# Gospel of Mark Weekly Talk Ideas | Sean McGever

## Mark Chapter 12

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| Scripture suggestion, basic overview, and background:  Mark 12 has a few stories that could work for club or campaigners: Parable of the Tenants (a parable about God sending Jesus whom they were going to kill); The Greatest Commandment (a great one for campaigners). But, I want to focus on the last story in the chapter, the Widow’s Offering, for three reasons. First, in our club our last talk was about the Rich Young Ruler (10:17-31), as you will see in a moment here we meet his antithesis: a Poor Old Widow. Second, this is a story of Jesus interacting with a woman – I include those as much as possible. Third, this is a story about the poor and marginalized – again, I include those as much as possible (and they are prevalent in the Gospels!)  In the last talk in our club we read the Rich Young Ruler’s question “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” (10:17). We read Jesus’ answer: “Sell all that you have and give it to the poor” (10:21). In this story we recognize the following:  The man… RICH The woman… POOR  The man… YOUNG The woman… OLD  The man… RULER The woman… WIDOW  The story actually has little to do with their place in life. It has to do with their *response*.  The man…. went away sorrowful (10:22) The woman… “put in everything she had” (12:44)  This is a story about responding to God with “everything we have.” Notice the point is not *how much I have*. The point is *everything I have*. Jesus actually measures response by *what you keep for yourself*. Some people don’t have a lot of anything to give (faith, trust, etc.) but Jesus wants what we *do* have.  I love this concept: Give what you have today. Some students might know very little about God and have little trust to give God. That is OK… give all that you *do have… today*. |
| Possible main point(s):   * Will you give all the faith that you have tonight to God? Whether it is a “lot” or a “little” what matters is what you hold back. Give whatever trust you can give to God, give it all today. |
| What this shows us about Jesus:   * Jesus isn’t impressed by vast displays of money, knowledge, or obedience – he instead wants wholeheartedness. * Remember: Jesus was poor his entire life. He is more like the widow than the scribes. |
| What this has to do with our life:   * If you are poor (financially, relationally, in faith), don’t underestimate what you *do* have to offer. |
| Relevant technical details:   * Scribes (v.38) = Professional biblical scholars in Jesus’ era. They were technically poor since they had no official income but many people in the community supported them financially. They were known to take advantage of poor people. * Long robes and like greetings (v.38) = The scribes wore large robes that were very noticeable. People in the community would call out to them with the titles “Rabbi,” “Father,” and “Master.” * Devour widows’ houses (v.40) = Scribes took advantage of the poor. The Old Testament made it clear that widows and other poor and marginalized people should not be mistreated (Ex. 22:22, Ps 146:9, Isa. 1:14-17, 10:1-4). * Treasury (v.31) = Area in the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem where people would bring money as a sacrifice/donation. * Two small copper coins (v.42) = Each coin was “lepton” two of these made a “penny” which was equivalent to 1/64 of one day’s wage (perhaps $1 today?) So, each coin was worth about 50 cents and she had only $1 to her name. Technically, she only needed to give one coin, but she gave both – all she had. |
| Possible illustrations:   * *Coin in a can*: Toss a small coin (a dime?) in a metal can. Toss in a bunch of money. Ask which is more impressive to God. The answer is that it depends on *who* tossed it. Ask yourself and the students about how much you hold back, not how much you “give” in your response to God. In the talk, give everyone two coins to keep. Put a can by the door for when they leave. Ask everyone to put one in and keep the second one. Ask them to think about what it would mean later to “give everything they have” to God. * *Uniform*: Uniforms of our exterior don’t always tell us what is on the interior – nothing wrong with a robe! Come in with a uniform (sports uniform, work uniform, any will do) and ask what that says about “you.” It actually says very little about you. Uniforms are easy to change. Insides usually are seen in our words and actions. |

*For more details, see ylhelp.com*

Mark 12 (ESV)

**The Parable of the Tenants**

**12**And he began to speak to them in parables. “A man planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a pit for the winepress and built a tower, and leased it to tenants and went into another country. **2**When the season came, he sent a servant to the tenants to get from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. **3**And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. **4**Again he sent to them another servant, and they struck him on the head and treated him shamefully. **5**And he sent another, and him they killed. And so with many others: some they beat, and some they killed. **6**He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ **7**But those tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ **8**And they took him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. **9**What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others. **10**Have you not read this Scripture:

“ ‘The stone that the builders rejected

has become the cornerstone;

**11** this was the Lord’s doing,

and it is marvelous in our eyes’?”

**12**And they were seeking to arrest him but feared the people, for they perceived that he had told the parable against them. So they left him and went away.

**Paying Taxes to Caesar**

**13**And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians, to trap him in his talk. **14**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?” **15**But, knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, “Why put me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.” **16**And they brought one. And he said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” They said to him, “Caesar’s.” **17**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.

**The Sadducees Ask About the Resurrection**

**18**And Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection. And they asked him a question, saying, **19**“Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves a wife, but leaves no child, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. **20**There were seven brothers; the first took a wife, and when he died left no offspring. **21**And the second took her, and died, leaving no offspring. And the third likewise. **22**And the seven left no offspring. Last of all the woman also died. **23**In the resurrection, when they rise again, whose wife will she be? For the seven had her as wife.”

**24**Jesus said to them, “Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God? **25**For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. **26**And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God spoke to him, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? **27**He is not God of the dead, but of the living. You are quite wrong.”

**The Great Commandment**

**28**And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, “Which commandment is the most important of all?” **29**Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. **30**And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ **31**The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” **32**And the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. **33**And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” **34**And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions.

**Whose Son Is the Christ?**

**35**And as Jesus taught in the temple, he said, “How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? **36**David himself, in the Holy Spirit, declared,

“ ‘The Lord said to my Lord,

“Sit at my right hand,

until I put your enemies under your feet.” ’

**37**David himself calls him Lord. So how is he his son?” And the great throng heard him gladly.

**Beware of the Scribes**

**38**And in his teaching he said, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces **39**and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, **40**who devour widows’ houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”

**The Widow’s Offering**

**41**And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. **42**And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. **43**And he called his disciples to him and said to them, “Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. **44**For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”