

(In preparation for gathered worship next week, March 15, 2009)

Mark 11:27 – 12:44

15th March 2009

Jesus' attack on the temple in Jerusalem, the center of nationalistic hope, was an audacious move (see Mark 11:15-18). Not surprisingly, it provoked intense opposition.

For the next five episodes in the gospel of Mark, the religious leaders 'seek a way to destroy him' (11:18). Jesus responds by condemning them and their religion.

According to Jesus, the kingdom of God is not about religion. It is more closely associated with the widow and her two copper coins.

Read the entire passage, and then focus carefully on the last two episodes (12:38-44).

- 1) Why should we 'beware of the scribes'? (verse 38)

- 2) The Pharisees (12:13) and the Sadducees (12:18) and the scribes (12:28, 38) are all very 'religious'. According to the passage, what makes them religious?

- 3) What is your critique of religion? Is it a good thing or a bad thing? Why?

- 4) If making people religious is not the goal of Jesus in the kingdom of God, what is his aim? Does the widow with the two copper coins provide a clue? (see 12:41-44) Explain.

- 5) The most significant sentence in the entire passage is the last one: 'she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on' (12:44). What does the sentence mean? Does this describe your relationship with the Lord? Give examples. Why do you find it hard 'to put in everything you have'? How does the Lord help you to overcome this difficulty?