

Mark 12:13-34

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[0 : 00] Mark chapter 12. Mark chapter 12 will be in verses 13 through 34 this morning. Mark 12 verses 13 through 34. While you're turning there, I'll challenge you to think for just a moment, but I'm not going to ask you to think very far back.

What we sing matters. The words, even the words of the songs matter. We try to be theologically accurate, at least in our wording. Sometimes maybe we don't think about it as much, but we strive to be theologically accurate even in what we sing.

What was it, that song that we just sang, second stanza, second verse, it was my what upon his shoulder? Sin, singular. There's no S on it.

Okay, and it was what that held him there. It was my what that held him there? Sin, there's no S, sin, singular. That matters. Because if Jesus died for all the bad things you did, the next time you do bad things, you have to die again.

He did not die because of our sins. He did not die because we did all these bad things and we just need to correct the bad things we did. He died because we are sinners, that we have a sin nature.

[1 : 14] And it was the very nature of who we are that was laid upon his shoulder. And he paid the price for who we are. Paul differentiates. You say, Pastor, these are really important. Well, they were important enough to be included in the word of God.

In Romans chapter 5 through 7 really finds its fulfillment there in Romans 7. It is not the sins that we need deliverance from for we would just find a new way to do bad things. That's just who we are. We need deliverance from our sin, the thing that makes us bad, the thing that is very core of our being. And the good news of the gospel is that Jesus died for our sin, not because we did bad things or we do bad things.

He died because of who we are to the core of our being. And when we accept him as our Lord and Savior, we are created new. And it is our sin nature that is transformed. It is still wrestling against this flesh and bones, this thing which we call body.

And we will stumble and falter. We're not perfect, but we are pushing on because we have a new man within us. That's just a gospel message I wanted you to see. I don't want you to lose it in the song. This has nothing to do with what we're looking at in the gospel of Mark.

[2 : 18] But I don't want you to miss that. That is important. So when you sing that, it was my sin upon his shoulders. And it was my sin that held him there. Praise God, he didn't just die because we do bad things.

He died because of who we were. And he took our place to the very core. And you say, Pastor, you're telling me that I'm rotten to my core. Yes, because I am and you are and we all are to the very depth of who we are.

But he died to take care of that. And that's the hope of the gospel. I like how S.M. Locker said, I know where a poor man can find money. I know where a thirsty man can find water.

And I know where a sick man can find healing. And it's found in Jesus Christ. Whatever our need is, it's there. Would you stand with me when we read the word of God found in Mark chapter 12? If you're physically able and desire to do so, would you stand with me as we read the word together? We're going to start in verse 13. And then we're going to go down to verse 34. The word of God says, Then they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to him in order to trap him in a statement.

[3 : 25] And they came and said to him, Teacher, we know that you are faithful and defer to no one, for you are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay a poll tax to Caesar or not?

Shall we pay or shall we not pay? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, Why are you testing me? Bring me a denarius to look at. And they brought one, and he said to them, Whose likeness and inscription is this?

And they said to him, Caesar's. And Jesus said to them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar, and to God the things that are God's. And they were amazed at him.

And some Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus and began questioning him, saying, Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves behind a wife and leaves no child, his brother should marry the wife and raise up children to his brother.

Therefore there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife and died, leaving no children. And the second one married her and died, leaving behind no children. And the third likewise. And so all seven left no children.

[4 : 28] Last of all, the woman died also in the resurrection. When they rise again, which one's wife will she be? For all seven had married her. And Jesus said to them, Is this not the reason you are mistaken?

That you do not understand the scriptures or the power of God? For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. But regarding the fact that the dead rise again, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God spoke to 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 of the living. You are greatly mistaken. And one of the scribes came and heard them arguing and recognizing that he had answered them well, asked him, What commandment is the foremost of all?

And Jesus answered, The foremost is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.

The second is this, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said to him, Right, teacher, you have truly stated that he is one, and there is no one else beside him.

[5 : 40] And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as himself is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, he said to him, You are not far from the kingdom of God.

