that, no one dared to ask Him any more questions.

These men, these religious leaders, the elite religious of that day, were looking to make Him look like a fool, and in turn, He had done the very same to them. And so people have stopped asking Him questions.

[3 : 04] They have recognized that this is a foolish thing to do. Now, just in case you're wondering, as we've been in the text, and I've repeatedly said it is Wednesday of the week, and you're wondering when Wednesday will be over, not until the end of chapter 13.

He'll be in the temple until the end of chapter 12, and then He leaves the temple and continues to teach some rather perplexing things in chapter 13, which I am eager to dive into.

We find ourselves with these three incredibly important verses in front of us as He turns now to teach those who are gathered, specifically, in this case, the Pharisees.

How do we know this? Because of a parallel text in Matthew. Matthew 22, verse 41 and 42.

Matthew records, Now, while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question. So Mark records Him just beginning to teach, but Matthew records that He actually was asking the Pharisees a question. Now, others would have been gathered around Him at this time, so others certainly would have been hearing the teaching, but He's aiming this question specifically at the Pharisees.

[4 : 18] And I think at this point, the value to us in recognizing this is to know that, by and large, these men would reject Jesus, these religious leaders of the day.

These men were apostate. They were not worshipers of God. They thought they worshipped God. They thought they were worshipping the right God in the right way, but in fact, they were

worshipping Him wrongly.

They were outside the faith itself, and they were leading Israel in the same way. Jesus has harsh words for them all throughout the Gospels.

He calls them repeatedly hypocrites, snakes. He calls them a brood of vipers. But He has not excluded them from responding in faith with repentance.

Here He once again turns to encounter them, as we can see in Matthew 22 in this parallel text. Luke records for us about a man named Joseph of Arimathea.

[5 : 19] Most of you are probably familiar that this is the man who owned the tomb in which Jesus' body was laid. In Luke 23, verse 50 and 51, Luke records, Now there was a man named Joseph from the Jewish town of Arimathea.

He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man who had not consented to their decision and action. That was to crucify Christ. And he was looking for the kingdom of God. And so there were men numbered amongst these Pharisees and the Sadducees and the scribes that did respond in faith to the call of Christ. So here we see him doing that once again.

And he asks them this interesting question in Matthew. What do you think about the Christ? And followed with the question, Whose son is He?

And they respond to Him, this is in verse 42 of chapter 22 of Matthew, the Son of David. The Son of David. So their understanding of who the Messiah was to be is that He would be the Son of David.

[6 : 27] And they were right in that. But they didn't take it far enough. They understood some of the Old Testament prophecy, which we'll get to in just a moment.

But they didn't understand the completion of it. In fact, the prevailing understanding of this day, of who the Messiah would be, would be an earthly man that would come and He would conquer and reign in an earthly fashion.

He would come in a military way. In fact, these religious leaders were positioning themselves to be part of that leadership structure. When He came and overthrew Rome, they wanted to be first in line to have power and to have prestige.

But instead, the Messiah comes as a servant from a lowly town, the son of a carpenter. One who comes and lays down His life and dies. Certainly reigns, but not in the way they thought.

They thought He was merely, the Messiah was merely going to be a man who would come to reign on earth. But Jesus, rightly, is a son of David, the Messiah.

[7 : 33] Old Testament prophecy. 2 Samuel 7, verses 12 and 13. God speaking to David said, When your days are fulfilled, and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you who shall come from your body, and I will establish His kingdom.

He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever. You see it in there? Son of David, the Messiah. Psalm 89, verses 1-4.

This is the psalm of a man named Ethan. He writes, I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord forever. With My mouth I will make known Your faithfulness to all generations.

For I said, Steadfast love will be built up forever in the heavens. You will establish Your faithfulness. You have said, that is, God has said, I have made a covenant with My chosen one.

I have sworn to David My servant. I will establish Your offspring forever, and build Your throne for all generations. And there are many other messianic prophecies that speak in the same way.

[8 : 41] That Jesus would, in fact, be a descendant of David. The people who encountered Jesus in His day understood this not too long ago. You'll recall in Mark 10, verses 47-48, the healing of blind Bartimaeus.

