

Title: A Sober Warning and a Poor Widow - Part 1

Passage: Mark 12:38-44

Context of Passage:

- Week of Passover. Week before Jesus' crucifixion.

Mark 12:37b

And the great throng heard him gladly.

- but the crowd's response was mostly superficial. They heard Jesus but did not choose to believe and respond to Him from the heart.

Passage: Mark 12:38-44

And in his teaching he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

EXPOSITION

Beware

- caution: do not be like religious leaders

Overview

Three charges against religious leaders:

- Pride
- Greed
- Hypocrisy

I. PRIDE

- Beware of those who do things just show

Mark 12:38-39

And in his teaching he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts,"

Scribes

- Craved recognition (why wore long robes)
- Expected acknowledgement of their status (why liked greetings)
- Demanded people to pay attention to their rank and position (why expected the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts)

John 12:43

for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

Application:

- How are we tempted to want praise of others more than praise of God?

Galatians 1:10

For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

II. GREED

- Beware of those who take advantage of others.

Mark 12:40a

who devour widows' houses

Devour widows' houses

- very opposite of God's Word and commands to care for widows.

James 1:27

Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

Acts 6:3

Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.

III. HYPOCRISY

- Beware of those who make a pretense of their piety.

Mark 12:40b

for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

Matthew 23:27-28

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

God sees the heart

1 Samuel 16:7

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."

IV. APPLICATION

Beware of your own heart.

Jeremiah 17:9

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

Search our hearts and see how pride, greed, and hypocrisy may be.

- Question: Is there anything in my heart that would express itself differently because of pride, greed, or hypocrisy?

Psalms 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

- God's calling for us:

Micah 6:8

He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

- Contrast: one not following God wholeheartedly

2 Chronicles 25:2

And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, yet not with a whole heart.

- True gratitude will live thanks (not just merely give thanks)

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Romans 12:1

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.