And after that, no one would venture to ask him any more questions. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this day. We thank you for the grand privilege opportunity it is to gather together with brothers and sisters in Christ and to read your word.

We pray now that as we have read it, seen it, Lord, help us to have minds to understand it, hearts to accept it, and lives to live it out, as always, for your glory and honor.

And we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. And you may be seated. During this Passion Week of Christ presenting himself for open inspection, one of the matters which he allowed to take place, one of the things which was permitted, so to say, was this questioning of who Christ is.

He allowed them to question his authority. By what authority do you do these things? And if you remember, he said, Then I'll ask you one question. If you answer it, I'll tell you by what authority. He never did, because they refused to answer the question as it pertained to the baptism of John.

[6 : 56] It was their own pride that limited the further revelation of the authority of Christ. But here we see that he allows himself a day of questioning, where people were challenging him, challenging his authority, challenging his teaching, trying to catch him something that would bring condemnation or public scorn.

They were trying to undercut this great teacher. And it is the reality of the questioning of the Savior. We also know that by the time that these series of events happen, as it records for us in the Gospel of Mark, after this, no one asks him any further question, for they find that no matter how difficult the question may be, no matter how challenging it appears on the surface, he answers them all well.

And since they cannot argue what he is answering, they just resort to lying. And they do that during the... ..matters are showing their perfection of the Lamb that will be slain for the sin of the world.

Living, he is also perfect in his response. He's sinless in how he interacts with individuals who question him, which, by the way, is a wonderful testimony, for even today, people have questions.

And even today, we understand that we come to Christ or we come to the Word of God with our own doubts, with our own backstories, with all the factors that factor into our life.

[8 : 24] And many come with questions. And I've always said that Christ is not afraid of our questions. We find that as it just responds or resounds throughout all of Scripture, that God is not afraid of our questions.

But we also must position ourselves to not be afraid of his answers. It is one thing to come with questions. It is a whole other thing to shun the answers that he gives in response to our questions. And we, as the people of God, as Brother Ivan shared this morning, should not be afraid of other people's questions because we do not have to have a false sense of pride that says, I know everything, but rather we ought to have the humility to say that if the question is asked and I cannot answer it, I do know the one who is not afraid of any question, no matter how difficult, and he will answer it well.

And we find it in the Word of God. You say, well, I'm not Christ, but you live in relationship with Him. And you have, as the book of Hebrews tells you, the full revelation of Jesus Christ right here in the Word of God.

So any question that is asked of mankind, any longing, any desire, any doubts can be answered here within the pages of God's Word. But in the person of Christ, during this time, we see the question of the Savior.

[9 : 41] Now, let's look at two things. We'll look at their motives for asking these questions, and then we'll look at the message that He gave when He answered them. Within the two, we'll break them down just a little bit. Very seldom do I tell you how many points I have, but then the one time that I tell you I only have two, I'll let you know that there are three sub-points to each one of them, so actually I have six.

So what about that? I told you all the way at the very beginning, okay? So it's just really easy to look at this. You have three series of questions. You have the Pharisees and the Herodians, and then you have the Sadducees, and then you have the scribe, and each of them coming repeatedly, one right after another one.

It is a season of questioning and answering, if you will. And they are coming to Him in the temple, and they are coming at a time after He has already declared the keeper of the vineyard is going to come and cast out those who are maintaining it or the owner will.

We see that parable at the first where the vineyard has been fruitless, not because it has not borne fruit, but because the ones that were tending it failed to give the fruit to the owner, so He's going to cast them out.

We've already declared that He is the cornerstone. He's the foundation. He is of utmost importance that everything must be built on Christ. And so what we need to know is we need to make sure that this cornerstone can handle the weight that we're going to set upon it.

[10 : 55] We need to be certain that He is a foundation sure enough. And He allows these series of questions to come because I believe that each one of them are subgroups or major groupings, if you will, of the questions of all of mankind, the questions that are still being asked today.