And in those verses, look at how Jesus is approached. Verse 47 says, And when He heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, this is blind Bartimaeus, He hears that it's Jesus of Nazareth, He began to cry out and say, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on Me.

Verse 48, And many rebuked Him, telling Him to be silent, but He cried out all the more, Son of David, have mercy on Me. There's many other encounters in the very same way where people recognized that Jesus was, as the Messiah, the Son of David, that He was in the lineage of David. Matthew takes great effort to establish this in chapter 1 of his Gospel account. Matthew 1, verse 1, the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, working to establish that the Old Testament Messianic prophecy is fulfilled in the person of Jesus.

Verse 17 of chapter 1 of Matthew, So all the generations from Abraham to David were 14 generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon, 14 generations, and from the

deportation to Babylon to the Christ, 14 generations.

[10:09] And He, at length, in those 15 verses in between, establishes that Jesus is in fact in the lineage of David. So they were right in that understanding, but they did not take it far enough.

And this is the point that Jesus is making in our text today when He quotes from Psalm 110, 1, that He is the Messiah and He is to be worshipped as Lord.

Not merely a man that would come and rule as a king, but He was to be worshipped as God. In the Old Testament, God gives Himself the name Lord.

In Hebrew, the English pronunciation being Yahweh. In fact, Lordship is an Old Testament theme. Over and over, we are told that God performs His mighty deeds so that people will know that He is the Lord.

Whether that's His people Israel or those outside, those who will be destroyed, who are not His people, we see this as a theme established again and again and again.

[11:19] Let's look at some examples. And I just encourage you to be an active listener. Don't turn. Listen. And write these down if you'd like to look at these references later. Exodus 14, 4.

God says, And I will harden and I will harden Pharaoh's heart and he will pursue them and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his hosts and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord.

And they did so. Deuteronomy 4, 35 To you it was shown that you might know that the Lord is God. There is no other besides Him.

1 Kings 20, 13 in a prayer to be delivered from a king of Assyria. And behold, a prophet came near to Ahab king of Israel and said, Thus says the Lord, Have you seen all this great multitude?

Behold, I will give it into your hands this day and you shall know that I am the Lord. Psalm 83, 18. Again, some deliverance from enemies.

[12:25] Verse 18, That they may know that you alone whose name is the Lord are the most high over all the earth. Again, Isaiah 37, 20. So now, O Lord our God, save us from His hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone are the Lord.

Ezekiel 6, 7. Last one. And the slain shall fall in your midst and you shall know that I am the Lord. So this is a theme that's established all throughout the Old Testament that God is Lord.

That is, that He is to be worshipped with all that we have. That He is to set direction for us. We are to lay aside our self-direction and pick up His. That we are to follow Him with everything that we are. But it doesn't end there. Lordship is also a theme in the New Testament. In fact, the New Testament Greek word for Lord is applied regularly to Jesus Christ.

A couple of examples. 1 Corinthians 12, 3. Therefore, I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says, Jesus is accursed.

[13:37] And no one can say, Jesus is Lord, except in the Holy Spirit. Philippians 2, verse 10 and 11. So that the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God, the Father.

John 20, 28. This is after Thomas touches the risen Christ's side. Thomas answered Him, my Lord and my God. In fact, I would argue that the great theme of the Bible is the Lordship of Jesus Christ. That the redemption of our souls is ultimately about bringing us back into a relationship with Him and changing our hearts so that we can worship Him as the Lord of all. These men failed, by and large, not only to recognize that the Messiah was not merely the Son of David, but that He is, in fact, Lord.

And so Jesus gives them a little sermon. Did you know that Jesus was an expeditional preacher? I bet that you guys wouldn't mind if my sermons were as short as His this morning.

Jesus quotes from Psalm 110, 1. Now this is a massively important psalm. In fact, it's quoted more than any other psalm in the New Testament.

[15:04] I'm going to read to you Psalm 110, verses 1-4. It just sets a little more context for us. Remember that these men in the hearing of Jesus would have fully understood this psalm and beyond it.

They just didn't get the implications of it. They had wrongly applied this psalm and Jesus corrects their thinking in this way. So I'm going to read to you Psalm 110, verses 1-4.

