

Gainsville Baptist Church
Mark 12:38- 40
January 9, 2011

① A Sharp Contrast

Introduction:

② Contrast - to compare in order to show unlikeness or differences.

In our study this morning, we will see a sharp contrast between an individual that lived a life of **self-sacrifice who genuinely loved God** and a group of individuals that professed love for God but **actually loved themselves**.

God has intentionally breathed life into your nostrils for the purpose of putting Him and His love on display for the world to see.

John 10:10b – *I have come that they might have life and have it more abundantly.*

God loves you....and He has sacrificially given that which is most precious to Him.....His only son, Jesus.

God's desire for you is NOT that you simply be religious.

③ God's desire for you is that you genuinely love Him..... and out of that love.....that you sacrificially lay down your life just as He already has done for you.

Matthew 16:25 – *For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.*

④ **The most meaningless and miserable life is one lived for self....sprinkled with religion.**

Transition: The passage of Scripture we are studying this morning is the last public sermon of Jesus' life before He was to be crucified. The remainder of his days will be spent privately pouring his life into the twelve.

I. **⑤ Jesus Issues a Stern Warning Against False Teachers (Mark 12:38 – 40)**
Explanation: While teaching a large crowd of people in the temple, Jesus issues a warning to the Scribes that were leading people astray from the truth of God.....and he issues a warning to the people about the dangers of following such false teachers.

Scribes were Jewish religious leaders that were supposedly the most knowledgeable concerning Scripture. It was their responsibility to know it and to make handwritten copies of the Law.

(6) Instead of being some of the most righteous men of their day.....these Scribes were the most self-righteous. They were guilty of one of the most detestable sins.....hypocrisy.

In a very public manner, Jesus called them out on their sin.

These Scribes were guilty of:

- ❖ Wearing long robes that drew attention to themselves.
- ❖ Loved to receive greetings in the marketplace
- ❖ They loved being honored with the best seats in the synagogues and at feasts
- ❖ They were also guilty of taking advantage of poor widows for their own gain
- ❖ They were guilty of making long prayers intended for the ears of man instead of the ears of God.

These false teachers loved themselves and they loved the honor and praise of man rather than God.

(7) God despises such teachers because they profess to love God but in actuality they love themselves.

And He winds up all by the solemn declaration, "these shall receive greater damnation."

Application: Of all the sins that man is susceptible.....one of the most dangerous and most deadly is a false profession of faith or hypocrisy.

It is bad enough to be deceived by the evil one and to serve your own lusts and pleasures. But it is even worse to pretend to have a religion and serve your own lusts and pleasures.

But God is not mocked. He is able to discern our thoughts and the intents of the heart.

No matter what kind of religious paint and decoration you put on your life....there will come a day of judgement.

Job 20:5 – *The triumphing of the wicked is short and the joy of the hypocrite is short.*

If you have ever said that one sin is the same as another in the eyes of God....that's not true.

Jesus says there is a GREATER CONDEMNATION awaiting false teachers that lead others astray.

I can't comprehend the degree of eternal punishment that God is capable of dispensing.....but when you weigh that against the degree of eternal love He has already demonstrated.....how can we say no to Him?

(8) Beloved, let's prove our sincerity by the consistency of our lives.

II Peter 1:5 – 10 (ESV) – *For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so near-sighted that he is blind having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure for if you practice these qualities, you will never fall.*

Transition: In stark contrast to these self-gratifying false teachers, Jesus points out a self-sacrificing widow.

II. **(9)** Jesus Issues a Commendation For Self-Denial (**Mark 12:41 – 44**)

Explanation:

The widow in this passage of Scripture stands in stark contrast to the Scribes.

(10) Unlike the proud, self-centered Scribes.....the widow is an example of humility and sacrificial discipleship that Jesus demands of His followers.

Luke 9:23 – *If any man desires to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me daily.*

In contrast to the Scribes, this woman was not:

- ❖ She wasn't an educated woman.
- ❖ She didn't possess great Scriptural knowledge.
- ❖ She didn't seek public recognition and was satisfied living in obscurity.
- ❖ She wasn't held in high esteem in the community.....as a matter of fact.....people likely looked down on her because she was a woman....and a widow.

And yet, Jesus singled this woman out and commended her self-denial.

This poor widow was NOT simply a religious person.....she genuinely loved God.

And out of her love for God.....she sacrificially gave out of her poverty.....not out of her abundance.

Jesus even called his disciples to take note of her and thousands of years later, we are still talking about this woman that the world would have seen as insignificant.

She humbly and genuinely loved God with everything she had.

(11) Conclusion: The greatest example of humility and sacrifice is our Lord Jesus.

- ❖ Although He is a King.....he had no palace but was born in a stable.
- ❖ On the day He was born, He was not surrounded by servants but by animals and shepherds.
- ❖ He was wrapped in strips of cloth instead of robes.
- ❖ He died like a humiliating death between two thieves.
- ❖ The tomb they buried him in was borrowed.
- ❖ This One born to a carpenter and his wife in the company of shepherds would die amidst thieves.

Your Savior never came *to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many*” (Mt. 20:28)

GBC APPLICATION: Every sermon always has a different application for each individual.

None of us wants to think of ourselves as the Scribes.....arrogant, proud and self-righteous. For the most part, I don't think the difficulty for us as a whole is thinking more of ourselves than we ought.

At the same time.....I'm not the Holy Spirit.....I can't eliminate the possibility that there are some among us that are like the Scribes.....filled with pride and self righteousness.

Here's the question you have to ask yourself:

(12) Is your life lived for the sake of others.....or is your life lived for your sake?

How does your life compare to the life lived by your Lord.....or for that matter.....how does your life compare to the widow who loved the Lord and willingly sacrificed out of her poverty?