They are at least a type of that question, and hopefully we will see that. The first that we notice here and the motive behind the question is we have the motive to trap Christ by means of hypocrisy.

And it tells us in the Word of God that these people came together for the sole purpose of attempting to trap Christ in something He said or in a way in which He answered.

And it was with a hypocritical spirit that they came. They posed as being genuine seekers of truth, but in their hypocrisy, what they were longing to do was to trap Him kind of in a double standard, if you will, wanting to say, well, if you say that, then this can't be true, or if you do that, that can't be true.

And we see that people still do that today. They come with a hypocritical spirit, not really confessing who Jesus is, but their whole motive for asking the question was to try to trap either the believer or the Savior Himself in His answers.

[12 : 10] Maybe you have heard this, and if I had to guess, this would be the one thing that scares us more than any, that there are people who ask leading questions attempting to trap you in your answers to prove you wrong.

And friend, that's okay. I get that a lot. And I've told people, and I've opened myself up, said, you can ask me anything you want. And over the years, I've had a lot of people ask me very difficult

questions, questions trying to trap me, and I've been trapped and stumped by some of them. I have not always been able to answer them all, but this is why, listen to me, brothers and sisters in Christ, you need to be people of conviction. You need to know what you believe, and you need to believe what you know, because the moment you say that I am a follower of Jesus Christ, somebody's going to ask you something out of a hypocritical spirit to try to trap you in how you answer it.

And this is exactly what happens here. It says that after Jesus had spoke this, the Pharisees and the Herodians came together to ask him a series of questions. Now, for just a moment, you ought to have red flags going everywhere, because any time you see avowed enemies uniting to come together for a purpose, you need to pay attention.

And when the Pharisees and the Herodians came alongside one of another, you need to know that this is not just good motives, because if you look at all of the timing around Christ and what's going on historically and even politically, the Pharisees were the legalistic keepers of the law.

[13:38] They were the guardians of the faith, if you will. They knew the law. I mean, they literally wrote the book on the law. You say, oh no, the law is the first five books of the Bible. Right, but they wrote the book about the law, so they took the Ten Commandments, made it 634 oral commandments, and then they wrote down the book called the Mishnah.

It says, this is how you do it. When it says, don't do any work on the Sabbath, well, the Pharisees were the ones that said, that means don't carry a coffee cup, don't go any further away from your house than this, don't do any, they told you how to do it. They were the guardians of the faith. Don't throw them under the bus too quickly because they were genuine and they were devout, and honestly, if we were to just be transparent, it would be good to have a little bit more of a Pharisaic spirit about ourselves, not in a legalistic manner, but in a devoted manner where we would say, we're going to adhere to it regardless of what anybody else thinks, and that's what the Pharisees were.

And they were keepers of the faith, but not really true faith, legalistic faith, and they really kind of wanted to be the stewards of Israel. On the other end of the spectrum, you had the Herodians. Now the Herodians, by name, you ought to all of a sudden understand who they are. They are the supporters of Herod, and they really believe in Herod, and they like Herod because, you know, Herod made things easy, Herod made things prosperous.

[14:48] I mean, Herod was not called Herod the Great because he was a great guy. Okay, he killed a lot of his wives, killed all of his children, but one, he was just really not a great guy. He was also the one that issued the killing of the babies, if you remember, in Bethlehem.

You ought to understand that. He's not a great guy, but he was called Herod the Great because he developed underwater concrete. He built a maritime port in the Mediterranean Sea. He was the first one to do that.

He built the aqueduct that supplied water to Jerusalem until 1945, I believe it was, that was built like in 4 or 5 B.C., and it supplied water to Jerusalem until the 1940s.

I mean, that's pretty amazing, right? And so he did a lot of historically great things for the nation, and there were people that were all about some Herod, and so they were the Herodians.

They loved the world they lived in. They got it because they, hey, business was good. Maybe some of them started concrete companies. I don't know, but business was good, and they were making profits, so you can all of a sudden see.