The Lord says to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool. This is what Jesus quotes. Verse 2, So this is a little broader context.

text. And just as a bit of a side note, let me just show you some of the places that this is quoted elsewhere in the New Testament. Peter quotes from this psalm in his sermon on the day of

Pentecost in Acts 2, 34-35.

Paul quotes from this psalm in his explanation of Jesus' resurrection and subsequent reign in 1 Corinthians 15, verses 27-28. The writer of Hebrews quotes from this psalm a number of times in making his case that Jesus is superior to angels in Hebrews 1-13 and in teaching Jesus' supremacy over the present priesthood in Hebrews 5-6, 7-17, and 7-21.

[16:50] That is, that Jesus is a priest king. This is something that was forbidden all throughout the Old Testament and the only other character we see in the pages of Scripture that was both a priest and a king is a rather obscure character.

One who is a priest king over the city of Shalom whose name was Melchizedek. And he shows up after Abraham's first battle conquest.

Abraham gives to him a tenth of all the spoils. There's a prayer prayed over Abraham and he leaves and he doesn't show up again until the pages of Hebrews under the inspiration of the Spirit.

So we see this priest king in this function and then we see Jesus functioning in this way. Some, I think, wrongly have said that was Jesus himself in Abraham's day.

It doesn't really matter. The point being that Jesus now makes propitiation, makes sacrifice on our behalf the perfect sacrifice for us, stands in the gap between us and God and also rules over us as Lord.

[17:57] And this is what this psalm means. It's such a beautiful psalm speaking of the coming Christ. And Jesus very simply says to them using really basic logic, verse 37, if David himself calls him Lord, how is he merely his son?

This is the way to understand this. How is he just his son? Just a son of flesh, right? That would come and rule in the way that David ruled. He would rule in a much more mighty way as a priest king.

David recognized the coming Messiah as his Lord. This is the pressing point that Jesus is making. David got it. He got that the coming Messiah, the one that would be prophesied to be one day of his lineage, was the coming Lord.

What you believe about Jesus is the most important thing about you. What we believe to be true about Jesus is the absolute most important thing about us.

There are many erroneous understandings of who Jesus was or is, depending on the understanding. Muslims believe that he was a prophet, a real man.

[19:11] He existed. He was a prophet. He had wise things to say from God, but he was merely a predecessor of Muhammad. Jehovah's Witnesses believe that he was not God incarnate, but a created being.

In fact, they believe that he was Michael the Archangel before he was recreated as a perfect man. Mormons, those known of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, believe that Jesus was a, again, created being, a man who became a God, and therefore they believe that the same can be true of them.

Many evangelicals believe that Jesus is their homeboy to their everlasting shame. And evangelicals also want to separate the recognition of Jesus as Savior from their devotion to Jesus as Lord.

Two separate things. And I say to you that the two are inextricable. They cannot be separated. If Jesus is, in fact, your Savior, then he is, in fact, your Lord.

Now, in Romans chapter 10, some of this misunderstanding, verses 9 and 10, upon a simple reading of it, Paul writes, now in this is in the midst, remember, of him talking about God's sovereign purpose over saving a people, his elective purposes, that he has moved the gospel from beyond the Israelites to the Gentiles, but yet he's still including Jewish people in this.

[20:44] Paul says, chapter 10, verse 9, because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. And then verse 10, for with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

And so they want to say that simply making a profession is salvific. Simply saying that I believe that Jesus is Lord is in and of itself salvific.

But if you really look at these words, the word believe, every time it's used in the New Testament, it's one Greek word, and it's written in the indicative mood, which means that the writer's portraying something as actual, something that's actually carrying out and having real effect versus intended.

So we may believe, I think most of you have probably flown on planes, but for those of you who haven't, I'm sure you believe that planes do fly. You've seen them fly.

But it's not really a belief in this verb's sense until you get on the plane and let it take off. If you didn't believe you'd get back off the plane, at least I hope you would, unless you're just a fool. [22 : 01] But it has real effect. It's working things out in your life. There's a result of the belief, something that is tangible, something that can be measured. But people try to pull them apart, and I think this often happens because of our experience in American evangelical Christianity.

