

**Second Baptist Church of Doylestown**  
**Bible Study Notes**  
**10-23-24**

**Mark 12**

**The Parable Of The Tenants – Verses 1-8**

<sup>1</sup> Jesus then began to speak to them in parables: “A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. <sup>2</sup> At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. <sup>3</sup> But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed. <sup>4</sup> Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. <sup>5</sup> He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed. <sup>6</sup> “He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ <sup>7</sup> “But the tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ <sup>8</sup> So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

**12:1-8** In this parable, the man who planted the vineyard is God; the vineyard is the nation Israel; the tenants are Israel’s religious leaders; the servants are the prophets and priests who remained faithful to God; the son is Jesus; and the others are the Gentiles. The religious leaders not only frustrated their nation’s purpose but also killed those who were trying to fulfill it. They were so jealous and possessive that they ignored the welfare of the very people they were supposed to be bringing to God. By telling this story, Jesus exposed the religious leaders’ plot to kill him and warned that their sins would be punished.

**Jesus Applies The Parable – Verses 9-12**

<sup>9</sup> “What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. <sup>10</sup> Haven’t you read this passage of Scripture: “‘The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; <sup>11</sup> the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes?’” <sup>12</sup> Then the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away.

**12: 9-12** Jesus referred to himself as the stone rejected by the builders. Although he would be rejected by most of the Jewish leaders, he would become the cornerstone of a new “building,” the church (Acts 4: 11-12). The cornerstone was used as a base to make sure the other stones of the building were straight and level. Likewise, Jesus’ life and teaching would be the church’s foundation.

**Paying The Imperial Tax To Caesar – Verses 13-17**

<sup>13</sup> Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. <sup>14</sup> They came to him and said, “Teacher, we know that you are a man of integrity. You aren’t swayed by others, 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 the imperial tax to Caesar or not? <sup>15</sup> 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.” <sup>16</sup> They brought the coin,

and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?” “Caesar’s,” they replied.  
<sup>17</sup> Then Jesus said to them, “Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.”  
And they were amazed at him.

**12:13** The Pharisees were primarily a religious group concerned with ritual purity; the Herodians were a Jewish political group that approved of Herod’s compromises with Rome. The Pharisees did not like Jesus because he exposed their hypocrisy. The Herodians also saw Jesus as a threat. Supporters of the dynasty of Herod the Great, they had lost political control when, as a result of reported unrest, Rome deposed Archelaus (Herod’s son with authority over Judea) and replaced him with a Roman governor. The Herodians feared that Jesus would cause still more instability in Judea and that Rome might react by never allowing the Roman leaders to step down and be replaced by a descendant of Herod.

**12:14** Anyone who avoided paying taxes faced harsh penalties. The Jews hated to pay taxes to Rome because the money supported their oppressors and symbolized their subjection. Much of the tax money also went to maintain the pagan temples and luxurious lifestyles of Rome’s upper class. The Pharisees and Herodians hoped to trap Jesus with this tax question. A yes would mean he supported Rome, which would turn the people against him. A no would bring accusations of treason and rebellion against Rome and could lead to civil penalties.

**12:17** Jesus avoided the trick question by showing that believers have dual citizenship (1 Peter 2: 17). Our citizenship in the nation requires that we pay money for the services and benefits we receive. Our citizenship in the kingdom of heaven requires that we pledge to God our primary obedience and commitment. (See Acts 4:18-19 and 5:29 for discussions on obeying God rather than people.) As God’s followers, we have legitimate obligations to both God and the government. But it is important to keep our priorities straight. When the two authorities conflict, our duty to God always must come before our duty to the government. The coin bearing the emperor’s image should be given to the emperor; our lives, bearing God’s image, belong to God. Are you giving to God what is rightfully his?

### **Marriage At The Resurrection – Verses 18-23**

<sup>18</sup> Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question.  
<sup>19</sup> “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 raise up offspring for his brother. <sup>20</sup> Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. <sup>21</sup> The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. <sup>22</sup> In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. <sup>23</sup> At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?”

**12:18-23** After the Pharisees and Herodians failed to trap Jesus with their tax question, the Sadducees stepped in with a question they were sure would stump him. This was a question that they had successfully used against the Pharisees, who could not come up with an answer. The Sadducees did not believe in life after death because the Pentateuch (Genesis—Deuteronomy) had no direct teaching about it, and the writings of Moses were the only Scriptures they followed. But Jesus was about to point out that Moses’ books support the idea of eternal life (12:26).

**12:19** According to Old Testament law, when a man died without a son, his brother had to marry the widow and produce children to care for her and allow the family line to continue. The first son of this marriage was considered the heir of the dead man (Deuteronomy 25: 5-6).

## **Jesus Corrects Their Misunderstanding About Resurrection Life – Verses 24-27**

**24** Jesus replied, “Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? **25** When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. **26** Now about the dead rising—have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the account of the burning bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? **27** He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!”

