

Mark 12:13-17 – Courage to speak God’s Truth – Part 1

TSK, Handfuls, GreekLexicon, Gill, Rienecker, Robertson, Barnes, Clarke, Calvin, JFB, Poole, Geneva, Trapp, Henry, Family, Vincent, PNT, Lightfoot Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: The Jewish (犹太人的) leaders hated Jesus and they showed it.

They hated him for what he did. They criticized him for healing on the Sabbath (安息日), for meeting and eating with wicked people, for not ceremonially (符合仪式规则地) washing his hands before eating, and for forgiving sins.

They hated him for what he said. He called out their sins (罪) and accused them of having hard hearts, he called them out for teaching their young people to ignore their parents and give their money to the temple, he called them out for giving frivolous (轻率的) divorces, he called them out for worshipping God only with their lips, he called them out for their refusal to honor him because of where he was born, and he called them out for corrupting the temple of God.

And more recently, Jesus had just taught the parable (比喻) of the rich man who owned a vineyard and leased it to keepers. The keepers then killed the owner’s servants who came to them and finally killed the son of the owner of the vineyard. Jesus was teaching that the Jewish leaders had killed many prophets (先知) and finally killed the Son of God, and they did this to keep the vineyard for themselves. This, without doubt, made the Jewish leaders very angry and increased their hate.

But the Jewish leaders did not act impulsively (冲动地). Rather, they selected some men, planned, and then sent them to Jesus with the intention to trap (给...设圈套) him and then destroy him.

You will see the Jewish attempt to destroy Jesus and the results of their actions under the following headings:

The Pharisees (法利赛人) Flattered (献媚) Jesus

The Pharisees Framed (设计陷害) Jesus

Jesus Corrected the Pharisees

Our goals are: That you will see that, under pressure from the Pharisees, Jesus courageously obeyed God’s law for you and spoke the truth so you could get the credit, and that you will now boldly speak the truth for Jesus when you are under pressure.

The Pharisees Flattered Jesus

13 Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians (希律一党的), to catch Him in His words. 14 When they had come, they said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and care about no one; for You do not regard the person of men, but teach the way of God in truth.

1. The Pharisees and the Herodians were not friends; the Pharisees hated the Herodians. Why?

The Pharisees opposed Caesar’s legitimacy (凯撒统治的合法性). The Herodians supported Caesar’s rule over their homeland. But because of the Pharisees’ hatred for Jesus, they were willing to work with the Herodians.

2. These pleasant Herodian Doves (as they were called) along with the Pharisees, came to trap Jesus by using his words.

The word for “catch” is a hunting term, which signifies to “catch with deceit.”

3. The Pharisees’ goal was either to make the people hate Jesus or make the Roman government condemn and kill him.

4. These cunning狡黠的 men started with flattering Jesus in order to throw him off-guard (卸下防备) before they set the trap.

They thought that if they said agreeable, patronizing (屈尊附就的) things about him, he would think they were innocent and more easily fall for their trap. This has always been a common tactic (计策). This is often how salespeople make the sale.

5. In order to flatter Jesus, they said:

a. You are a teacher – a respected one, one with authority.

b. You are true. This referred to Jesus’ character. His heart was true. His motives were true. He was genuine.

c. You do not worry about what others think. Jesus was courageous. He wasn’t afraid to speak when he was criticized.

d. You do not give rich or important people a pass because of their position; you demand obedience for all.

e. You teach the truth about God. Jesus was not the fake teacher like others were. Nicodemus confessed this in John 3. Jesus said no one would come to the Father except through him, and that was the truth.

Sadly, these men did not believe a thing they were saying. They did not have true faith in Jesus. They were speaking the truth but they thought what they were saying were lies. They were in a large company of those peddling God’s word for profit.

2 Corinthians 2:17 For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God (为利混乱神的道); but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

6. Lesson:

a. The enemies of the people of God will conspire (谋划) together to destroy the people of God. Know this. Watch out for this. Don't be naïve and think that wicked are innocent or neutral. Even more, don't be fooled, even if someone says he is conservative (保守的). If he is not a friend of Christ he is an enemy of Christ and Christ's people.

Psalm 2:1 Why do the nations rage, And the people **plot a vain thing?** 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the **rulers take counsel (商议) together**, Against the LORD and against His

Anointed (受膏者), saying, 3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords (绳索) from us."

b. How will the enemies try to destroy you and the church? The church's enemies do not always hunt you with guns but with a lure (引诱) to compromise (妥协) and an appeal to be apathetic (麻木不仁的). This is more deadly. Consider a few examples:

A church in California recently had a Beyonce Mass (弥撒) to show they are "hip" with the culture.

Churches in Toronto are encouraged to welcome perverts (性变态者) as members of the church and show they are "open-minded."

The enemies of Christ say good things about Jesus without acknowledging faith, justice, and mercy. This makes people drop their guard and accept these as "so-called" brothers.

c. But don't be close friends with these men and women. Don't marry them. Their goal is to lure you away to sin. It's a trap!

The Pharisees Framed Jesus

14 ... Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? 15 "**Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?**"

1. After the flattery then came the trap –the frame-up. The Pharisees asked Jesus (with the Herodians standing by): Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar?

("Taxes" literally means "head money人头税." The Jews paid taxes per person.)

2. How was this question (Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar?) a trap?

a. This was a trap because if Jesus said that it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, then the Pharisees would **report this to the people and the people would hate Jesus for saying this and stop following him.** The people were suffering under Rome's heavy hand. And to make matters worse, the Roman government was sending Israel's wealth to Rome. There were armed rebellions叛乱 by the Jews to avoid paying taxes. Judas of Galilee and Theudas were two examples of rebel leaders.

b. This was a trap because if Jesus said that it was unlawful to pay taxes to Caesar, they would accuse Jesus of subversion颠覆罪 and turn him over to Rome to be executed被处决. One of the things Rome hated the most was if the people did not pay their taxes. Caesar did not demand that the Jews changed their religion or their religious practices. But he demanded taxes.

