

**Mark:
Hearing Jesus Gladly**

Mark 12:35-46

By Dr. Derek Thomas

November 2, 2005

Now turn with me if you would to the Gospel of Mark once again, and we are at the end, or almost at the end, of chapter twelve. We pick it up this evening at verse 35, and we'll be reading through to verse 40, but we'll be concentrating more on the first part than the second part. And then we have the widow's offering, the widow's mite, coming up next, and then we're in trouble! We're in the thirteenth chapter, the Olivet Discourse; paralleled in Matthew's gospel, of course, but we're in end times, and we will have some fun as we try and plumb the depths of Mark 13. But that's to come.

But now we want to remind ourselves this is the final week of Jesus' life on earth. He's been making these forays into Jerusalem with His disciples each day, going back in the evening to Bethany to the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. This is still probably Tuesday of the final week. He has had encounters, you remember, with the Pharisees and the members of the Sanhedrin — or representatives of the Sanhedrin — the Herodians, the Sadducees, and more recently the scribes who have been asking Him all kinds of clever questions about a woman with seven husbands...one that He's responded to...and now in this section He's about to ask a question of His own.

Before we read the section together, let's come before God in prayer. Let's pray.

Our Father in heaven, this is again such an extraordinary privilege that You have given us, to spend time apart now from the concerns of the world for a moment to immerse ourselves in the Scriptures, in Your word. We thank You for the gift of the Bible. We bless You that holy men of old wrote as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. We thank You that it is light unto our path, a lamp that opens up the way before us. We find it sweeter than the honeycomb; we want to treasure it, hide it, deep within our hearts that we might not sin against You. We want to learn it. We want to understand it more. We want to obey its every precept. We want to heed its every warning. We want to see Jesus. So help us tonight again as we look at the passage together. Come, Holy Spirit, and illuminate, shine a light before us and open up Your word for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Beginning at verse 35:

And Jesus began to say, as He taught in the temple, 'How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? David himself said in the Holy Spirit, 'The Lord said to my Lord, sit at My right hand, until I put Your enemies beneath Your feet.' David himself calls Him 'Lord': so in what sense is He his son?' And the large crowd enjoyed listening to Him. And in His teaching He was saying: 'Beware of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes, and like respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues, and places of honor at banquets; who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater condemnation.

Amen. And may God bless to us the reading of His holy and inerrant word.

Many of you of course will know the King James rendition of the closing section of verse 37: "...and the common people heard Him gladly." It's often a verse that comes back to me as a preacher, that the common people...somewhat obscured in the translation before us tonight, but "the common people heard Jesus gladly." He had the common touch.

Just a few weeks ago...was it the twenty-first of October? (Ligon, forgive me, my history of Great Britain has somewhat escaped me now...) but 200 years ago was the anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar. I think it was the twenty-first of October in 1805, and it was marked with a great celebration across the pond, and it caused me to at least glance (I can't say that I read fully, but I glanced) at a biography of Lord Nelson, an extraordinary figure by any standards. A small man, he was barely 5'6", I think, and of course, lost the use of one of his arms and also lost the sight in one eye, and also lost his life in the Battle of Trafalgar. He fought, of course, against the French and the Spanish. And the biographer referred to Lord Nelson, who, in a brutal age when life was cheap, and especially military life was cheap, managed to inculcate enormous respect from his naval compatriots because he had the common touch.

Who is Jesus? Who is Jesus? It's an intriguing question as much today as it certainly was in the temple in Jerusalem in the final week of His life, surrounded by hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Jewish worshipers making their way to celebrate the Passover, purchasing lambs or doves or something, the sound of money being exchanged for the temple money...who is Jesus? Who is this man, this preacher from Galilee? What do you think about Jesus?

That's what Jesus seemed to feel was the most important question for them to consider that day. Of all the questions in the world, that was the most important question of all: Who is Jesus? Who is Messiah? What is Messiah going to be like? All you Jews who have come to celebrate Passover — the scribes in particular, who had been asking Him clever questions — 'Tell Me, what is

Messiah going to be like?' Jesus says. 'What do you think about Messiah? Who is He? Who are you looking for, exactly?'

