

No Earthly Agenda

8-20-23

Mark 12:13 (ESV)

And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians, to trap him in his talk.

The Herodians were detestable to the Pharisees. Yet the two groups united in their opposition to Jesus. This unholy coalition in wickedness had the sole purpose to trip up Jesus in his words. Kind of sounds like our political system today. **The most deceptive people use the truth to deceive the innocent. Jesus teaches us wisdom to discern this deception.**

Mark 12:14 (ESV) NO/OH

And they came and said to him, “Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone’s opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?”

This evil coalition approached Jesus with praise and truth: #1 We know that you are true and do not care about anyone’s opinion. #2 You are not swayed by appearances. #3 You truly teach the way of God. **Warning #1: Beware when your enemies praise you. Those who have evil intent will use praise to flatter and trick the innocent. **Warning #2: Beware**: A bad tree cannot produce good fruit. Those who are evil use a legitimate question with evil intent. In this situation, the Israelites were being oppressed by the Romans. If Jesus said pay taxes to the godless Caesar, the people would reject HIM. If Jesus said do not pay taxes, the Romans would arrest him.**

Jesus recognized their hypocrisy and answered them with amazing wisdom. Of course, Jesus is God, which certainly helps. **But also**, Jesus as the perfect man answered with wisdom available to all men and women. This morning I want us to examine HIS wisdom which is available to each of us. Since Jesus was secure in HIS position with God, Jesus did not “need” praise and flattery from men. **Not needing praise and flattery, Jesus was not influenced by it.** Therefore, Jesus could see through the praise and flattery and understand the true intent of those speaking to HIM. Same with us. Secure in Christ, we should not “need” praise or flattery from men. Therefore, it will be difficult for us to be deceived because we have unobstructed sight. The next statement is the most devious deception used on Jesus, “You truly teach the way of God.” These people did not care if Jesus taught the way of God or not and HE immediately knew their hypocrisy. If we need human affirmation about preaching the Word, such deceptive comments could cause us to feel a little proud which is the first step to destruction. The preacher, preaching the truth doesn’t “need” affirmation from man. After a sermon, can you imagine Jesus asking the disciples, “Guys, how did I do?” Since Jesus did not desire or even care about the praise of men, HE was never influenced in any way by what man thought or said. **Not needing praise, Jesus always heard God clearly without obstruction.** Matt.5:8 says, “Blessed are the pure (uncluttered) in heart, for they shall see God.” We too need to have an uncluttered heart before God. **Warning #3:** To have godly insight, we cannot have an earthly agenda.

When we go before God or man with an earthly agenda, our agenda will distort everything that is discussed, read, or prayed. With an earthly agenda, we cannot clearly understand the Bible or clearly discern truth or falsehoods of this world. Without an earthly agenda, like Jesus we can see as God sees.

Mark 12:15 (ESV)

But, knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, “Why put me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.”

Jesus saw clearly and knew their hypocrisy. Their focus was only on the physical and through the physical, Jesus exposes their true heart. Jesus said, “Give me a dollar.”

Mark 12:16 (ESV)

And they brought one. And he said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” They said to him, “Caesar’s.”

Jesus got them personally identify the physical nature of their question, money and taxes. Now they are stuck with their own words. This not hard. We just need to see the physical nature of the people we are dealing with. A dollar is a dollar and in the same way the things of the earth are the things of the earth. **By exposing the physical Jesus has set the stage to identify the spiritual.**

Mark 12:17 (ESV)

Jesus said to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” And they marveled at him.

This unholy coalition does not have “any” comprehension of the spiritual. Jesus tells these deceptive leaders what physically is to be done with the physical money. At the same time, Jesus communicated that the spiritual supersedes the physical affirming a believer’s security in God alone. Give the physical to the physical and give the spiritual to God. They marveled at him because only believers can comprehend the spiritual.

Summary: Protection from deception!

- 1) Beware when your enemies praise you.**
- 2) A bad tree cannot produce good fruit.**
- 3) Jesus was secure in HIS position with God. Thus, Jesus did not “need” praise and flattery from men. Not needing praise and flattery, Jesus was not influenced by it. HE could hear God clearly. Likewise, the same for each of us.**
- 4) To have godly insight, we cannot have an earthly agenda. Having no earthly agenda gives us power and insight.**
- 5) Those of the earth have an earthly agenda and only see the physical.**
- 6) Only committed believers can comprehend that the spiritual supersedes the physical.**

A person needs to receive Christ as their Savior and be empowered by the Holy Spirit to be able to move from the earthly agenda and operate in the Kingdom of God.

John 3:16 (ESV)

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.