



THE KING'S NARROW PATH: Jesus and the Bills Mafia

Pastor Derek Sanford

November 3, 2024

Life Group Discussion

Encouragement: This is the time to encourage someone in your LifeGroup! How have you seen the fruit of the Spirit in someone's life recently? (see [Galatians 5:22-23](#))

Scripture: Read [Mark 11:12-26](#).

Observations:

- Ask someone to summarize this passage, answering: who, what, where, when

Interpretations:

- Read [Jeremiah 7:1-15](#) and [Isaiah 56:1-8](#). How do these prophecies connect to this passage? What phrases does Jesus quote? [*The NIV Application Commentary*, pp 437-439]
- How does the symbolism of the fig tree relate to the temple demonstration? [*The NIV Application Commentary*, pp 439-442]
- In Jesus' explanation to the disciples in [Mark 11:22-25](#), what are the "requirements" of Jesus' new kingdom? [*The NIV Application Commentary*, p 441]
- Read [John 14:13](#) and [James 4:2-3](#). How do these verses and [Mark 11:22-25](#) help us understand the power and role of prayer?

Application:

- What are some things in our culture today that could be similar to the temple in Jesus' time? (Please encourage your group to just list things and not get drawn into a debate about any of the things listed.)
- What are some things in your own life that look good on the outside, but inside are in the wrong place in relation to Jesus? ("What do I need to leave behind to follow Christ?")
- How does your prayer life need to change to better reflect the instructions Jesus gives in [Mark 11:22-25](#)?

Prayer: Take a moment of silent confession. Pray over each other to have faith and to know the Lord so that your prayers are in alignment with His heart.

Next Steps:

- Take time throughout the week for confession and repentance of things that look good on the outside, but aren't truly bearing fruit.
- Remember, all the Mark series resources can be found at <http://www.whoisgrace.com/MARK>.



THE KING'S NARROW PATH: Questioning Jesus' Authority

Pastor Scott Michel
November 10, 2024

Life Group Discussion

Encouragement: What is your relationship with authority? (parent, boss, government, etc) [Remind the group that no matter the outcome of elections and government actions, God is sovereign and in control, the Author of The Story.]

Scripture: Read [Mark 11:27-12:12](#)

Observations:

- Answer the questions about the passage: who, what, where, when?
- Jesus' parable of the wicked tenants in 12:1-12 is an allegory. Based on 11:27-33, can we decipher **who** Jesus is talking about in this parable? [For insight, see *The NIV Application Commentary* pp 450-451.]
 - o Nathan's parable in [2 Samuel 12:1-15](#) is a similar use of allegory.

Interpretations:

- Jesus doesn't interpret this parable for us, but what can we understand from our knowledge of Jesus' mission and the opposition of the religious leaders? [For insight, see *The NIV Application Commentary* pp 450-458.]
- How does this parable communicate God's character: authority, goodness, patience, grace?

Application:

- Like the religious leaders, what are our blind spots? How do we miss God's work in the world around us? What are our dark spots? How do we build our own little vineyards/kingdoms, with selfish disregard for God's sovereignty, authority, and plans?
- What are the bright spots? What does submission to God's authority look like in your life right now?

Prayer: Use Psalm 118 to lead the group in prayer. (Suggestions: Ask each participant to read a section out loud or assign sections and ask them to write it in their own words, then read aloud. Be creative!)

Next Steps:

- Where is the "vineyard" God has placed you? How can you be God's good tenant in that space?
- Remember, all the Mark series resources can be found at <http://www.whoisgrace.com/MARK>.



THE KING'S NARROW PATH: God or Government

November 17, 2024

Pastor Derek

Life Group Discussion

Encouragement: [Remind the group that no matter the outcome of elections and government actions, God is sovereign and in control, the Author of The Story.] How do you see God's hand in the past, present, and future of your Story?

Scripture: Read [Mark 12:13-17](#)

Observations:

- Answer the questions for this passage: who, what, where, when?
- What is the intent of the Pharisees and Herodians? Why is this significant at this late stage of Mark's story?
- What is the governing situation for Judea in Jesus' day? [*The NIV Application Commentary* pp 461-464.] How is that different from our government?

Interpretations:

- What do you think Jesus meant when he said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."?
 - o Note: Jesus did not mean that Caesar has charge over the material/secular world, while God only has charge over our spiritual lives.
 - o For further reading: [Acts 5:27-32](#); [Romans 13:1-7](#); [1 Timothy 2:1-6](#), [6:11-16](#); [Titus 3:1-2](#); [1 Peter 2:13-17](#)

Application:

- Respond to Pastor Derek's teaching, "Give to Caesar only that has his image on it. Anything with his image on it, give to him. It's his. They're his coins. It's his coinage. Literally, it was his money. It was minted out of his wealth. "It's his money. Give it to him because his image is on it, but give to God what has his image on it. **That's you.**"
- If "the Way of Jesus revolutionizes revolutions," how should we live as peaceful, God-honoring, Government-honoring citizens and Jesus followers today?

Prayer: Use one of the scriptures above to lead your prayer time. [*Father, your Son is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Please help us to live in the power of your Spirit and show Your Kingdom to those around us. To demonstrate the servant leadership that Your Son showed us. Lord God, bring your Kingdom through your church to the unbelievers! Amen*]

Next Steps:

- What is one way you can honor God by honoring your neighbor, your boss, your elected official?
- Remember, all the Mark series resources can be found at <http://www.whoisgrace.com/MARK>.



THE KING'S NARROW PATH: Is there marriage in heaven?

Pastor Stephen Hay
November 24, 2024

Life Group Discussion

Encouragement: Before becoming a believer in Jesus (Or even as a believer), what doubts/questions did you have? What/who helped push you from doubt to belief? Did Jesus give you answers, or did the questions no longer matter? If they no longer mattered, why?

Scripture: Read [Mark 12:18-27](#)

Observations:

- What appears to be the motive of the Sadducees?
- How would you describe Jesus' reaction to the Sadducees' question?

Interpretations:

- How does today's passage point to one of the themes that we have been following through Mark, Cosmic Conflict? (i.e., There is more to life than what we can see) [For more insight, see *The NIV Application Commentary* – p 469, bottom paragraph, through p 470.]

Application:

- Big Idea-“Jesus will dig beyond the surface to address the real issue.” What are some common motives for disbelief in our world today?
- Jesus said that one of the Sadducees' problems was that they did not know the Scriptures. How do you make sure that your opinions and views are informed by the Scriptures? (Read after discussion: [2 Timothy 2:14-15](#) and [3:16-17](#))
- Jesus also said that the Sadducees did not know the power of God. What are the possible consequences of not knowing/believing in the power of God? What are signs that a person knows/believes in the power of God? How can a person grow in belief in the power of God? (Read after discussion: [Jeremiah 32:27](#), [Mark 10:27](#), [Ephesians 1:18-20](#))

Prayer: Invite your group to close their eyes and prayerfully ask this question: “What question or situation have I been approaching without evaluating my motives, searching Scriptures, or factoring in the power of God?” If comfortable, share what God is putting on your heart and pray for each other.

Next Steps:

- This week, prayerfully consider this question, “What circumstances do I need to see through spiritual eyes?”
- Remember, all the Mark series resources can be found at <http://www.whoisgrace.com/MARK>.