

Mark: Chapter 12

Disciple/apostle = learn/do.

In this Module (chapter 11) you will:

- Learn how to handle tough questions, awkward circumstances, and avoid self-incrimination.
- Know how to defend yourself from those who intend you harm of any kind.

Jesus said, “The world hated me before it hated you” (*John 15:18*).

In this chapter, we see how those who hated him due to jealousy and fear for their own positions, tried to trap Jesus in his words. We observe his masterful, divine handling of these futile attempts. We learn how to emulate this wisdom in speech and demeanor as his present day disciples.

Jesus begins his instruction with a parable (1-12).

PARABLE - A fable or allegorical relation or representation of something real in life or nature, from which a moral is drawn for instruction (*Webster’s 1828*).

Mar 12:1 And he began to speak unto them by parables.

A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

Easton’s Bible Dictionary explains *winefat*: “The original word (hypolenion) so rendered occurs only here in the New Testament. It properly denotes the trough or lake (lacus), as it was called by the Romans, into which the juice of the grapes ran from the trough above it. It is here used, however, of the whole apparatus. In the parallel passage in

Matthew 21:33 the Greek word lenos is used. This properly denotes the upper one of the two vats. (see WINE-PRESS.)”

So this vineyard is all set up. It is planted, it is protected by a hedge, it has a receptacle to catch the juice of the grapes (the product or good and profitable outcome), and a tower upon which to watch for danger and/or take shelter and be protected. It is “let out,” or rented out. Someone other than the owner is running it (husbandmen who know how to care for it) and they will rightly need to pay the owner from the profits.

This is the setting. What does this parable represent?

A certain man planted a vineyard (who does the “man” represent?) God!



The vineyard is the creation of God.

The fruits, the wine, the juice of the grapes, are the healing works and demonstrations in daily life that show forth the perfect nature of the Creator, Love.

God provides a “hedge” or safety measures in the fact of His own omnipresence and Allness — God is Good and there is “none beside Him.” His allness precludes evil. In this absolute truth we are safe from all danger — we are hedged about in Truth.

Our good works and life of Love are the juice, the wine, the value of Being. Our showing forth the divine nature as His “image and likeness” is gathered into a stream of love and energy that is the essence of Life.

The tower is the high mental place of spiritual understand that we are capable of attaining by conscious reflection of divine Intelligence coupled with study and attention through prayer.

The vineyard is all set and you are a husbandman in it. Will you be a good husbandman? Those in the parable are not. They are the ones who rejected the prophets and Jesus himself.

Mark 12:2-5 represents the overall rejection of the prophets sent by God to Israel. It may more pointedly represent the individual’s rejection of the narratives and truths told in the Bible regarding the prophets and communications from God in the sacred texts.

Verse 2. And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.

Verse 3. And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty.

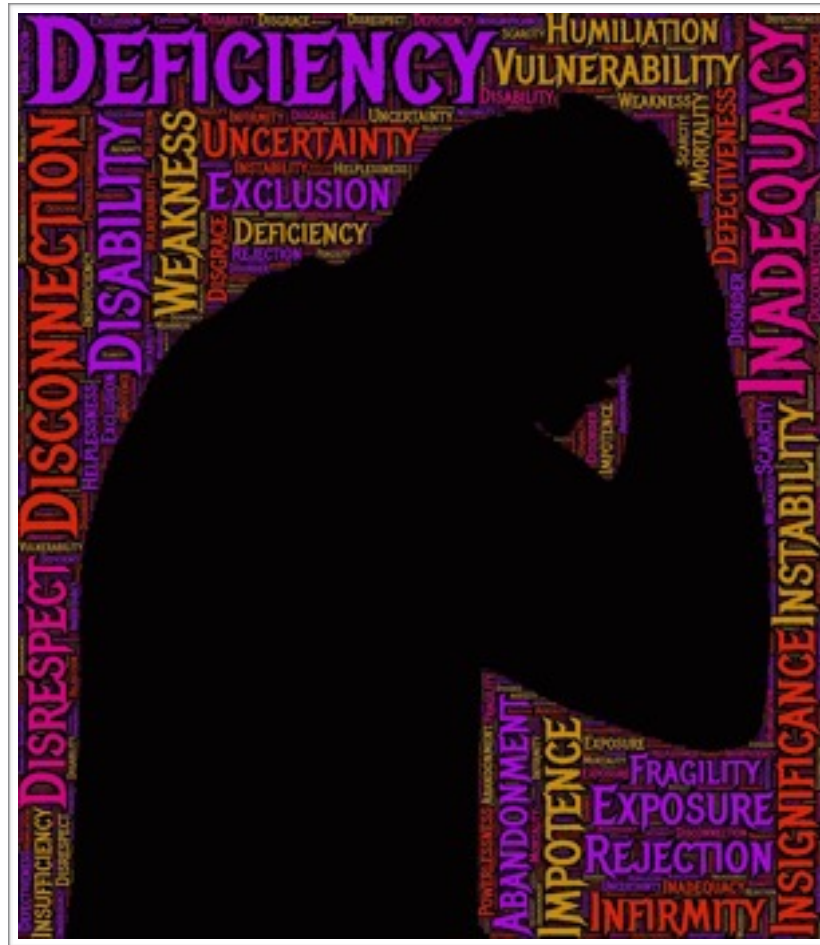
Verse 4. And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled.

