

Not Far from the Kingdom (Mark 12: 28-34)

- We observe here, beautifully, Jesus' exchange with a scribe about his spiritual state
- Many in history (J. Wesley) have been here: “you are not far from the kingdom”
- Countless numbers have been ‘so close to the kingdom’ but yet have failed to enter

I. Being Near the Kingdom

- Exchange began with a question from a scribe who heard Jesus and another disputing
- Noticing that Jesus had a good answer, the Scribe asked Jesus a question (v.28)
- This scribe had a religion of achievement, so he was there to see Jesus silenced
- He was impressed & drawn to Jesus and before he could help himself ask a question
- What the scribe received from Jesus was the very essence of true religion (vv 29-31)
- First part of Jesus answer was from Deut 6:4 the Shema “Israel, hear, O Israel’
- Second part of Jesus' answer was from Lev 19:18 “Love your neighbor as yourself”
- Brilliance of Jesus' answer is in the implications of: Love God & love your neighbor
- It summarized the whole ten commandments: the first part summarized the first four
- The second part of Jesus answer summarized, the last six commandments
- Jesus' answer showed that love for God & love for neighbor cannot be separated
- Jesus' answer was a call to radical human love, “love your neighbor as yourself”
- The scribe literally responded to Jesus: that was a beautiful answer, rabbi (32,33)
- Jesus responded “you are not far from the kingdom of heaven” to draw him in.
- Jesus' answer was a compliment: He could see he had thought deeply about the law
- Jesus' answer was a warning: though he was close, he was decisively separated

II. Being Far From the Kingdom

- Many claim to be on a spiritual pilgrimage, they claim to be evolving into the truth
- Some may say this man was on a pilgrimage, could he really say he found truth
- Our relativist world claims we are arrogant to think we have found the saving truth
- This man was close, but he was not in, the implication is clear: close is not in

III. Getting into the Kingdom

- 1st it is entirely possible to have grown up religious and still not be in Christ
- 2nd it is entirely possible to know the Scriptures, know theology and not know Christ
- 3rd it is entirely possible to hear the grace of Christ preached every Sunday all your life & still be resting on your own work or looking to your own goodness for salvation