**Christ Is Our Victorious Lord**

Mark 12:35-44 (Key Verse 36)

*“David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared: ‘The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.’*

In today’s passage we are going to learn from Jesus himself, who the Messiah is. Jesus began this teaching to challenge the teachers of the law who had a skewed understanding of who the Messiah is. Because of their skewed understanding of the Messiah, they could not be used as spiritual leaders of their time; they could not lead the people of Israel to God, and they could not live a life filled with delight, true joy and peace. Furthermore, because of their skewed view they missed the Messiah who lived amongst them. From the key verse, Jesus revealed from scripture that the Messiah is the Lord. When the large crowds who listened to him heard this, they were filled with delight. We are therefore going to learn what it means that Jesus is the Lord and how these could fill the large crowds with delight. We are also going to learn what attitude we inherit when we accept Jesus as our victorious Lord by an example of a widow who gave all she had to live on unto the Lord. May God have mercy on us to receive one word today, receive Jesus as the Lord so that we too can be filled with delight.

The passage today begins with Jesus who was in the temple courts teaching the words of God. It was about there days before his crucifixion and death. This was also after many counts of the teachers of the law, the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Herodians having tried to trap him with ridiculous questions. The teachers of the law came to Jesus with all these sorts of question to discredit him, they wanted him to say something that will compromise his credibility. The teachers of the law did all this, for Jesus had become so popular, Jesus became a political threat to them. Not only that, Jesus also became a threat to their pockets for when he came to Jerusalem he went into the temple of God and challenged the corrupt teachers of the law and the Pharisees by overturning the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. When Jesus did all this, he challenged them and said: *““Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’[a]? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.”* The teachers of the law were touched for they had a stake in the business activities in the temple. Jesus did not do all this because he hatted the teachers of the law and the Pharisees, but he did this out of love, he wanted the teachers of the law and the Pharisees to turn from their sinful ways, surrender their lives to God and be used by God.

Today, Jesus continued to challenge the teachers of the law, first to help them to repent and secondly to help the crowds who have been led by the teachers of the Law. Jesus challenged them by asking the question: *“Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David?”* This was common teaching by the teachers of the law that the Messiah is the son of David, and this was indeed true, the Messiah was expected to be a descendant of King David. However, what the teachers of the Law missed was that they only considered the Messiah to only be of human nature, they were expecting a king like David who would redeem them from the Roman Empire. They stripped the Messiah of the divine nature. To them the Messiah was the Son of David or the son of man, but not the Son of God. And today Jesus began to teach them that the Messiah is actually both man and God, he had both human nature and divine nature.

How did Jesus reveal this nature about the Messiah? Let us look at the **key verse 36**: “*David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared: “‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.”’* To reveal the true nature of who the Messiah is, Jesus quoted **Psalm 110:1**, firstly because the teachers of the law themselves believed that it was truly written by King David and they accepted that it talks about the promised Messiah. Furthermore, Jesus said David spoke this by the Holy Spirit, meaning this was not the words of David but a decree from the mouth of God, it was authoritative and cannot be changed, in the very chapter we also learn that the Messiah will become the Priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. Furthermore, Jesus asked: “*David himself calls him ‘Lord.’ How then can he be his son?”*” In the key verse David said, the Lord said to my Lord. Now Lord refers to God, it signifies God's sovereignty, authority, and divinity, it reflects His ultimate power and worthy of worship and obedience from all creation. Now when David spoke about the Messiah, he said the Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.

The first Lord referred to God the Father, Yahweh, the second Lord referred to the Messiah. David did not refer to the Messiah as his grandson, but rather he referred to him as Lord. Meaning the Mesiah is not only of human form like him, but rather he is God, the creator of the heaven and earth who was from the beginning. He holds all power and authority, he is divine and worthy to be worshiped. David said: *“The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet*” Here the enemy is not the Roman Empire who can be defeated by human king, but rather the enemy is the power of sin and death. Through Jesus Christ the Messiah, the power of sin and death was defeated, Jesus came into this world, lived a sin free life, was crucified, died and on the third day rose from the dead. To save us, the Lord Jesus Christ was handed over, a Lamb without blemish, an atonement for our sins. All this was possible because Jesus was not just human, but rather divine, he was the son of God, he was God with power and authority.

When Jesus said this the crowd listened to him with delight. What does this mean? This means what Jesus said was so refreshing, it brought them joy, peace, hope and satisfaction. Through Jesus words they could learn the true meaning of who the Messiah is, they could learn that he not just human, but divine with power and authority over all things, they could learn how he would conquer the power of sin and death. They could learn how the Messiah would solve their fundamental problem. As they listened to Jesus, they could gradually realize that the Messiah was with them, they could realize that Jesus is the Messiah that the scriptures spoke about, and this left them with delight. The crowds could realize this when they listened to the words of Jesus. For us too, to know who Jesus is, we need to engage the scriptures, it is through the words of God that we can discover who Jesus is. When the crowds listened to the words of Jesus they were delighted. Similarly, when we too listen to the words of God we will be left with delight, we will be filled with joy, peace, hope and satisfaction.

Furthermore, as Jesus spoke, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law continued with their usual ways, they did not pay attention to Jesus words, rather they were filled with bitterness, jealousy, evil thoughts and plans to kill Jesus. And so, Jesus warned the crowds about them in **verse 38-40**: *“As he taught, Jesus said, “Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, 39 and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. 40 They devour widows’ houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely.”* The teachers of the law were called to take care of God’s people as spiritual leaders of the time, however because they had a natural way of looking at things, they missed the spiritual aspect of the Messiah. Instead of accepting the Messiah as God, the creator, they saw him as a political leader who would overthrow the Roman Empire. Because of these, they became very worldly people, who were fueled by worldly power and politics. Instead of taking care of God’s people, they oppressed them and stole from them. They did things just for a show, and never to honor God.