Verse 5. And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.

Jesus now refers to his impending betrayal and crucifixion.

Verse 6 - 8. Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.

Mar 12:9 What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.



Question. That mentality that kills prophecy, to whom the law and the prophets are dead, unimportant, hated, rejected — what happens to that mentality, that mental state? It will be destroyed. The good words of the prophets, of Truth and of Love, will be given to others who will receive it. Others will find joy, peace, healing, and life-purpose in expression of the divine nature. The mental state of rejection will be destroyed and bring its own suffering upon itself. One that erroneous mental state is destroyed there is a rebirth ... but there is a torturous interim that the individual brings upon himself.



Jesus remarks, “And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?” (10-11).

STONE THE BUILDERS REJECTED

Jesus quotes this from *Psalms*, “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner” (118:22).

The response to his parable and words? The response to his warning and instruction?

“And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way” (12).

One lesson we can learn from Jesus' handling of his enemies' malicious intent: answer indirectly through an analogy. Everyone gets the point but you have said nothing incriminating. It is all a matter of how one interprets it and whether one applies the lesson to himself personally or not. This method exposes evil intent and sin, and the guilty party inwardly knows that it points to himself. There is then a choice: repent or be angry and leave. In this narrative, those who came to catch Jesus in his words, left in indignation. They did not touch our Master, however, because he was so revered by the multitude that his enemies were afraid of the reaction from the crowd.

STOP. Consider your own consciousness or mental state right now. Are you taking in the words of the prophets and of the Son of God? Are you studying these words and applying them in your

life? Could you do this a bit more? Could you add an extra 10% of study time to your week? Try it for this week and be a good husbandman. Let the prophets and the Messiah have life in you as you conform to and express their teachings, instructions, and examples.

Paying Taxes to Caesar

There seems to have always been taxes!



Mark 12:13-17. And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words. And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not? Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it. And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's. And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

Beware of those who would try to “catch [you] in your words” (13).

You see how they begin by contrived complements to Jesus? They are not sincere. Do not be deceived or be put off-guard when you are being complemented. Even when it is well-intentioned, be on guard. Once a person addressed Jesus as “good Master,” and Jesus immediately turned the complement to his Father, “Why tallest thou me good, there is none good but one, even God” (*Matthew 19:17*).

What they were really getting to was the raw question, “Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not? Shall we give, or shall we not give?” Jesus knew that they were not asking in sincerity, but to trick him with this question.



When you have a question put to you like this, do not hurry to answer and do not say anything condemnatory or personally rebuking, to the inquirer. Listen to God, Mind, to give you the answer of wisdom.

Jesus simply asks that a penny be brought for him to see.

Again, he turns a question on them!

“Whose is this image and superscription?” he asks. They state the obvious, it’s Caesar’s. The wonderful conclusion is in the logic that none could argue, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

The Sadducees Ask About the Resurrection

The Sadducees did not believe in resurrection, yet they formulate the following complex construction to inquire concerning it, bringing in questions of marriage and offspring. Jesus’ masterful handling of this is another lesson for us to observe, think on in parallel situations, and apply as needed.

Mark 12:18 - 27. Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed. And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise. And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also. In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife. And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God? For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven. And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

Jesus turns the question to that which is truly important — again by using a return inquiry, “Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?” He refers to man’s spiritual state (“as angels”) that does not engage in the human experience of marriage. He refers back to Scripture (“it is written”) for authority — to the burning bush where God said

he was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob — and that he is the God of the “living.” All are living in Spirit forever. We have eternal life by reflection and expression of the one infinite Life. God is the God of Life, and is Life Itself, the I AM.