[15:49] I mean, you have Herod over here who's killing wives and sons and doing whatever he wants to. He's kind of half Jew. He's Edomaeon, so he's not even fully Jewish, but he uses that intermarriage to play on the Jewish culture, and he got appointed by the Roman empires, and you have the Pharisees over here going, get away from Herod.

Don't leave Herod. We don't want the Herod. And all of a sudden, the Pharisees and the Herodians come together. Why? Because these avowed enemies who hated one another more than any other two sects within the community did had one common enemy, and that enemy was Jesus Christ. Friend, listen to me. When you find people that are usually at odds with one another coming together to ask you a question is probably not well intended. And they come with a hypocritical spirit, and they ask him about this whole poll tax.

Now, just so you understand it, the Pharisees said it is unlawful to pay a poll tax because it is God and God alone who should receive the money. The Herodians said it's absolutely lawful to pay the poll tax because when you pay the reign of Herod, you line our pockets as well.

So no matter how Jesus answered, he was caught. If Jesus says, well, yes, we ought to pay the poll tax, then the Pharisees, the keepers of the faith, are mad at him. If he says, no, we shouldn't pay the poll tax, then the Herodians are mad at him, and he seems to be caught in a place because they come trying to trap him in hypocrisy.

[17 : 11] But the good news is that the word of God is greater than hypocrisy. And we'll get to that in just a moment. The second question, the series of questions that come to him, come not to trap him in hypocrisy, but they come with truth being ignored.

The Sadducees are the second group who come before him, and they have a blatant desire to ignore the truth of God's word. And so there are moments when people question Christ, and they will question you as well, and they just want to ignore the truth.

They want to discount large portions of Scripture and say, well, that's over here, and that's over there, and we shouldn't do it over there. I'm currently reading a book right now called Seeking Allah and Finding Jesus.

Great book, by the way, and it's about discipleship, about someone befriending a devout Muslim and coming to Christ, and how any time he would try to answer any questions, oh, well, you can't do that. We can't look at the book of John because the gospel of John is written so much longer, and it was just this blatant attempt to ignore revealed truth.

And today, people will come to you and say, well, I'm not going to accept this portion of the Bible or this one. Well, that's the Sadducees. The Sadducees accepted the first five books of the Bible, that is the writings of Moses, and they discounted everything else.

[18 : 28] And so in discounting everything else, they were throwing the majority of Hebrew Scripture out the window because by the time Christ comes, they have Genesis and Malachi, and we have the testimony of all these things, and there are some great matters in there.

I mean, brother, I haven't read from the book of Psalms, and there's all these testimonies. If you were to read the book of Job, the book of Job speaks of the resurrection, which historically is the oldest book in Scripture, but it's not included in the first five.

But the book of Job says that I know that though he slay me, I will see my Redeemer in the land of the living. Job says I may die, but there will be a day when I stand in the land of the living and I will see my Redeemer face to face.

Now, if that's not proclaiming the resurrection, I don't know what is. You know, though I'm going to die, and then I'm going to see him alive again someday, and that's the oldest historical writing you have in Scripture.

So from the very beginning, it had been proclaimed, but it's not included in the first five books. So the Sadducees, the guy who ordained me in the ministry, said they were sad, you see, because they didn't believe in the resurrection, they didn't believe in angels, they didn't believe in demons, they didn't have any hope.

[19 : 37] All they had was what this world would offer them. And if that's all you have, then you're sad, you see, because that's all you got. But they were really good at business, and they were really prosperous, and the reality is, is by the time of Christ, the Sadducees were in control of the high priesthood.

And the reason they were in control of the high priesthood, think about this, those who did not accept anything beyond the book of Deuteronomy, those who did not believe in the resurrection, those who did not believe in angels, and those who did not believe in demons, were in control of the high priesthood.

Because the Roman government put it up for open bid, and they had more money than Pharisees, because the Pharisees were too busy being legalists, the Sadducees were working on the Sabbath and doing good business, and they had more money.

