

Lake Cities Community Church  
September 20, 2009  
Series: On Your Mark  
Pastor Craig Schill

**“Everything”**  
Mark 12:35-44

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In the High School Musical movies, Sharpay Evans is the antagonist in the film. She is scheming, arrogant and very talented. She wants desperately to be famous and will do anything to promote herself. She is often tries to persuade her brother Ryan to go along with her on her schemes; and he struggles with whether to do the right thing, or to follow his sister. In a song titled “I Want it All” you can hear her brother’s struggle and see her desire for fame and fortune. Let’s listen to about two minutes of this song:

Imagine having everything we ever dreamed.  
Don’t you want it? Maybe... Can’t you see it? Kinda...  
Imagine first audition after college. I get the lead!  
A part for me? Well of course. Yeah right!  
You gotta believe it. Keep talking!  
You and I all the fame. Sharpay and what’s his name?  
Sound exciting? Inviting! Let’s do it then! Listening.  
Personal stylist, agent and a publisist But where do I fit into this?  
With you we can win. Win a part? Think bigger! Become superstars! That’s better  
Don’t you see that bigger is better and better is bigger!  
A little bit is never enough No, No, No!  
Don’t you want it all!  
You want it, you know that you want it  
The fame and the fortune and more  
You want it all, you want it, you know that you want it  
You gotta have your star on the door  
You want the world nothing less, all the glam and the press  
Only givng you the best reviews. Say it!  
I want it all I want it, I want it,  
Yeah My name in lights at Carnage Hall. I WANT IT ALL!

I want it all. That is the siren call of the world around us. We, like Sharpay's brother, receive constant messages that what matters in life is to be famous and to acquire as much money as status as possible. Success is defined by what we can get for ourselves. We believe that bigger is better and— and a little bit is never enough.

These are the world's values – but they stand in stark contrast to the values of the Kingdom of God. Jesus said, "What good does it do to gain the whole world, yet lose your soul?" It is precisely the little things that do matter. The least is the greatest – the last is the first. The way of the World and the way of the Kingdom are very different – and their contrast has been frequently highlighted by Mark as they are in our text today.

Turn with me now to Mark chapter 12, verses 35-44. Let me remind us of where we are at in the narrative. After arriving in Jerusalem, Jesus entered into a period of open confrontation with the religious leaders, as illustrated by seven stories listed one right after another. We looked at the first five stories two weeks ago, and the last two stories are on the agenda today.

### **The Sins of the Scribes 12:35-40**

The five previous conflict stories ended with the narrator telling us, "After that no one would venture to ask Him any more question." (34) The religious leaders have just peppered Jesus with questions intended to trap him, but they failed, and so we might think that the period of conflict was over. But now Jesus has a question of his own. He turns to the gathered crowds and asks, "How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? David himself said in the Holy Spirit, (and he quotes from Psalm 110) "THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND UNTIL I PUT YOUR ENEMIES BENEATH YOUR

**FEET” (35-36).** With this, we return to the question “Who is Jesus?” Jesus wants to talk about Himself – his identity - as the Christ / Messiah - the Son of David. So he asks the crowd, **”David himself calls Him (The Messiah) ‘Lord’ so in what sense is He his son?”** In Psalm 110 the first Lord is a reference to Yahweh – God, and the second Lord is a reference to *adoni* – *the earthly Lord / King* or interpreted here as the Messiah.

In other words, how can the Messiah be called the son of David and the Lord of David? How can he be a subordinate son and a superior master at the same time? The implication is that the Messiah, while a descendent of David, must in other ways be his superior. He is David’s son, but He is also *God’s Son!* And if the Messiah is so highly exalted, above even the revered King David, then he is One to worshiped. This conclusion, in context, is a jab at the Scribes and other religious leaders who preach Psalm 110, yet reject the superiority Jesus, in spite of clear evidence to the contrary. And everyone enjoyed Jesus putting the bullies in their place. **”And the large crowd enjoyed listening to Him.”**

Now in verse 38 Jesus speaks plainly of their sins as a warning to the people: **”In His teaching He was saying, “Beware the scribes who like to walk around in long robes, and like respectful greetings in the market places. (38) and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets, who devour widows’ houses, and for appearance’s sake offer long prayers; there will receive greater condemnation.”**

In a withering attack Jesus condemns the Scribes. They wear beautiful flowing robes to draw attention to themselves; they delight in taking the best seats at church. They offer long pompous prayers. And to keep the cash flowing into the temple, they prey on widows for donations to sustain their lavish lifestyle. Jesus tells the crowd – do not follow these people. Be warned. Don’t let their apparent success fool you – they are condemned men.

*The Scribe's song like Sharpay's in High School Musical 3 was, "I Want it All!"* Or perhaps I want it all. I've got it all and I'm keeping it all! They had acquired all the world could offer. They were educated, wealthy and held powerful positions of authority. The Scribes were the most important people in the Nation - more powerful than the Chief Priests or Pharisees and more honored than parents. Yet they refused to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah - even though he had fulfilled every prophetic passage about the Messiah up to that point in time. They are stubborn in their rejection of Jesus.

It is like that familiar story about the captain of the ship who looked into the dark night and saw faint lights in the distance. Immediately he told his signalman to send a message, "Alter your course 10 degrees south." Promptly a return message was received: "Alter your course 10 degrees north." The captain was angered; his command had been ignored. So he sent a second message: "Alter your course 10 degrees south--I am the captain!" Soon another message was received: "Alter your course 10 degrees north - "I am seaman third class Jones." Immediately the captain sent a third message, knowing the fear it would evoke: "Alter your course 10 degrees south--I am a battleship." Then the reply came "Alter your course 10 degrees north--I am a lighthouse."

