

11-7-21

Sermon- Telling Others about Kingdom

Scripture- Mark 12:38-44, CTW- Psalm 127

Hymns- 39, HH, 152

Theme- Jesus shows here that our motives are a key to the kingdom. Those with impure motives are the hypocrites who have no real love for God and therefore no real understanding of the kingdom. Their spirituality is all a big show.

Introduction: We keep hearing about false teachers and watch reports about them on television.

As I studied today's passage, I understood that the scribes were guilty of the sins of pride and hypocrisy. Just like these scribes, even we struggle with the sins of pride and hypocrisy.

There is a scribe within us. So, don't think that this message is only for the false prophets. All of us must heed to Jesus' warning.

Why did Jesus tell the people to be wary of the scribes? Three reasons:

I. Because The Scribes Loved Recognition

After asking a pointed question to the scribes in verse 37 (refer), Jesus began teaching to the crowd in the temple.

And while teaching, he tells the people to be wary of the scribes.

Now, these scribes were given the solemn responsibility of teaching God's Word to the people. They were spiritual leaders.

They were responsible to feed the people with God's Word and lead them in the right path. In light of this, it's sad that Jesus had to tell the people to be wary of the scribes.

The scribes were to shepherd God's people. Instead, these scribes led them astray.

Their desire for recognition is seen in two things:

A. The scribes liked to walk around in long robes, bringing attention to themselves.

During Jesus' days, people of prominence wore long white robes.

While the common people wore colored robes, the scribes wore white robes.

Also, according to **Numbers 15:38**, the Lord commands the Israelites to make tassels on the corners of their garments in order to identify themselves as Jews and to remind themselves the commandments of the Lord.

Now there's nothing wrong in wearing long robes and wearing tassels on the robes.

But these scribes made their fringes or tassels long in order to gain attention (**Matt. 23:5**). They desperately sought attention!

It's good to dress up well. But listen, never dress up in a way that will draw the undue attention of people to you, and away from the things of God.

B. The scribes liked greetings in the marketplace.

These scribes didn't like to be greeted privately.

They liked to be greeted in the marketplace where plenty of people could see them and they could receive plenty of greetings!

Luke says that they 'love (not just like) greetings in the marketplaces' (**Luke 20:46**). They expected to be addressed with titles of respect and dignity.

Just as it is not wrong to wear tassels on a robe, it's not wrong to respect authorities.

In fact, the Bible commands us to respect and submit to authorities. But these scribes expected others to address them with certain titles.

Matthew 23:7 tells us that they expected others to address them as 'rabbi,' which means 'my master.'

Read Mt. 23:8-12: 8 But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. 9 And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. 10 Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. 11 The greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Jesus says that these religious leaders must not be addressed as a 'teacher' or 'instructor' too.

Today, many ministers in our country are purchasing doctorates and bishops' certificates just to gain recognition from people.

This is the kind of attitude that Jesus condemned.

Secondly, Jesus tells the people to be wary of the scribes:

II. Because the Scribes Loved Respect.

Read verse 39.

A. The scribes had the best seats in the synagogues.

A synagogue was an important place of assembly for the Jewish community. In the synagogues, there would be a platform and some of these scribes would sit on the platform.

When a person sits on a stage like that, there's no way that he could be missed. Everyone will get to see him.

The scribes wanted the entire congregation to see them and admire them for their position of authority!

B. The scribes have places of honor at feasts.

At feasts, the most important place was at the right side of the host and the second most prominent place was at the left side of the host.

The scribes wanted to be seated near the host. They wanted to be the center of attention.

But listen to what the Lord says:

Read Luke 14:7-11.

7 Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, 8 “When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, 9 and he who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Give your place to this person,’ and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. 10 But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. 11 For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

So, the issue is pride. The scribes sought to have places of honor because of their pride.

Even today, some religious leaders take offense if they are not given important seats in a meeting.

The scribes loved themselves rather than loving God. The scribes sought honor from people rather than from God...“for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.” **John 12:43**

Jesus demanded a different attitude from his disciples see what he says in **Mark 10:42-45:**

42 And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever would be first among

you must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Christ himself is our perfect model, and in this passage He bypasses all of the other “models of society” and asks us to focus on the widow’s mite...or you could say “the mighty widow.”

In this regard, Jesus tells the people to be wary of the scribes:

III. Because The Scribes Were Guilty Of Religious Hypocrisy.

A. The scribes were hypocritical. They appeared to be spiritual, but they didn’t really care for the people. Jesus says that they devoured widows’ houses.

Many of the scribes knew that the greatest command is to love God and to love people, but they failed to love the oppressed and poor.

They were supposed to shepherd people, but they were devouring “taking advantage of” helpless people. These scribes sought huge offerings from helpless widows. They were worse than tax collectors.

Remember what **James 1:27** says: 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.

See also Isaiah 1:17- “Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.”

If we are truly spiritual, we will be concerned about the oppressed and the poor.

IV. And that Brings Us to the Reason Why Jesus Loves the Widow's Mite.

A. The Collection Boxes Were Placed for Show. There were several boxes in the Temple where money could be placed for collection.

Some were for the purpose of collecting the annual Temple tax from the Jewish males, while others were for free will offerings and the rich would make a big show of putting their money in, so all could see. This box that Jesus was watching would have been in the Court of Women.

B. This Widow Gave From Her Heart, Not for Show. She gave all the money she had to live on. She gave sacrificially, without regard for her present well-being but in true belief that God would indeed provide for all her needs.

This is in contrast to the way most people give. We tend to give from our surplus...whatever is left over after all the bills are paid and we are comfortable. This is not the kind of giving the Father requires.

When we consider giving a certain percentage of our income a great accomplishment, we resemble those who gave a tiny part of their surplus.

Here, Jesus shows that He admires sacrificial giving. As the body of this church, **we should give beyond the line of surplus or convenience**, and honor God the way this widow did, in total reliance upon the fact that God will indeed provide.

Jesus knows that when we look at the budget today we have two possible reactions: one where we resolve that the situation for this church is in dire need but that we should not increase our giving, but just wait for the storm to pass while someone else steps up to solve the problem...**or we can be like the widow**, giving all that she had in total reliance upon the grace of God. This is a reminder for all of us to decide which. Amen? Let us Pray...