The Herodians didn't want anything to do with temple worship, because they were concerned more about the court of the king. And so these were the people, and what was going on is the Sadducees came with this story. By the way, if you're like brother five or six, would you marry that woman?

I mean, just be honest. I just got to say it. I don't care what the law says. If I'm brother five or six and some four people have died before me with no child, I'm not marrying that woman.

[20 : 48] But that's just me, okay? You say, Pastor, you shouldn't say that. Well, I know in the Bible it's bad. It says you shouldn't say that, and there are people who die because they won't do it, but I get it.

I mean, I wouldn't have done it, but they tell this story, this absurd, and the absurdity in it is implied on purpose. There's a woman who has seven husbands. You know that, right? The good news is Jesus meets someone else who has a lot of husbands too, and he offers grace and mercy to the woman at the well.

But here's this woman who has seven husbands, and she had no children, and then she dies, and so the question they're asking is, well, if the resurrection is true since all seven had her, who in the world's wife is she going to be in the resurrection?

And the reason they ask the question that way is because they are openly knowingly ignoring the truth. There will be times where people question Christ simply ignoring the truth.

What the word of God has been clear about, they say, I don't want to hear it, I don't want to do it because I have these questions, and it's okay because the Savior can answer that as well. The third question, the third motive behind that question is a test of greatness.

[21 : 56] The scribe shows up now, and now you've got the Pharisees and the Herodians, the answer has stumped them, and then you have the Sadducees, and the answer has shut their mouth, and now you have the scribe, and the scribe heard them.

Notice the wording here. The scribe overhearing them arguing. Now, when I read the text, I don't see Jesus arguing with anyone. I just see him answering, right? I don't see him getting in a heated argument.

I don't see him losing control of himself, which, by the way, is really good for us. We need to understand that. It's okay if people ask us hard questions. We don't have to get offended. We don't have to get mad. We don't have to get upset. It doesn't even matter if they're asking it with a hypocritical spirit or if they're ignoring the truth.

It's not you they're questioning, right? They're always questioning the Savior. So you don't have to be mad about it. You just have to say, okay, give an answer. But what we find here is Jesus isn't arguing so much to say, but the scribes overhears them arguing, the Word of God says, and that wording is intentional because what the scribes did, and we ought to thank God for them again.

We don't cast people in judgment too quickly. Their job was to hand copy the Hebrew scripture. And they would have a copy here and they would over here copy it over here, right? And so they would hand copy scripture and they were about the preservation of the scripture.

[23 : 08] That was their job. And they were teachers of the Word of God because they saw it more than anyone else. Their days were consumed with transcribing scripture. And so one of the pastimes that they did, because that was their work, just like your work, is they would argue among one another as scribes which commandment is the greatest.

And some would prefer this portion of the Word of God and some this. And they would just spend their days arguing about what was the greatest part of scripture. And that's how they spent their time.

They would do it as they transcribed it, much like in your work world, people will question you or in your hobby world, but who do you think is the best at this or what part of the job do you think is the best there? And so they were trying to categorize scripture.

And so the scribe hears them and he asks this question and really it is a test of greatness because here's a question we must all ask. What part of the Bible is the greatest part you can ever open to? Now that's kind of a trap question because greatness is subjective.

Some of you like other portions of the Word of God more than you like others. I get it. People come to me all the time and say, I'm reading through Leviticus and I will praise the Lord when I make my way through Leviticus because there's so many difficult names and there are so many difficult hearts.

[24 : 25] And you know, we wouldn't ever, I have never met in 20 plus years of pastoral ministry, no one has ever walked up to me and said, man, the book of Leviticus is my favorite book.

No one. But do you know that Jesus refers to that? Peter refers to that? And the call of Leviticus is to be holy as I am holy says the Lord. So we can't discount those names and those listings for the call of Leviticus is to be holy.

And that's the standard of holiness. And when we read it that way, we fall in love with it, right? We are told to be holy as I am holy says the Lord. And all those laws and all those rituals, they're the standard of holiness.