The Scribes were (like the Captain) stubbornly holding onto course - their way of living, unwilling to change course. And Jesus said to the crowd - be warned - if they do not change course; repent and believe. If they do not listen to Me - they will soon face destruction; they will destroy themselves on the rocks. They will have gained the world, but lost their souls.

## The Example of the Widow (12:41-44)

In direct contrast to the wealthy, powerful Scribes, Mark now introduces us to a poor, helpless widow. Still in the temple, verse 41 **He sat down opposite the treasury, and began observing how the people were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums.** In the temple were 13 offering containers for different types of contribution. To one of them, verse 42, **A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent.** Mark 12:43 **Calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; Mark 12:44 for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on."**

This is a familiar story to us – a Sunday School classic. It rates up there with Daniel and the Lion's Den, and David and Goliath. The woman gives two copper coins; the smallest denomination of money and that was all she had to live on. It was her rent money – her grocery money. But in spite of that, she is compelled to give it all to the Lord's work. Her gift is valued beyond the combine contributions of all the wealthy people. It is a familiar story to us, but what does it mean? What is the message of the story, within the context of the seven conflict stories? What point is Mark driving home?

Some suggest the story is a sad tale of a **victim of a corrupt religious system**. On one hand we wish she had kept her copper coins. She is giving money to corrupt people. It would have been like sending in a check to Enron the week before it went bankrupt. The poor are giving money to the rich. But that is not the point of the story. Jesus praises her giving – he does not comment on her motive, or present her as a victim.

Well... may then we should take her as an **example of sacrificial giving**? The rich people are discounted as they gave out of their surplus – but she gave what she needed to live. Therefore, the preacher says, “Give sacrificially to the church. Give until it hurts. Give like the poor widow.” But again I don’t think that is the point. We do not expect, nor think it would be wise for everyone to put their grocery money into the offering plate. Sacrificial giving is important, but that is not the point.

Perhaps the lesson then is: the **size of the gift doesn’t matter** – what matters is the attitude. The smallest gift with the right attitude outpaces the largest gift given in pride. That begins to get to the message – but the focus of Jesus is not on the size of the gift per se, but the totality of the sacrifice – Jesus highlights to his disciples the fact that she gave everything. Therefore, I believe the lesson we are to take from this is:

**A true disciple gives up everything to God.**

Isn’t that what Mark has been trying to teach us over and over. In Mark chapter 1, Jesus’ calling of Jesus’ disciples is told in such a way as to emphasize the fact that they left everything behind to follow Jesus. They left Zebedee in the boat and the nets on the shore. A true disciple gives up everything. In Mark chapter 8, Jesus teaches a disciple deny themselves and to take up their cross and follow Him – to give up everything for Christ. In chapter 10 – Jesus says to the young businessman, “One thing you lack; go and sell all you possess and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow me.” Why – because a true disciple gives up everything to follow Jesus. It is not necessarily an easy thing to do! Peter said to Jesus (10:28), “Behold we have left everything and followed you.” And Jesus said Yes! That is the way of discipleship - and for whatever you give up for

my sake – you will receive 100 times that in rewards in this life and the next. You give up everything to follow Jesus – but then he promises a pretty good benefit package!

## **Application**

The application today seems to flow like this:

**The Scribes wanted it all,**

**the widow gave it all.**

**God requires it all**

**What will you do?**

Will you sing the song of the Scribes, “I want it all?” Or will you sing the old hymn, “*Jesus Paid it all - All to Him I owe.*” Will you be like the Scribes, or like the widow? So let me ask: What is in your life you have not yet been willing to surrender to Him? What attitude, sin or desire have you not released to God? Maybe you have a dream – it is your dream, and you have not given it to the Lord. You are afraid he will take it away from you. Perhaps there is a sin you love, and you have not been willing to give it up. Maybe it does have to do with money – in the area of giving. Or control or pride, or bitterness – you have been unwilling to forgive someone. Are you ready to give everything, all you have to the Lord? That is the mark of a true disciple.

My favorite character in J.R.R. Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* is Sam. Frodo is the one who has to destroy the evil ring in the fires of mount doom. But Sam, as Frodo’s disciple, gives everything he has to the task. He is fully committed to the journey. At the beginning of the adventure Frodo says, “Go back Sam, I’m going to Mordor Alone.” Sam responds, “Of

course you are. And I'm coming with you. I made a promise, Mr. Frodo. A promise. Gandlaf said, 'Don't you leave him Samwise Gamgee.' And I don't mean to." At the end of the story, after every other companion had deserted or fallen away, Sam was still there, faithfully following his master.

And in a small way – that is the type of radical devotion and complete commitment we are to have to Christ, our master, and our Lord.

### **Application / Summary**

As we close I have some money to give to you – this is a reverse offering. This may be the only time it is Ok to take money out of the offering plates. There should be enough for everyone who wants one. The card has on it two pennies – our smallest denomination. Then it says, "A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins... She put in all she owned, all she had to live on." And under the two pennies is a prayer. And if this is the desire of you heart, make it your own prayer: "Dear Jesus, I give you my entire life – all I possess, my dreams and desires. Help me to be a faithful follower, going wherever you lead. Help me to overcome my pride and fear; trusting you to take care of me today and for all eternity. Amen."

If that reflects your desire this morning, I encourage you to sign and date that card and just stick it in your Bible (maybe right there in Mark 12) as a reminder that He is the Christ the Messiah and Lord, and he calls his follower to be fully devoted to Him. He who gave himself fully for us – so that in response we give ourselves fully to Him.