**12:24** What life will be like after the resurrection is far beyond our ability to understand or imagine (Isaiah 64:4; 1 Corinthians 2:9). We need not be afraid of eternal life because of the unknowns, however. Instead of wondering what God’s coming kingdom will be like, we should concentrate on our relationship with Christ right now because in the new kingdom, we will be with him. If we learn to love and trust Christ now, we will not be afraid of what he has in store for us then.

**12:25-27** Jesus’ statement does not mean that people won’t recognize their spouses in the coming kingdom. It simply means that God’s new order will not be an extension of this life and that the same physical and natural rules won’t apply. Jesus’ comment in verse 25 was not intended to be the final word on marriage in heaven; instead, this response was Jesus’ refusal to answer the Sadducees’ riddle and fall into their trap. Sidestepping their question about the much-married woman, he gave a definitive answer to their real question about the doctrine of resurrection. Because the Sadducees believed only in the Pentateuch (Genesis— Deuteronomy), Jesus quoted from Exodus 3:6 to prove that there is life after death. God spoke of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob years after their deaths as if they still lived. God’s covenant with all people exists beyond death.

## **The Greatest Commandment – Verses 28-34**

**28** 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?” **29** “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. **30** Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ **31** The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.’ **32** “Well said, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. **33** 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.” **34** 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.

**12:28** By Jesus’ time, the Jews had accumulated hundreds of laws— 613 by one historian’s count. Some religious leaders tried to distinguish between major and minor laws, and some taught that all laws were equally binding and that it was dangerous to make any distinctions. This teacher’s question could have provoked controversy among these groups, but Jesus’ answer summarized all of God’s laws.

**12:29-31** God’s laws are not burdensome. They can be reduced to two simple principles: Love God and love others. These commands are from the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18). When you love God completely and care for others as you care for yourself, then you have fulfilled the intent of the Ten Commandments and the other Old Testament laws. According to Jesus, these two commandments summarize all God’s laws. Let them rule your thoughts, decisions, and actions.

When you are uncertain about what to do, ask yourself which course of action best demonstrates love for God and love for others.

**12:32-34** This Pharisee had grasped the intent of God’s law— that true obedience comes from the heart. Because all the Old Testament commands lead to Christ, his next step was faith in Jesus himself. This, however, was the most difficult step to take. We do not know if this Pharisee ever became a true believer, but we must remember that being “close” to being a Christian is infinitely far away if a person never commits to Christ. Salvation cannot rest on intellectual knowledge alone. You must repent, follow Christ, and be made a new person by his Holy Spirit. Don’t be content with being close; take the step and make the commitment.

### **Whose Son Is the Messiah? – Verses 35-37**

**<sup>35</sup> 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? <sup>36</sup>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.” <sup>37</sup> David himself calls him ‘Lord.’ How then can he be his son?” The large crowd listened to him with delight.**

**12:35** How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David? Since Jesus is the Christ, He spoke of Himself here. With the questions of the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees to Jesus, they tried to trap Him. Jesus did not do the same in His questions to them; instead He got to the heart of the matter: “Do you really know who I am?” These religious leaders thought they knew just about everything there was to know about the Messiah. Jesus challenged this thought, and He asked them to consider that they may have something to learn.

**12:35-37** Jesus quoted Psalm 110:1 to show that David considered the Messiah to be his Lord, not just his descendant. The religious leaders did not understand that the Messiah would be far more than a human descendant of David; he would be God himself in human form.

### **Warning Against the Teachers of the Law – Verses 38-40**

**<sup>38</sup> 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, <sup>39</sup> and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. <sup>40</sup> They devour widows’ houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely.”**

**12:38-40** Jesus again exposed the religious leaders’ impure motives. The teachers of the law received no pay, so they depended on the hospitality extended by devout Jews. Some of them used this custom to exploit people, cheating the poor out of everything they had and taking advantage of the rich. Through their pious actions they hoped to gain status, recognition, and respect.

**12:38-40** Jesus warned against trying to make a good impression. These teachers of the law were religious hypocrites who had no love for God. True followers of Christ are not distinguished by showy spirituality. Reading the Bible, praying in public, or following church rituals can be phony if the motive for doing them is to be noticed or honored. Let your actions be consistent with your beliefs. Live for Christ, even when no one is looking.

## The Widow's Offering – Verses 41-44

<sup>41</sup> 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. <sup>42</sup> But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. <sup>43</sup> Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. <sup>44</sup> They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”

**12:41** There were several boxes in the temple where money could be placed. Some were for collecting the temple tax from Jewish males; the others were for freewill offerings. This particular collection box was probably in the Court of the Women.

**12:41-44** This widow gave all she had to live on, in contrast to the way most people handle their money. When we consider giving a certain percentage of our income a great accomplishment, we resemble those who gave “out of their wealth.” Here, Jesus was admiring generous and sacrificial giving. As believers, we should consider increasing our giving— whether of money, time, or talents—to a point beyond convenience or calculation.