



## **Living Faith vs Dead Religion** **Mark 12:1-27 | Ryan Pfeiffer | February 19, 2023**

INTRO. Illus. "Far Side" Comic. Summarizing what we see?

Overview Slide: Quick Run through on point 1 for each.

3 CONFLICTS- contrast Jesus' Living Faith vs the Dead Religion of the time.

Dead religion has been the cause of so much pain/ disillusionment.

Affairs... child abuse... financial malfeasance... division...

Jesus came to reclaim God's creation... renew God's kingdom on earth

Jesus wants to convict... and revive us.

FOCUS. How does each conflict expose the trap of dead religion and call us to living faith?

CONFLICT OVER THE VINEYARD (vs 1-12) v10 "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; 11 the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes?"

Jesus is talking about his rejection and death on the CROSS.

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

The CROSS represents Jesus posture as a servant king...

The CROSS of Jesus redefines our role in life as servants of God's household to help the outsiders become insiders.

Dead Religion tempts us to see ourselves as the Owner... who see the church and creation existing for our glory.

Living Faith sees everything as GRACE... our role as Servants in God's house

Outsiders—> Insiders. The Lost and Left-Out.

CONFLICT OVER TAXES. (vs 13-17) 17 Then Jesus said to them, "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's."

The Pharisees and the Herodians come to trap Jesus in a socio-political controversy. "Should we pay taxes... to Caesar?"

If Jesus says YES— DISCREDIT HIM with the people.  
If Jesus says NO— ACCUSE him to Roman authorities.

DEAD RELIGION = They are so focused on being against Roman control.

Think about this. Israel was called to reach the world... but when they failed God brought the world to them! And Jesus calls them out in the Temple.

YES... need awareness of negative influences of culture and compromise.

TRAP- So focused on what we are against we lose sight of what Jesus is for.

What is God's... 11:17 Den of Robbers. 12:40 Devour widows houses.

Living Faith flourishes when we unite justice with righteousness.

Tim Keller, American Christianity is Due for a Revival. Second, the Church in the U.S. can grow again if it learns how to unite justice and righteousness. I have heard African American pastors use this terminology to describe the historic ministry of the Black Church. By righteousness they meant that the Church has maintained its traditional beliefs in the authority of the Bible, morality, and sexuality. It calls individuals to be born again through faith in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. By justice, they meant that the Church has an activist stance against all forms of oppression. Absolute Truth + Crazy Love.

CONFLICT OVER THE RESURRECTION. (vs 18-27). 24 Jesus replied, "Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?... 27 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!"

Sadducees want to trap Jesus in a theological controversy...

Sadducees only accept the first 5 books of Moses... Torah. (GELND).

Don't believe in the supernatural side of God- miracles, angels, resurrection.

Upper Class... educated... sophisticated... pragmatic... Cynical.

They want to make Jesus' belief in the resurrection look naive and childish.

Embarrass him in front of the crowd.

DEAD RELIGION wants to tempt us to give up:

1. Confidence in the authority of God's word
2. Hope in God's supernatural power. Power to save... to revive... to heal

Evangelicalism = result of revival movements in 18th/ 19th/ 20th century:

1. Authority of Scripture as God inspired.
2. The Cross as the Cornerstone of faith
3. The necessity of personal conversion
4. Christian Activism for the lost and left-out.

Revival's HAPPEN when these are reclaimed from grip of DEAD RELIGION.

ILLUS. Right now—> ASBURY. College in Kentucky.

Students: praying, worshipping, repenting, surrendering to God- Feb 8th!

REVIVAL... Season of breakthrough(s) in word, deed, power, that usher in a new normal of Kingdom experience and fruitfulness.

Gatherings of communal prayer are the catalysts for larger scale revival

When we lose faith in God's power we stop praying.

Revivals 1.0—> 5.0—> 10.0

Tim Keller, American Christianity is Due for a Revival. "Historically during times of fast growth and renewal, Christian movements have been marked. By an extraordinary amount of communal prayer... The renewed growth of the Church in the U.S. will not happen without it."

NEXT STEPS: RENEW OUR COMMITMENT TO GOD'S WORD/ PRAYER

- Monthly memory verse.
- Start with 15min/ day prayer.
- Thurs worship/ Prayer...
- Where do you long for God to revive his greatness in your life?
- The greatness of his presence, his purpose, his power?

## Additional Resource:



### Article Referenced

"American Christianity is Due for Revival"  
by Timothy Keller

February 5, 2023 | [www.theatlantic.com](http://www.theatlantic.com)

<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2023/02/christianity-secularization-america-renewal-modernity/672948/>