And so now we can't even discount that or numbers. What about the book of Numbers? Well, if we see all the types and the pictures of all the sacrifices and what we see is these are types of Christ,

how do we know how much his death on the cross accomplished until we know what every sacrifice was?

How do we know that if we offend him unknowingly, there's a sacrifice for that? Or if we offend him knowingly, there's a sacrifice for that? How do we not know there's time to fellowship at the cross and to have a fellowship meal together?

[25 : 36] By the way, that was one of their sacrifices just to come and joy fellowship around that sacrifice? That's at the cross. We don't know that without the book of Numbers. So which part of the Bible is the greatest?

There's not one. And so people will come and they want to, it's a test of greatness. And now there are things that I prefer, one of the reasons I went into expository, expositional preaching, for one, I was challenged by it very early on in pastoral ministry, but also in the early days of my pastoral ministry, I was kind of confining myself to the pages of scripture I preferred.

I came to Christ from reading the book of Romans. I fell in love with the book of Romans. By the way, I was a pastor for six years before I preached my first sermon out of the book of Romans, so it's not like I jumped right into that.

I found the pastoral epistles, and they were a little bit difficult to preach from, but the writings of Paul, I mean, in the old preacher world, as I say, those are preached, brother. I mean, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Galatians, all of those things will preach.

There's some good things in there, and so it wasn't hard to open up some writings of Paul and say, look at this. This is rich. This is so strong, and so I would kind of lean towards that a little bit because that's where I was comfortable, and so then God began to push me in my own personal reading.

[26 : 52] That's why I read the reading plan that I read to get me out of the things that I was comfortable with, and so now I read all of scripture, and I've been doing it for years, and I read the fullness of scripture, and then I start preaching.

The reason I started preaching on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights. If you remember, you were here Sunday night. The first Sunday night I was here as pastor, I said, open your Bibles up to Genesis 1-1, and so now we're making our way through the book of Esther.

We went from Genesis 1-1 to we'll be in Esther chapter 5, I believe it is, this Wednesday, and we've made it that far. The reason is so that I wouldn't overlook any of it because there's no great part of scripture.

It's all great, and what I was doing is what so many people do is I was ignoring truth, and I was putting scripture to a test and saying, which one's the greatest?

And really, all I was talking about was preference. What was more appealing? Now, there are portions of scripture that will speak to you in a season of life, and that's awesome, but don't get stuck there.

[27 : 52] So these are the motives. Now let's look at the message. Christ answered all three of these, and he answered them very clearly. And he answered them the same way we can, too.

When it came to this hypocritical test, this trying to trap Christ with hypocrisy, Christ gave a very abrupt answer, and the answer was one that we ought to live lives of consistency.

There ought to be a consistency of life. When the Herodians and the Pharisees came to Jesus and they asked about the poll tax, you know the account. We just read it. Jesus says, bring to me a denarius, and denarius is the equivalent of a day's wage.

So like, bring me your paycheck for today. Now on the denarius was an inscription of Caesar's name, but also the image of Caesar. And so Jesus asked them, whose image is this?

Because the money was, the question was about money. And the question was, do I give Caesar my money? And what Jesus is telling them is, when you labor, Caesar is giving you money for your labor, so render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's.

[29 : 03] If you're going to borrow from him, you need to give back to him. Now it's tax season, I get that. This is my least favorite time of the year. I'll just be transparent with you. I drop my taxes off at my accountant, and I never like it when they call me.

Nothing against you if you're in that world, but I just don't like it when they call me. Hey, the good news is, is you only owe, and anytime you say you only owe, that is not good news, so don't lead with that reality, right?

But the reality is this, it's not mine anyway. That's not my image on the money in my wallet. It's not my name stated on it.

And it's a hard, difficult thing, but it's a reality. And Jesus is saying, if you're going to use the means of this world and give back to the world, what is theirs? But then he goes a little further, because there ought to be a consistency in this.

And to God, the things that are God's. So the question is, what bears the image of God? Well, that answer is really clear. You and I do.