And the answer that the folks in the temple would have given is that Messiah is the Son of David. Everybody knows that. Every Jew worth his salt knows that. Every child knows that — it was taught to children from their earliest moments, that Messiah is going to be the Son of David. Several key passages in the Old Testament have taught that, in particular II Samuel 7 with the promise of the Davidic covenant, that Messiah, the Deliverer, would be of the lineage of David, and that an everlasting lineage of David would survive and would be Israel's deliverer in times of trouble. Several Psalms spoke of it. That glorious Psalm that we actually sang this evening, the seventy-second Psalm...but Psalm 2, Psalm 45, Psalm 89, and especially Psalm 110.

The oracle that was given through Nathan in II Samuel 7 had promised an endless line springing from David: "Your house and kingdom shall endure forever before Me. Your throne shall be established forever." And Psalm 2 and Psalm 89 have specifically mentioned this in terms of David's son as the deliverer figure. So the answer was easy: Messiah will be another David, a son of David, from the lineage of David.

Now, that isn't as impressive an answer as you might think. It's like asking, 'What is Gibbon's *Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire* about?' 'Rome.' It's like asking, 'What is Tolstoy's *War and Peace* about?' 'Russia.' 'Who is Messiah?' 'The son of David.' It wasn't that impressive an answer.

Now, Jesus isn't challenging the answer; He's just trying to teach them that it's insufficient as an answer. There's more to Messiah than that; even the very passages that they would have pointed to teach that. So Jesus takes them to Psalm 110.

Why Psalm 110? Probably because Psalm 110 was as well known in Jesus' time as Psalm 23 is in our time. Everybody knows Psalm 23. Well, in Jesus' time, I venture to say that they knew Psalm 110 as well as we know Psalm 23. It's quoted in over a dozen letters and books of the New Testament. Peter cites it on the very day of Pentecost. It was deeply imbedded in the consciousness of the Jews because it spoke about the Messiah. It spoke about the Deliverer, and it spoke about the lineage of their greatest king, David.

If as everyone knew and acknowledged that Messiah was the son of David, how come the Deliver in Psalm 110 is said to be David's Lord? He's David's son, but He's also David's Lord. Let's explore that a little.

First of all, He's David's son. Mark, in fact, has not established this in any official way, but Matthew and Luke, both of them, trace the lineage of Jesus through Joseph all the way back to David and beyond that. Both of them mention that

Jesus is of the lineage of David, Matthew giving, I think, the official line, and Luke giving the physical line of descent. He has a lineage that's fully human. He was birthed in an actual sense. His mother Mary gave birth to Him. She had borne Him in her womb for nine months. She went into labor and gave birth to Him.

He had a human body, a reasonable soul. He grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and with men. He had a human physiology. He had a human anatomy. He had a human nervous system. He had a brain, organs, bodily fluids...He had human characteristics, flesh and blood. He grew tired. He was hungry.

He called the disciples, Mark says, in order that they might be with Him. He felt the need for companionship. He bled. He wasn't a ghost; He wasn't an apparition. He had the same anatomy, the same number of chromosomes as in our body. He had a human mind. He had the same laws of perception and logic and inference. He listened; He asked questions, He grew in wisdom. He observed life and personality, and from time to time that human mind was fed with information from His divine mind. And He had human emotions. He felt joy and righteous anger, and sadness and grief. He enjoyed the company of friends, and with one He was particularly close. He was a son of David. He wasn't born with a silver spoon in His mouth. He was born in a stable in Bethlehem; He was a refugee, having to go to Egypt; He was raised in some obscure town called Nazareth, up north somewhere. He was born, as *The Catechism* says, "...in a low condition" facing temptation at every hand.

He had no money, no off-shore bank accounts, no holiday villa on the Mediterranean Coast, no palace, or winter palace in Jerusalem, no friends in high places. He wasn't the kind of son of David that they were expecting. They were expecting a son of David, but not this kind of son of David.

But it's not that so much that Jesus really wants to challenge: It's how can David say that Messiah can be both the son of David and David's Lord at the same time, because He's not only the son of David, He's David's Lord?