These questions showed intense hatred of Christ. It was a trap with the intention of destroying Jesus.

3. And what about that 2nd question "Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?" Why ask that additional question asked?

The Pharisees wanted Jesus to **specifically say**: "You must not pay taxes to Rome," or "You must pay taxes to Rome." They wanted him to be specific enough **so they could get a conviction from the Jews or the Romans.** They wanted to be like lawyers.

4. It looked like they had Jesus trapped, and they were likely sitting back with smirks (冷笑) on their faces!

They knew they had him! They would get him if he said "Pay taxes," and they would get him if he said "Don't pay taxes." So the pressure was increased on Jesus. **The people who pretended to be nice started to swing the hammer.**

5. Lesson:

a. Watch out for people try to trap you with compromise. (It's just one Sunday away from church; God wouldn't mind. It's okay to commit adultery犯奸淫; everyone's doing it; it will feel good. Of course God could use evolution进化 as part of creating man. Technically you are only watching adultery when you watch pornography; you are not really guilty of adultery.)

b. Watch out for people who try to trap you by making you apathetic. (You have to look out for yourself; that is their problem. Aren't people of all religions God's children?)

c. Instead of compromise and instead of apathy, be strong and courageous and stand for the truth. How? **Pray** for strength. **Look to God's Word** for directions.

Jesus Corrected the Pharisees

15...But He, **knowing their hypocrisy (假冒伪善)**, said to them, "**Why do you test Me?** Bring Me **a denarius** that I may see it." 16 So they brought it. And He said to them, "**Whose image and inscription (号, 刻印) is this?**" They said to Him, "Caesar's." 17 And Jesus answered and said to them, "**Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.**" And they marveled (希奇) at Him.

1. Jesus knew that these people, two enemies conspiring against him, were hypocrites who were trying to trap him.

2. Jesus then courageously corrected them, destroying their plans.

He corrected them by asking them to bring him a denarius – a Roman coin that was equivalent to a day’s wage. (The KJV wrongly translated this word “penny.”) He then asked whose image and inscription was on the coin, and they confessed that it was Caesar’s, likely Caesar Tiberius (台比留, 罗马皇帝AD14–37) .

Then Jesus responded: **Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. Give to God what belongs to God.** Look at the meaning:

3. Jesus courageously said that all men should pay their taxes to Rome and encouraged others to pay their taxes.

Earlier, Jesus had rebuked(指责) the Pharisees who had told children it was better to give their money to God at the temple rather than to care for their own parents. He wanted them to know that duty to God did not remove duty to parents. **Civil subjection (民事法律的服从) did not remove submission (顺服) to God and submission to God did not remove the need for civil subjection.** In fact, **submission to civil authority is obedience toward God.** And surely the Jews had already ceded authority to Rome by using Rome’s money. (He who uses Caesar’s coin must pay tribute进贡 to Caesar.)

Romans 13:7 -Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

The Pharisees would have hated this.

4. Jesus courageously said that all men should give gifts that belonged to God, for he was still on the throne.

He meant that Caesar wasn’t everything and wasn’t owed everything.

The Herodians would have hated this.

5. Jesus’ answer shut their mouths and left them marveling at his answer.

The Pharisees and the Herodians came with a trap but they were both left angry. They had failed in their plans, miserably failed. Jesus’ courageously spoke the truth.

6. Lessons:

a. Heaven’s searchlights see every evil plan in this world, even the plans of the heart. So find comfort that **God does not miss any evil plans against the church.**

b. Jesus spoke truth. He was the embodiment 化身 of truth. He spoke the truth of God’s salvation and sanctification成圣 of sinners. Jesus spoke the truth courageously. In this case, **Jesus endured this temptation试探 so that you would get the credit for having failed to speak the truth!** He did not allow the nice things that the Jews said about him to distract him from speaking the truth.

c. Pay your taxes. And no, I am not working for the CRA加拿大税务; I am working for God. In fact, you must fulfill all your legal and civil responsibilities, whether you want to or not. So don’t “vote for Jesus” at election time; he is not on the ballot选票. Vote for the best candidate. Fulfill all your civic responsibilities.

d. Give to God what belongs to him. What is it that belongs to God that you must give to him?

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice活祭, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

Remember that you were created by God, you were recreated by his Son, and you must now live through the Spirit. Give of the gifts he has given to you. **It may be that Jesus’ answer was based on what he had just said in his parable: That Jews ought to return a portion to the Lord of the fruits of his vineyard.**

Conclusion:

The pressure was on. The Pharisees flattered Jesus. But he wasn’t fooled. Instead, he **boldly spoke the truth.**

In doing this, **Jesus earned righteousness that is counted as yours.**

In doing this, **he set a perfect example for you to follow once you were redeemed.**

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Praise God that Jesus’ life of perfect obedience (speaking truth under pressure) was credited to you.

2. As Christ’s redeemed, learn to be bold and speak the truth – the full truth of the Gospel - regardless of the consequences. Be known as a speaker of truth. Don’t be afraid to hurt someone’s feelings. Yes, speak the truth in love, but speak the truth even if it hurts.

3. What is that truth you must know? Know of the incarnation, life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and bodily return of Jesus, so you can wisely speak. Know that Christ is king and every knee will bow to him one day and that it is better to bow before him now.

Finally: If you are not a Christian, let me tell you that God requires that all men worship him. But you can’t. The only way you can be able to worship is if your heart is changed. Your heart can only be changed if God counts Christ’s life and death as yours. So I challenge you to ask God today to count Christ’s life and death as yours.