[30 : 01] For in the image of God, he created them, male and female. And if the coin bears the image of Caesar, and you need to render to Caesar that which is Caesar's, but you bear the image of God, then you render to God that which is God, which means that's the remainder of your life.

You yourself ought to be rendered to God. And that is a consistent principle of life. For if you are going to use the things of the world to sustain yourself in your daily living, then do not be upset when you have to repay them a small portion of it back.

And if God allows you to live in this image of himself, and if he allows you to live as image bearers of the creator, and you get to use your life however you want to use your life, though he dictates you shouldn't, you ought to render to him your life as well.

For it is on loan. And though they tried to trap him in a hypocritical statement, the reality is we ought to live consistently in our life. It is not an either or.

It is not just pay your taxes, all you have to do is, you know, pay your taxes and die. No, it is you bear the image of God so you also have the responsibility of rendering your life to him.

[31 : 14] when it came to the truth that was ignored, I love the answer of Christ here because he declares to them there ought to be a confidence in the resurrection, and this confidence is found even in their own writings.

They ask him about this woman who had all these husbands and the brothers that were all there. I love what Jesus says because by the way, this is the answer to every truth ignoring question.

Jesus answers it this way. He says, is the reason, is not the reason you are mistaken, it's in verse 24, that you do not understand the scripture or the power of God.

By the way, anytime we really have doubts, it boils down to those two things. If we doubt a truth that has been clearly proclaimed, it is a result of either one of those two things.

Either we do not understand scripture accurately or we are doubting the power of God. some people can look at this and say, well, yes, I mean, it does say that.

[32 : 15] I understand it and I get it, but what about this? And I'll give you a word and all of a sudden we'll raise red flags to you just because we're so conditioned to it in our church time.

If I was to use the word predestination, it's almost like a scary word, predestination, those whom he predestined. All of a sudden some of you are going, yes, and some of you are getting very defensive because predestination kind of goes against everything in your word.

And I'm not trying to be mean in this, I'm not trying to be, but the word is there, it's in scripture, right? And so our whole wrestling with that word is this, either we misunderstand it or it's not really hard to misunderstand, we know what predestination means, we know what predestined, those whom he predestined means to have foreknowledge, to know beforehand, to be able to appoint, to do all those things.

And so really what comes down to this, are we doubting the power of God? Is God able to do that? Well yeah, we have to say he's able to do that, for if we ever find anything that he is not able to do, then he ceases to be God.

If there's something beyond his ability, then he ceases to be God. And really it's just saying, okay, I'm going to accept it by faith.

[33 : 25] I mean I can comprehend all the fullness of it, I mean I can understand it, I mean I can explain it to you in all of its expansive understanding, I mean I can be very clear on that, but I just have to accept that the word's there and I have to accept it and go yes, okay, I get it.

And so when we look at these truths that are in scripture, it is this result of either misunderstanding scripture or doubting the power of God. But the good news is that Jesus says the word of God has an answer.

And I love what he says here, but regarding the fact that the dead are raised, here is the confidence you can have in the resurrection. resurrection, how do we know there is a resurrection?

Because Jesus said it was a fact regarding the fact that the dead are raised. And notice too what Jesus did.

Have you not read in the scriptures when Moses is before the burning bush? Now what books of scripture did I say this and you see is accepted? The first five books, right?

[34 : 28] So Jesus is going to use a text from their accepted text. He's going to use a portion of the Bible that they accept that they say, oh, well, it's not anywhere in here, so I'm just going to ignore it even though every people say about it.

He's going to use a portion of scripture that they accept because by the way, the Bible is consistent. It keeps saying the same thing over and over and over and over again. It has but one great message. And this, by the way, is one of the challenges of expositional preaching because Jesus is implying here that even the words matter in the word of God.

And even the tense of the word matter. This is why you need to have an accurate translation of scripture. This is why you need to have what I would consider a word for word translation of scripture, one that holds to the true meaning of the original language.

This is why. Because the word and their tense matters. He says, have you not read in a passage where Moses had the burning bush that God says, I am, that's a present tense by the way, the God of, and he begins to list the names.

