

In Between

June 1-6, 2026

Monday June 1, 2026

Scripture - Mk 12:9-12 What [then] will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come, put the tenants to death, and give the vineyard to others. Have you not read this scripture passage:

‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; by the Lord has this been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes?’”

They were seeking to arrest him, but they feared the crowd, for they realized that he had addressed the parable to them. So they left him and went away.

Observation: This week continues the final run through Mark that started with Ordinary Time in Jan./Feb. This week’s readings are during Jesus’ final days in Jerusalem, typically preaching near the temple. In today’s reading, Jesus had just told the people (and religious elites listening on) the parable of the vineyard master whose son, who was sent by the master, was killed by the tenants.

Narrative: In parable form, Jesus was directly challenging the religious elites in front of a sizable crowd of people. Jesus continues to agitate the Jewish power brokers of His time; as the saying goes, Jesus “did not let up on the gas pedal.”

Question: Have you ever used a sly way (parable here) of getting your point across without directly challenging the one the message is meant for? If so, how did it go?

Tuesday June 2, 2026

Scripture - Mark 12:14b-15 “Is it lawful to pay the census tax to Caesar or not? Should we pay or should we not pay?” Knowing their hypocrisy he said to them, “Why are you testing me? Bring me a denarius to look at.”

Observation: After yesterday’s reading and the parable challenge to the religious elites, some Pharisees and Herodians came to do entrapment in reverse by posing the famous question around paying tax to Caesar – they thought no matter which way Jesus would answer, it would upset either the Romans or the people.

Narrative: They were amazed at his answer: “Repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God.” The cat and mouse game continues between Jesus and the power brokers of His time.

Question: Ever been in an ongoing relationship (causal or otherwise) where you always are facing an ulterior motive or entrapment? How did/do you handle it?

Wednesday June 3, 2026 Scripture - Mark 12:24-27 Jesus said to them, "Are you not misled because you do not know the scriptures or the power of God? When they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but they are like the angels in heaven. As for the dead being raised, have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God told him, 'I am the God of Abraham, [the] God of Isaac, and [the] God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead but of the living. You are greatly misled."

Observation: Next up in Jesus' final days, the Sadducees, who did not believe in the afterlife, challenged Jesus with their own parable of sorts about a woman whose husband died and each of the other six brothers needed to marry her according to Jewish law after each one's death in succession. They asked who the woman would be married to after the resurrection/in the afterlife. Notice the number 7 – it has purposeful symbolism.

Narrative: A similar answer/sentiment as seen in Matthew (8:22) and Luke (9:60) of "Let the dead bury the dead," meaning the spiritually dead (non-believing) people should attend to worldly matters, while followers focus on Jesus' mission. Jesus is not so subtly implying that the religious elites of His time are spiritually dead and therefore of no use to the people. Yah, ouch - not winning many friends in powerful places.

Question: Have you ever run up against a person whose approach is so out of touch or off base? If so, how did/do you deal/communicate with such a person?

Thursday June 4, 2026 Scripture - Mark 12:34 And when Jesus saw that [he, the scribe] answered with understanding, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Observation: The last challenge by the elites came from the scribes who asked Jesus what was the first of all the commandments. Jesus would answer with two commandments > Love God and love your neighbor as yourself. One of the scribes agreed with Jesus, to whom He replied above.

Narrative: In making this connection between God and neighbor running through a person in the middle, Jesus would forever link the love of God with how we treat each other. The image/message in the cross > love of God vertically, and love of neighbor with the outstretched arms of Jesus > yes the sacrifice(s) of a person stuck/hung in the middle of both.

Question: Do you see the dual commandment as your mission, duty, ministry, sacrifice in life?

Friday June 5, 2026

Scripture Mark 12:35-37 As Jesus was teaching in the temple area he said, "How do the scribes claim that the Messiah is the son of David? David himself, inspired by the holy Spirit, said: *'The Lord said to my lord, "Sit at my right hand until I place your enemies under your feet.'*" David himself calls him 'lord'; so how is he his son?" [The] great crowd heard this with delight.

Observation: Right after one scribe agrees with Jesus on what is most important (see yesterday), He challenges the scribes' myopic focus on a human descendant of David being the Messiah by quoting Psalm 110:1 to the crowd. One of the great scriptural foretellings of Jesus used scripturally as a basis for the divinity of Christ/Messiah.

Narrative: Human, or Divine, or both, and how? The ongoing mental and spiritual gymnastics that must be dealt with through faith in regards to Jesus. Was Jesus only human (Arianism), only divine (Docetism), or both (Orthodox, prevailing view since the 4th Century/Council of Nicea)? While settled within the Church, it remains a question?

Question: Where do you fall on the above stated nature of Jesus - human, divine, or both?

Saturday June 6, 2026

Scripture - Mark 12:38-40 In the course of his teaching he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to go around in long robes and accept greetings in the marketplaces, seats of honor in synagogues, and places of honor at banquets. They devour the houses of widows and, as a pretext, recite lengthy prayers. They will receive a very severe condemnation."

Observation: Jesus continues to generally ridicule the scribes for their hypocrisy. The very next teaching of Jesus in this regard would be as they (He and the disciples) sat next to the temple treasury and saw a poor widow give two coins (half of her livelihood) while the rich (scribes included) gave out of their surplus.

Narrative: The metaphor for today is clear: are you/we "all in" with God or is it just one of many of life's priorities, an extra, a ritual performance, etc.

Question: Tough to be all in with God and not be a hypocrite at times; but generally are you headed in the right (spiritual) direction?