Jesus of Nazareth was an unorthodox, wandering rabbi, raised in Nazareth in the home of a carpenter and his wife; had spent the last three years in a peripatetic ministry with twelve disciples, mainly up in Galilee, with occasional forays to Jerusalem and its environs; and now, in these last few days, He will be arrested and tried and subsequently crucified. And yet, a week from now Thomas will say, "My Lord and my God!" And just over six weeks from now, Peter will address these very crowds in Jerusalem and say to them,

"Let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

And there's James, James the Lord's brother - "James the Just" as they came to

call him. They loved him in Jerusalem. They had an honest respect for him in Jerusalem...his knowledge of the Law. In Acts 15 James has already risen to be a great leader in the church in Jerusalem. This is a man who knew Jesus as well as anybody knows Jesus. He grew up in the same home, shared probably the same bed. You know, when the lights went out, they blew out the candle...what do little boys do? They talked. What did they talk about, Jesus and His brother James? He knew things about Jesus that nobody else knew. He played with Him, shared stories with Him, went for walks with Him, ate at the same table with Him. They'd shared moments of tremendous family gatherings — the loss of their father, Joseph, probably during Jesus' teenage years, we think — and yet, this James, he writes a letter and he says: "James, servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ..." and he means the same attribution by God and the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is none other than God. And he repeats it in chapters 2 and 5: "The Lord Jesus Christ...."

I love my brothers. They're very different: one's older, one's younger. The older one is, as you can expect, the one who gave me all the orders and told me off, and took me behind the woodshed in school one day and gave me a dressing down because I'd done something that he thought was letting the family down, and he told me in a very clandestine and almost Mafia-like way that I was letting the name of the family down; and then, my little brother, to whom I've grown closer over the years. I love them dearly, but I could never even remotely conceive of calling them "Lord." Not in my wildest moment would I think of calling them Lord! And James calls Jesus, this Jesus, this Jesus who's about to be crucified and buried and pronounced dead, and he says, "The Lord Jesus Christ."

Now, to be sure the word *Lord* in Greek doesn't always mean God. That's true. Sometimes it can be a polite form of saying "sir" as all you Southerners know all too well. But more often than not in the New Testament the term *Lord* is an attribution of deity. The earliest Christian confession is *Kurios Jesus*, "Jesus is Lord." Jesus is Lord.

Now Paul seems to hint at its sort of creedal status when he writes to the Corinthians in chapter 12, and he says, you remember, that nobody can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit. You have that marvelous song in Philippians 2, *Carmen Christe* (if you want a *Carmen*, of course, Bizet's *Carmen* — *Carmen* just means *song*...Jesus' song, the song of Jesus, the song of Christ):

"Therefore God highly exalted Him and gave Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

That's the song they sang in the early church: that Jesus Christ, the son of David, this very man, this flesh and blood figure, this One who wept and who fell asleep in the boat and who ate fish beside the Sea of Galilee, and who called disciples

in order to be with Him — they called Him *Lord*. They said He is God. They said He is the Lord of glory.

They did more than that. They gave Him the exact same name, same title, that they used when they translated...you know, the Old Testament, when Hebrew sort of fell out and all the people knew was Greek and they had to translate the Hebrew into Greek about 200 years before the birth of Jesus...what were they going to do with the name of God? And this is the name, this is the title, this is the term that they employ: *Kurios*. He is *Kurios*.

You see the question that Jesus is asking these scribes and anyone else who is listening: Who is the Messiah, really? You see, He's more than the son of David. He is the son of David, you're right! Not the kind of son of David that you're looking for, but He is the son of David. But He's more than the son of David. He is also the Son of God. He is the divine Lord of glory. He's the only God there is. He's the creator and sustainer of all that is. That's why Jesus' question is so utterly significant, because when the disciples understood who Jesus actually was, you remember what they did: They fell down and worshiped Him. They got on their knees before Him and called Him *Lord*. And He never said 'This is inappropriate; no, don't do that,' you know, like the angel does in Revelation 19 when John has that odd moment when he sees this vision of the angel and he falls down and worships the angel, and the angel says, 'Don't do it! Worship God!' the angel says. And they worshiped Him.

Do you see what this means? It means that everything I am belongs to Him: my mind, my thoughts, my affections, my will, my aspirations, my dreams, my ambitions, everything that defines me belongs to Him because He is Lord. He is David's son, but He's David's Lord. He is the Lord of glory.

It means that whatever Jesus says, I must believe it; however difficult it is, however countercultural it may now seem to us to be. Did Jesus believe that the Bible is infallible, that it cannot be broken, that it's given by God, every jot and tittle of it? Then I have no other choice but to believe that. I must bow my mind and my intellect to believe what He believes.