Pray that the divine Mind or Intelligence imparts the response to your consciousness and gives you the perfect return question that drives home a lesson and protects everyone from evil attempts to discredit or confuse.



The Great Commandment

Again our Master is questioned. This time, the inquirer is receptive. See the difference in the response in comparison to earlier questioning shown in this chapter.

Mark 12:28 - 34

“And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:



And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.”

Jesus read the thought of those around him, so can we, by reflection of divine Intelligence. Jesus knew if someone was instigating trouble or sincere; he also knew the response, if there was repentance and acceptance of truth, or resistance and hatred. Do not be deceived by outward appearances. Especially be careful when someone appears complementary or in agreement when in fact, they are not. God gives us the spiritual sense to perceive the true mental state of those who come into our experience. We have the wisdom to protect, defend, and teach.

Matthew Henry's Commentary offers these insights on the previous narrative. “Christ will guide in judgment, and teach his way. He tells [the inquirer]:

1. That the great commandment of all, which is indeed inclusive of all, is, that of loving God with all our hearts. (1.) Where there is a commanding principle in the soul, there is a disposition to every other duty. Love is the leading affection of the soul; the love of God is the leading grace in the renewed soul. (2.) Where this is not, nothing else that is good is done, or done aright, or accepted, or done long. ... He is our God, to whom we stand related and obliged; and therefore

we ought to love him, to set our affections on him, let out own desire toward him, and take a delight in him; and he is one Lord, therefore he must be loved with our whole heart; he has the sole right to us, and therefore ought to have the sole possession of us. If he be one, our hearts must be one with him, and since there is no God besides, no rival must be admitted with him upon the throne.

2. That the second great commandment is, to love our neighbour as ourselves (Mar 12:31), as truly and sincerely as we love ourselves, and in the same instances, and we must show it by doing as we would be done by. ... so we must love our neighbour as ourselves, because he is of the same nature with ourselves; our hearts are fashioned alike, and my neighbour and myself are of one body, of one society, that of the world of mankind; and if a fellow-Christian, and of the same sacred society, the obligation is the stronger. Hath not one God created us? Mal 2:10. Has not one Christ redeemed us? Well might Christ say, There is no other commandment greater than these; for in these all the law is fulfilled, and if we make conscience of obedience to these, all other instances of obedience will follow of course.



Son of David

Mark 12: 35-37

“And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly.”

Here, Jesus asks more questions. He is answering an unspoken question to the multitude. He is actually asserting his superior position above “Son of David,” as he is the Christ, and truly the Son of God.

David was a great king to the Hebrew nation, and Jesus was prophetically fulfilling the Messiah in that line of ancestry — but Christ — his true spiritual eternal selfhood at-one with the Father, Spirit, was not David's son, but God's Son.

Beware of the Scribes

Mark 12:38-40

Jesus instructs the people, his disciples, and us (his present-day disciples) not to be like the “scribes.” Why? They bask in the world's reverence, they love the praise of others, but they should only seek to please God, Spirit, Love. We need to be meek. Jesus was meek while at the same time authoritative due to his identity as God's Son and his knowledge of the Word. In I John we read, “Now are we the sons of God,” and Jesus taught us to pray, “Our Father...” We need to follow the Master's example in meekness and authority due to our true spiritual identity and our ever-increasing knowledge of the Word.



“And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.”

The Widow's Mite

Mark 12:41 - 44

Note how Jesus judges one's offering. It is not the specified amount but the percentage of the giving. The widow cast in 100% to church, while the rich people put in large amounts but small in percentage to what they had available.

"And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:

For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

How much are we really giving? In what ways are we giving? How much time, love, resources, and so forth are we lovingly giving to others in expression of Church everywhere, every day?

REFLECTION ON CHAPTER 12

List 2 - 3 things I have learned from this chapter.

What one narrative was most thought-provoking?

What questions have risen in my thought from this reading?

In what ways can I emulate Jesus in response to those who attempt to harm or discredit by formulated questions? How can I respond as he did with authority and perfect return-inquiries?

How can I express more meekness, even while increasing in spiritual authority?

In what ways might I please the Father more in relation to the theme of this chapter?

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