

“Trap the Teacher”
“A Journey with Jesus” — Part 21
Mark 12:13-34

1. A question about responsibility.

Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. They came to him and said, "Teacher, we know you are a man of integrity. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Should we pay or shouldn't we?" But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. "Why are you trying to trap me?" he asked. "Bring me a denarius and let me look at it." They brought the coin, and he asked them, "Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?" "Caesar's," they replied. Then Jesus said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." And they were amazed at him.

Mark 12:13-17

- **The questioners:** The Pharisees and Herodians join forces to set a trap for Jesus.
- **The question:** Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? This was not a honest question. It was a trap to set Jesus against one group or the other.
- **The answer:** "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." This was an answer of integrity. This was more integrity than they could handle.
- **The result:** The conspirators stand mouths wide open in amazement.

2. A question about marriage and eternity.

Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. "Teacher," they said, "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother. Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?" Jesus replied, "Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. Now about the dead rising—have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!"

Mark 12:18-27

- **The questioners:** The Sadducees ask a Bible question. The Bible teachers ask a Bible question.
- **The question:** At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?

This was not an honest question. This question is also a trap.

- **The answer:** "Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?"
- **The result:** The Sadducees are embarrassed.

3. A question about priority.

One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

Mark 12:28-34

- **The questioner:** A Scribe who was also a Pharisee. He was a tool of the Pharisees trying to get evidence against Jesus.
- **The question:** "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"
- **The answer:** "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." **We do not live by rules but by relationships.**
- **The result:** The Scribe commends Jesus. Jesus encourages the Scribe.

Application: If we love God we will experience His love within and will express that love to others.

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Romans 13:8-10

But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did... Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness.

1 John 2:5-6 and 9

Question: How do you view the people in your life? Do you act in love even when it is hard? Does your life give evidence to the Word of God being alive in you? How patient are you with others? Do people know you care even when you disagree?

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8

You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Psalms 51:16-17