Is He Lord? Then I must worship Him. I must give Him my heart. I must give Him my best affections. I must give Him the best of my time. I must give Him everything.

Do you see what Jesus is saying to these scribes? He's saying what Kuyper would say: that there isn't a square inch of this universe that Jesus doesn't say 'Mine!' There's a very famous section in *Calvin's Institutes*, in *Book III of The Institutes*: "We are not our own; therefore, let us not make it our end to seek what may agreeable to our carnal nature. We are not our own; therefore, as far as possible let forget ourselves and the things that are ours. On the other hand, we are God's; let us therefore live and die to Him. We are God's; therefore, let His

wisdom and will preside over all our actions. We are God's; to Him, then, as the only legitimate end, let every part of our life be directed. Oh, how great the proficiency of him who taught that he is not his own, has withdrawn the dominion and government of himself from his own reason, that he may give them to God.”

Jesus is coming before these scribes and He's asking them 'Who is Messiah, really; this One that you are looking for, this One that you expect will be your Deliverer? What is He going to be like? How come the most famous Psalm of all says He is both David's son and David's Lord?' You see, Jesus has shown that there are teachers who may talk about the Bible (as these scribes talked about the Bible), but who can miss the very essence of what the Bible is all about. They're false teachers...they're false teachers, and He's saying to His disciples 'Be careful about folk like this, who talk about the Bible, but they miss what's in the Bible: Me', Jesus is saying. They're greedy men, and they're self-aggrandizing men. Beware of them.'

And what Jesus wants us to see is Himself. It's breath taking when you think about it: that what He's saying has the consequences in two days from now that they will take Him and crucify Him. He will be nailed to a cross as the Deliverer of His people, as the Messiah, as the long-expected One promised in Genesis 3:15 — the Seed of the woman who will crush the head of Satan; and He will be bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement due to our peace will be laid upon Him, and by His stripes we will be healed.

Oh, it's Lewis time, I suppose, and will be now for a while, so let me remind you again of that famous statement of Lewis in *Mere Christianity* when he says that he's trying to prevent those foolish statements that people often say, that they're ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but they don't accept His claim to be Lord and God. And that's one thing that we can't....a man that's merely a moral teacher cannot say the things that He's saying here. A man who says the things that Jesus says would not be a great moral teacher unless He were God, unless He were the Lord, unless He were the very Prince Himself who sits upon a throne and rules and reigns over all His and our enemies.

Who is Jesus to you tonight? Is He just a great moral teacher to you, or is He your Lord and Master and King, to whom you bow in worship and acknowledge that there is none other in heaven or on earth worthy of your praise and of your heart, and of your life. “And the common people heard Him gladly.”

Let's pray together.

Gracious God and ever blessed Father, we thank You once again for the astonishing self-disclosure of Jesus in the gospels as He reveals the very content and center of His heart, as He tells us over and over again who He really is. And we have this propensity all the time to turn it into something else, and so sharpen our vision again by Your word and help us to see Jesus as He truly is, the son of

David, the Son of God; as the God-man now in eternal union in heaven. And our Father, we pray, help us to respond appropriately as disciples of Jesus Christ, that we might sacrifice all for Him, that we might deny ourselves and take up a cross and follow Him for the warning that He gives that if we try to save our life we will lose it, and only as we give our lives away will we save it. Hear us; bless us for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Please stand, receive the Lord's benediction.

Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

©2013 First Presbyterian Church.

This transcribed message has been lightly edited and formatted for the Web site. No attempt has been made, however, to alter the basic extemporaneous delivery style, or to produce a grammatically accurate, publication-ready manuscript conforming to an established style template.

Should there be questions regarding grammar or theological content, the reader should presume any website error to be with the webmaster/transcriber/editor rather than with the original speaker. For full copyright, reproduction and permission information, please visit the First Presbyterian Church Copyright, Reproduction & Permission statement.

This article is provided as a ministry of [Third Millennium Ministries](#) (Thirdmill). If you have a question about this article, please [email](#) our *Theological Editor*.

Subscribe to *Biblical Perspectives Magazine*

BPM subscribers receive an email notification each time a new issue is published. Notifications include the title, author, and description of each article in the issue, as well as links directly to the articles. Like BPM itself, *subscriptions are free*. To subscribe to [BPM](#), please select this [link](#).