

Evidence of God's rule (Kingdom)

Introduction. Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem to the cross - the culmination of his ministry. This passage follows on from the debates Jesus has with Pharisees and Sadducees; the teachers of the law and the religious leaders do not always set good examples. By contrast ordinary, poor people may show true evidence of God's rule in their lives. The wider context is Jesus' mission, the prospect of the coming kingdom (rule) of God. In response to God's claim on our lives, His offer of forgiveness and new life, we are called to give our lives to Him and His service.

1. V. 38-40. The teachers of the law (and the religious leaders) were respected and therefore had significant influence. Some of them were targets of Jesus' condemnation because of their hypocrisy. All church leaders in each generation have a great responsibility to teach and model the truth.

Reflection/Response. How can we support our leaders so that they can serve God and us in ways that honour God? What differences should be evident between church leaders' attitudes and behaviour and that of leaders in the general community?

2. V. 41-44. The widow shows quiet piety. In the public place where people deposit their temple gifts, some are seen to give large amounts while others like the widow simply give all they can. Jesus leaves the disciples, with an example of extravagant self-sacrifice, (v. 44b) 'she, out of her poverty, put in everything - all she had to live on'. This story leaves the hearer up in the air. How does she survive, are not these actions an extreme response? Jesus is clearly contrasting a half-hearted and superficial service to one that is total and self-sacrificial. This is the very example Jesus is about to show as he gives up his life for the world.

Reflection/Response. Jesus has given his all for us: What is stopping us giving our all to him? How are we using our resources, including our money to honour and serve our Lord Jesus Christ?

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