I am. And so what Jesus is saying is God does not say I was the God of these people or I'm going to be. He says, I am presently the God of these people.

[35 : 40] And Jesus knows that the people he's talking to understood full well that all of these individuals were dead. And if God, who cannot lie, says I am the God of these people, then what God is saying is they are with me and I am still their God.

So the resurrection is a fact. And so, friend, we have confidence in the resurrection. But regarding the resurrection, he said, they are neither given nor taken in marriage.

And some of us understand, well, you mean I won't know my husband or my wife and I won't know that relationship. That is beyond the realms of scripture. But we find here, no, you won't. But I think you would know them, but you will not know them as you know them now.

You will not be husband and wife or you will be like the angels. There's no need for procreation, by the way, in that time, which is one of the avenues of marriage. But my hope is that my broom closet is right beside Carrie's mansion.

I'll probably have the broom closet. She'll probably have the mansion. And that's okay. Maybe I'll have a broom closet in her mansion. That's what I'm hoping. I'll sweep her floors and, you know, she'll be okay. We will have this fellowship with one another as we will with all other believers.

[36 : 41] But I know it's difficult to understand this and accept this. But whatever null and void feeling is there, we've met by the fullness of the presence of Christ. Because ultimately, our marriage is found fulfillment in his presence, not in our performance.

And so we'll know that. Which, by the way, ought to cause us to love and to cherish. Those moments we have this side of eternity. And we will be there.

But notice the answer. It is the confidence. It is a fact. Third and finally, we see the message that Christ gives here. To the test of greatness, Jesus calls us to conduct ourselves in faithfulness.

When the question is, what is the greatest commandment? It's been stated the last two Sundays. And it is the clear teaching of scripture.

To love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. And the second is like it, to love your neighbor as yourself. The word of God is wrapped up in those two great commandments.

[37 : 50] Jesus says that all of the word of God hangs on those two. And it is a fulfillment. We ought to conduct ourselves in the faithfulness of loving the Lord our God with all of our being and loving our neighbor as ourself.

Every portion of scripture that we open up to answers one of those two questions. How do I love the Lord God better? And how do I love the people beside me greater? Every portion.

Even challenging ones. No matter where we're at in the Old Testament. No matter where we're at in the New Testament. How do I love the Lord God better? And how do I love my neighbor greater?

Some of you say, well, pastor, what about those portions of scripture where God commanded his people to annihilate, right? When he called them to wipe out all these people. Well, that ought to cause us to love the Lord our God with all of our soul, with all of our strength, with all of our mind,

with all of our being.

Because he is holy. And the mockery of those people's lives prior to that coming judgment denied his holiness and therefore judgment reigned upon him.

[38 : 54] And it ought to cause us to love him supremely. And it ought to cause us to understand that his judgment is certain and we do not know the day nor the hour nor the time. And so therefore we ought to love our neighbors in such a manner that they won't be the ones who fall under that judgment.

For he will not be mocked forever. So no matter where we open up scripture we find the call to consistently live faithfully.

To love him with all of our being and to love those around us as if it mattered. Any questions asked the Savior he had an answer for.

No matter what questions we bring before him he knows the answer full well. And he answers them in truth. Until we like the ones at the end of this passage no longer have any questions.

But notice I want you to notice one small detail. The scribe who challenged him must have been a little won over by the argument.

[39 : 59] For he is the only one who said you've answered well. You are right. You are right. And Jesus it says seeing that he had answered intelligently that is with the mind said this you are not far from the kingdom of God.

He wasn't there but he wasn't far. Intelligence will not bring us there. even having questions answered to the mind do not bring the individual to the Savior.

It's got to move into the heart because to know you should love is one thing but to live out that love is totally different. Let's pray.

Father we thank you for this day. We thank you for your faithfulness and goodness. We thank you for the truth of the word of God. And pray that it would challenge us and move us to love you more. And to love those around us in a greater way. We ask it all in Jesus name. Amen.