

The System is Down [Mark 12]
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INTRODUCTION

1. Sometimes "little storms" around here are more damaging than big ones.
 - a. Millions affected around the nation with Friday storms.
 - b. The difficulty is when we lose services like power or cable.
 - c. It adds additional stress (flipping the switches in our condo without power)
2. There is a frustration when systems upon which we rely are down.
 - a. When at work, if the internet is down, I treat it like there's a fire.
 - b. There are many different systems upon which our world is based
 - 1) We trust in systems to take care of us and fulfill our needs/desires
 - 2) But what to do when systems fail us?

VERSES 38-40

³⁸ As he taught, Jesus said, "Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted in the marketplaces, ³⁹ and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. ⁴⁰ They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely."

*** Religion was THE system in the time of Jesus. ESPECIALLY THE TEMPLE.

- a. Unfortunately, the system was severely broken.
- b. It's leaders were obsessed with self: as if the system worked for itself.
- c. If you're computer said, "Can you give me a second for some "me-time?"

1. They like to walk around in flowing robes

- a. Long ceremonial robes were worn at times of prayer and formal functions.
- b. Robes made them instantly recognizable.
- c. EX: wearing a uniform

2. Greeted in the marketplaces

- a. Talmudic requirement that the people rise in respect when a scribe passed
- b. Only tradesmen at their work (b. Kidd 33a) exempt.
- c. EX: do you stand to greet someone?

3. The most important seats in the synagogues

- a. These were elevated seats in full view of the people
- b. Remember that James & John sought places of honor for themselves
- c. James 2:2-4 "Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, 'Here's a good seat for you,' but say to the poor man, 'You stand there' or 'Sit on the floor by my feet,' have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?"

4. The places of honor at banquets.

- a. Their attendance added luster to the occasion.
- b. Rabbis were given precedence over the aged, and even over one's parents.
- c. EX: When I do a wedding, I always watch the parents

5. They devour widows' houses

- a. They love banquets—and what they eat are widow's houses.
- b. MORE ON THIS LATER

6. Make lengthy prayers.

- a. The offense was not long prayers but piety achieving.

*** "Such men will be punished most severely."

- a. Those who hold positions of service/ministry hold great responsibility.
 - 1) When they sin the damage to others can be devastating.

2) The community has a right to expect more from those B/C God does.

- b. **James 3:1** "Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly."

VERSES 41,42

⁴¹ Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. ⁴² But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny.

1. Where at the Court of Women at the TEMPLE.
 - a. When were limited by where they could come
2. The implications of the life of a widow (discussed briefly last week)
 - a. Marriages were sealed with a purchase price to the bride's family
 - b. If husband died she could return to her own family if purchase price refunded.
 - c. Otherwise had to remain in the husband's family
 - d. In many cases she was not allowed to remarry."
3. The Payment: The "widow's mite" (KJV), a Greek *lepton*.
 - a. It was the smallest coin then in circulation.
 - 1) A small fraction of day's wage.
 - b. The stark comparison: the gift was literally pocket change when compared.

VERSES 43,44

⁴³ Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. ⁴⁴ They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on."

1. Jesus sees through and challenges preconceived system:
 - a. The elite scribes vs. the destitute widow,
 - b. The scribes' pretentious piety vs. the widow's wholehearted devotion to God,
 - c. The scribes' self-centeredness vs. the widow's generosity.

CONCLUSION

1. We have broken systems. Good news: Jesus transcends all systems.
2. But how should we live?
 - a. **1 Peter 2:13-17**

"Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor."
3. MOST IMPORTANT THING: **2 Corinthians 10:5** "Take captive every thought . . ."