Many of you have had this experience. You come to faith. You believe you come to faith. Maybe you do. Maybe you don't. This is a big wrestling in your mind. But you come to faith at a very early age.

You're taught the gospel in church and at home at a very, very early age. And you give some response. You give some opportunity to respond to the gospel.

But then what happens is the church shelters you for decades. pulls you in and protects you from the world and maybe teaches you some things about being moral, like be obedient like Abraham or be brave like David, but doesn't really press you out into the world and see that as a Christian, you are automatically given a mission in this world.

So there's an equipping period of 15 to 25 years. Someday you'll be grown up enough in your faith to begin to work with God in the world.

[23 : 26] This is a great shame. What does it take to be equipped to share the good news of Jesus Christ? If you're a believer, you have it. The Spirit of God and the gospel, which I hope you know because you responded to it in faith.

You have this equipping, but we sit around on our hands just waiting and waiting and waiting. And so there's a fear for many evangelicals that we're going to tend towards a works-based salvation if we're saying to people in these settings that there must be something tangible.

There has to be fruit. If you're going to be a good tree, there has to be fruit. Is this not scriptural? So what they want to do is say, you can just say that you're a good tree and that's good enough for us. Jesus is your Savior if you say you're a good tree. And at some point in your life, embrace Him as your Lord and begin to bear fruit. We cannot separate the two things, beloved.

They cannot be separated apart. There's this great emphasis in our time placed on conversion at the neglect of discipleship.

[24 : 46] The Great Commission is for us to go and make disciples. There's this great emphasis on growing in breadth and not being concerned at all about growing in depth.

If you're going to follow Jesus, you cannot simply follow Him to the end of an aisle and stop there. It does not work that way.

And this is what Jesus is saying to the Pharisees. They were going through the religious motions. Some of them were the right motions. Just done with the wrong motivation.

Right? We are to empty ourselves. ourselves. Self-determining. We no longer worship us. We now worship Jesus as Lord. This isn't new at this point in the text.

He said this before. Turn back to Mark chapter 8. beginning of verse 34.

[25 : 55] And calling the crowd to Him with His disciples, He said to them, If anyone would come after Me, follow Me, Be My disciple.

Let Him deny Himself and take up His cross and follow Me. Oh, you can meditate on this for your entire life. Verse 35, For whoever would save his life will lose it.

But whoever loses his life for My sake and the Gospels will save it. Empty ourselves and follow Jesus to go wherever He goes.

And beloved, there is so much example given to us of the way in which Jesus functioned and the places in which He went that we have plenty of growing to do in this regard.

Listen to Paul's exhortation in 2 Corinthians 13.5. Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.

[26 : 58] Or do you not realize this about yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you? Unless indeed you fail to meet the test. What is this test that we're being exhorted to do?

I have sat under many, many preachers that want to make this test the remembering of a date and an activity, an action.

Tell me that's not works-based. Right? Write it down. Oh, write it down in the front of your Bible so if you ever have a doubt, you can look at that page and then you'll know that you're found in Christ.

That you've declared yourself a good tree. Phariseeism. This is a message from the devil. Air conditioning. Right?

On a train ride to hell. This is not good for people to hear. What is the test? The test is fruit. And we're exhorted to do it. Now hear me, the works do not save us.

[27 : 59] But the works are the evidence of God's salvific work in our hearts. If I asked you this morning, how do you know this morning that you're alive? None of you would say, because I have a birth date.

Let me share my birth date with you. You would give some evidence to that fact. Well, I'm standing in front of you. Look, I'm doing the things that living people do. Right? Descartes would have said, I think, therefore, I am.

Right? None of you would go, well, I have a birth date. So, of course, I'm alive. This is foolishness and this is what is happening in our churches. Turn to 1 John 3.

The great effort of John's first letter is to give us a lens by which to hold our lives up to, to compare to. How do we test ourselves?

How do we know? How do we know? 1 John 3, beginning in verse 4.

[29 : 02] Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness. Sin is lawlessness. You know that He appeared in order to take away sins and in Him there is no sin.

This is Christ. Verse 6. No one who abides in Him keeps on sinning. No one who keeps on sinning has either seen Him or known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you.