Because of all this, Jesus warned the crowds about the teachers of the law. He said they will be punished most severely. He warned them, to help them to repent and to carefully consider the scriptures, he warned them to not look at the Messiah in a human view, but a spiritual view, as the creator of the heavens and earth with power and authority over all things. Most importantly, at the core the Messiah has come to save us from the power of sin and death, he conquered sin and death on the cross. Today as well, Jesus is warning us to not be like the teachers of the law. How can we be like the teachers of the law? When we ignore Jesus’ Lordship, when we do not study the word of God diligently, but say we are Christian believers and only pray to Jesus to do things for us such getting a job, passing our exams, getting money etc. As genuine Christian believers we need to surrender our lives to Jesus fully, we need to depend on him, we need to study his word diligently so that we can get to know him deeply and have a relationship with him. Yes, it might seem burdensome when we must join Bible study after a long day of lectures on campus, after a long day of work. It might seem burdensome to surrender our lives to Jesus, surrender our marriage, our finances. But when do this we will experience true delight, like the people who listened to Jesus.

Furthermore, Jesus taught his disciples what is it like to know who the Messiah is, to delight in the Lord. He taught them this after he sat in the temple courts close to the place where offerings were put. He observed many rich people throwing large amounts into the offering basket, then he was very much amazed when he saw this poor widow who put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. Why was Jesus amazed by the widow’s offering? Let us look at **verse 43-44**: “*Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44 They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”* When Jesus called his disciples after witnessing the offering train, he began his sentence by saying: “*Truly I tell you*” these were words of emphasis, it implied that what he was about to say was extremely important. What then did he say? Jesus message to the disciples was that the widow’s offering was much greater, even though it was just a few cents, it was much greater than the large amounts of offered by the rich.

How is this possible? How could her offering be much greater? It was much greater because of the attitude she offered with. While the rich offered out of the abundance of their wealth. She offered from her heart; she understood the meaning and purpose of offering. Out of her poverty, she put in everything, all she had to live on, this act tells us that she offered to the Lord with faith that all she had is from God, she offered with faith that it is God who sustains her life. Her offering demonstrated that she truly has received the Messiah in her heart, she was 100% convinced that through the Messiah the Lord is with her, she placed her life and future security in the Messiah, so giving everything she had was not loss for her, for she has already received much in Jesus, our victorious Lord. How could the widow become like this? She became like these first because she humbly listened and received the words of God regarding the Messiah and as a result, though she gave everything she had, she was filled with delight, she was filled with joy, peace and hope.

I joined Wits UBF officially late 2008 and early 2009 through an invitation by my good friend Sh. Lesedi. When I joined, we were studying the gospel of John, I do not remember much but one thing I remember is Sh. Jacob’s emphasis on who Jesus Christ is, the Messiah who has come to save me from the power of sin and death. It was early in my career, and I had job which in comparison to my peers paid me lower salary with no benefits such as medical aid, I complained much about it. Sh. Jacob listened to me and prayed with me, but what he emphasized above all was that I may surrender my life to Jesus, put my trust in him. Yes, Jesus could help me with my career situation, but that was not the fundamental issue of my life. What is fundamental is knowing him as my victorious Lord. As we studied the Bible I began to enjoy studying his word, I could feel some delight in my heart, and could begin to see how much of a sinner I am. Before I lived with so much lust and immorality and it did not bother me, I still considered myself a good person for I thought I did not cause harm to others and respected others.

When I encountered Jesus my victorious Lord, I could accept the call to be a Shepherd for campus students, yes it seemed hard to go to campus after work and on Saturdays to teach the Bible, but each time as we studied the Bible with my brothers my heart would be filled with delight. Sh. Jacob also encouraged me to offer a tithe to the Lord, as an acknowledgement to God as my source of life and all I have. This helped me a lot to meditate regularly on who Jesus is, my victorious Lord.

However, as I prepared this message, I was very much challenged for I have been a Shepherd for a while now, serving sheep and offering unto the Lord. I was challenged for I felt that I have began doing some of these deeds habitually, I have gotten used to it. The widow offered from her heart; she offered unto Jesus the victorious Lord. While the rich offered out of the abundance of their wealth. The passage today is challenging me to serve in God’s ministry because of Jesus, to offer in the ministry because of Jesus, to offer from the heart. Not to offer habitually, not to out of obligation because I am Shepherd, not to offer my life because I am forced to, but because of Jesus our victorious Lord. This is how I can truly live a life with delight, with joy, peace and hope. This is how God can restore me and continue to use me in his ministry.

**Conclusion**

From today’s passage we have learnt that Jesus Christ is the Lord, he is not only the Son of David, but the Son of God with power and authority over all things. From the beginning he was with God. We have learnt how important it is to know who Jesus truly is, we also have learnt that for us to know Jesus we need to study his word diligently. We have also learnt the misery of not knowing who Jesus is, first we will not be used by God, instead being shepherds of God’s flock, we will oppress them, our hearts will be filled with bitterness, anger, greed zero satisfaction, and worst of all we will be punished severely. But when we diligently study God’s word, accept Jesus as our victorious Lord, surrender our lives unto him, offer our everything unto him we will be filled with delight, joy, peace and hope. I pray that God may help us to meditate on this word, study his word, learn who Jesus is, have a personal relationship with him and surrender our lives unto him by offering all we have to live unto him like the poor widow.