



SPORTS IN FOCUS

The Servant Confronted & Questioned

Mark 12:1-44 • Lesson Nine

READY

- Imagine that when a conversation turns to spiritual matters, your skeptical neighbor immediately begins listing all the religious hypocrites he knows and all the phony televangelists he has seen on the airwaves. How do you respond?

SET

Context of Mark 12:1-44

Chapter 12 reveals the growing animosity of the Jewish religious establishment toward Christ. They resented Jesus because He exposed their pride, hypocrisy, and self-righteousness. They envied His great popularity with the people, especially in light of the fact that He had never sought or received official Sanhedrin certification as a rabbi. Most of all, they were incensed at His claim to be the Messiah and the Son of God, a claim that in their eyes was blatant blasphemy. He even dared to publicly humiliate them in the Temple, the one place where they thought their honor was sacrosanct and their authority incontestable.

Keys to Text

Parable: A short, simple story designed to communicate a spiritual truth, religious principle, or moral lesson. In this parable of the vineyard owner, Jesus alludes to Isaiah 5:1-2. The “vineyard” is a common symbol for the Jewish nation in Scripture.

GO

Read Mark 12:1-44

1. Why are there so many people who know the truth and even pretend to subscribe to it but who, in actuality, do not live for the glory of God?
2. Who do the various characters in the parable of the vineyard owner represent? What was the Jewish response to this story by Christ?
3. How can you “render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s”? What would that mean for us today?
4. The question concerning taxes was an attempt to get Jesus to say or do what? What does his answer mean?
5. What was Jesus’ ingenious response to the trick question about the resurrection?
6. Why and how did the poor widow catch Jesus’ eye? What message was Jesus attempting to convey to His disciples through this incident?

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The sports switch did not worry Steve Holcomb. When his son, Steven, changed winter sports allegiances from Alpine skiing to bobsled, he knew both were inherently dangerous and vastly time consuming and offered little return. It was the timing that irked Steve Holcomb. Holcomb had just sent a tuition check to the University of Utah shortly before Steven made the decision. With a shrug, Steven told his father he was leaving for Europe the next day to fuel a passion and chase a dream. Then, Steve Holcomb fumed. Now? “Probably a good investment,” Holcomb said, watching his son compete from near the finish line at the Whistler Sliding Centre. “It was money well spent, poorly.” On Saturday, long after bequeathing what turned out to be a friendly donation to the college, Steven Holcomb can offer a refund in gold. Holcomb piloted USA-1 to the first gold medal for the United States in the four-man competition in 62 years. How could this sports story from the 2010 Winter Olympic games be used as a parable to teach a spiritual truth or moral lesson? Explain?