Whoever practices righteousness is righteous as He is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

No one born of God makes a practice of sinning. For God's seed abides in Him and He cannot keep on sinning because He has been born of God.

By this it is evident who are the children of God and who are the children of the devil. Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God nor is the one who does not love his brother.

[30 : 07] We are all indicted by these words, are we not? So we need to wrestle with this a little bit. Right? All of you who are perfect, raise your hand.

No one, right? None of us, right? We have been set free from sin and yet we continue to sin. The great struggle of Paul in Romans chapter 7. This body of death that he carries around that draws him into the things that he doesn't want to do.

And this is the nature of Christian living. This ebb and flow of righteousness. Seasons even that we go through in our Christian lives.

And so John is not saying to us that if you sin you are not found in Christ. There's a status, right, that is given to us by our faith in him.

But the general trajectory of our living should be towards righteousness. righteousness. I don't know if everyone in the room can see the bald cypresses outside.

[31 : 07] Do you see this orange tree that's blocking that entire window right there? There's two of them on either side of the sidewalk. And these are really, really neat trees called bald cypresses. And most of the year they're very green and beautiful.

They're a deciduous pine tree and they turn this beautiful orange color for like a week and they drop all of the needles. Likely, next week there will be not a single needle on either of those two trees and they'll all be all over the ground desperately needing to be cleaned up from the sidewalk down there.

A really fascinating tree. A good portion of the year these trees look dead. Totally lifeless. If you didn't know what they were you would definitely cut them down. You'd go, this looks kind of like a pine tree with no needles on it.

It's definitely dead. Our lives are that way at times. No real experience of the presence of God in our lives. We just seem to love sin so much appearing dead.

I've been coming to this building now for quite a few years and I can tell you that the general trajectory of these trees is that they're alive. Every year when they look dead I know that they're not dead because they continue to grow and year by year by year they get a little bit bigger and they encroach on the building a little bit more and a few more branches have to be pruned off of them so that we can walk down the sidewalk and the roots continue to advance across the playground and pop up from time to time across the playground like I know that they're alive because of the general presence of life in those trees.

[32 : 40] So John's not saying to us that we have to be perfect in every way but that we should be generally hating sin and generally loving righteousness. if this isn't true of you then you are not found in Christ.

You have not recognized Him as Lord. You've added Him as a slip of paper of fire insurance policy that you folded up and you stuck in your back pocket which is of no value to you whatsoever.

If your heart has not been changed if you have not been propelled by the work in your heart of the Holy Spirit to follow Him to worship Him as Lord then you are not found in Him.

Repent and believe. Repent and believe. Pray that He would do a work in your life like that. And for those of us who have recognized Him as Lord but yet deal with the day-to-day how do we continue to submit ourselves to Him as Lord?

I have to say that that very question which I know none of you asked but I posed it to you as well demands the point that I'm making. Those of us who are found in Christ who call Him Savior and Lord should know how to follow Him.

[33 : 55] He has spoken to us by His Word. This is the way in which we came to Him by the work of the Spirit in our lives that we would continue in that and that we would go to His Word to know Him.

This is the way in which we continue to submit to Him. Young people so many of you want to know the will of God for your life but it has really nothing to do with Lordship and submitting yourself to Him day by day week by week.

It's really just because you want answers and it is your hope that if it's God's answer that it's going to be a good one that's going to work out favorable for you. Self-serving in that way.

You don't submit yourselves daily to the Lord and say what would you have me do in this day?

What major should I have? Who should I marry? Where should I live?

Where should I invest in church? Who should I be sharing the Gospel with? Your search serves your ends and not His.

[35 : 02] Many of you want to know the will of God but you don't know your Bible and He has revealed His will to us in the Scriptures. Our Lord has written us a book. We should know it.

Why do we neglect this so much? Recognize that there is a battle a war being waged within you to get you away from this book. To hear God speak day by day by day and submit yourself to what He would have you do.

Practice the revealed will of God. All that other stuff the petty stuff who you'll marry where you'll work where you'll live where you'll go to church will all sort out in the end.

Submit yourself to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Stop being self-determining and then always submit to Him.

This is what it means to be a Christian, to be a disciple of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ. Let's pray together. Let's pray together.