

Sunday School Lesson

"Fatherhood and Footstools" | Mark 12:35-37

OVERVIEW

In Mark 12:35-37, Jesus asks a question that challenges the religious leaders—and everyone who hears it—to think carefully about who the Messiah really is. Everyone knew that the Christ, or Messiah, would be a descendant of King David. But Jesus points out something surprising: David himself calls the Messiah "Lord."

Jesus is showing that the Messiah is more than simply a human descendant of David. He is David's Lord. Jesus is revealing that He is both truly human and far greater than any earthly king.

For middle school and high school students, this passage gives us an important question to wrestle with: **Who do you believe Jesus really is?** It is possible to know facts about Jesus, go to church, hear Bible stories, and even know Bible verses without personally trusting Him as Lord.

This lesson will help students understand what Jesus was saying about Himself, connect Mark 12 to the Old Testament, and consider what Christ's identity means for their own lives.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Jesus is the promised Messiah, the descendant of David.
 - Jesus is not merely a great teacher, prophet, or religious leader. He is Lord.
 - The Old Testament points forward to a Messiah who would be both human and divine.
 - Knowing facts about Jesus is different from personally trusting and following Jesus.
 - Because Jesus is Lord, He deserves more than admiration—He deserves our faith, obedience, and worship.
 - Every believer has a part to play in God's mission of making Jesus known.
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OPENING QUESTION

Use this to get conversation started. Keep it light and accessible.

If you could ask one famous person from history one question and get a completely honest answer, who would you choose and what would you ask?

After a few responses, ask:

Why do you think knowing who someone really is matters before we decide whether we should listen to them, trust them, or follow them?

Transition:

Today we're looking at a question Jesus asked about Himself. The answer isn't just interesting Bible trivia. It changes how we understand Jesus—and how we should respond to Him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Understanding the Text

1. Read Mark 12:35-37 together as a group. What question does Jesus ask?

Answer: Jesus asks, "How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David?" He is not denying that the Messiah would be David's descendant. Instead, He is pointing out that the Messiah is much greater than simply being David's biological descendant.

Jesus then quotes Psalm 110, where David calls the coming Messiah "Lord."

Dig Deeper:

Why would it be surprising for David to call one of his own descendants "Lord"?

Answer: Normally, a descendant comes after an ancestor. David was a king and an important figure in Israel's history. His descendants would come from him, but David calling one of those descendants "Lord" shows that this particular descendant has a position and authority greater than David himself.

For Students:

Think about the difference between saying, "This is someone who came after me," and saying, "This person is my Lord." Jesus is showing that the Messiah is not merely another person in David's family tree. He is David's King.

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2. What does the word "Lord" communicate about Jesus?

Answer: It communicates authority, power, and position. Calling Jesus "Lord" means recognizing that He has authority over us. He isn't simply someone whose opinions we can consider and then decide whether we agree.

Dig Deeper:

If Jesus really is Lord, what areas of your life does He have authority over?

Possible Answers:

Our friendships, entertainment, social media, schoolwork, relationships, money, time, attitudes, words, decisions, future plans, and private life.

Follow-Up:

Why is it easier to call Jesus "Lord" at church than to let Him be Lord when we're at school or with our friends?

Answer: Because following Jesus can become uncomfortable when it conflicts with what our friends, culture, or our own desires tell us to do. It is easier to agree with Jesus in a church setting than to obey Him when obedience costs us something.

3. Why do you think Jesus asked this question publicly instead of simply saying, "I am the Messiah"?

Answer: Jesus often taught people by asking questions that made them think. Instead of giving the scribes an easy answer, He used Scripture to expose a problem in their understanding of the Messiah.

Dig Deeper:

What does this teach us about the way Jesus wants us to think about our faith?

Answer: Christianity is not about turning off our brains. Jesus invites people to examine Scripture, ask questions, think deeply, and recognize the truth about who He is.

For Students:

Is it okay to have questions about your faith?

Answer: Yes. Honest questions can lead us deeper into truth. The important thing is what we do with our questions. We should bring them to Scripture, seek wise counsel, pray, and honestly pursue the truth rather than using questions as an excuse to avoid it.

4. Read Psalm 110:1. David says, "The LORD said to my Lord..." What is happening in this verse?

Answer: David is describing God speaking to someone David himself calls "Lord." Jesus uses this verse to show that David understood the coming Messiah as someone greater than himself.

Dig Deeper:

Why is it significant that Jesus chose Scripture written hundreds of years before His birth?

Answer: Jesus is showing that His identity wasn't something He invented. God's plan for the Messiah had been revealed throughout the Old Testament. Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promises.

Follow-Up:

What does that teach us about the Bible?

Answer: The Bible is one connected story. The Old Testament points forward to God's plan of redemption, and the New Testament shows that Jesus is the fulfillment of that plan.

GOING DEEPER

5. Read Jeremiah 23:5-6. What does this prophecy say about the coming King?

Answer: God promises to raise up a righteous Branch from David's line. He will reign wisely, bring justice and righteousness, and His name will be associated with the LORD's righteousness.

Dig Deeper:

How is this different from an ordinary earthly king?

Answer: An ordinary king may be powerful, wise, or successful, but every human king is imperfect. This promised King would perfectly rule with righteousness and justice.

Connection to Jesus:

Jesus came from David's family line, and He is the perfectly righteous King. His kingdom is ultimately greater than any earthly kingdom.

6. Read Micah 5:2. What surprising detail does this prophecy give about the Messiah?

Answer: The ruler would come from Bethlehem, a small and seemingly unimportant town.

Dig Deeper:

Why do you think God often works through things or people that seem small or insignificant?

Possible Answers:

So that His power and greatness—not human status—receive the glory. God doesn't measure importance the same way the world does.

Application:

Have you ever felt too young, too unimportant, too inexperienced, or not talented enough for God to use?

Truth to Emphasize:

Your age does not make you useless to God. God can use students right now. You don't have to wait until you're an adult to serve Him, encourage someone, share the gospel, pray, or make a difference.

7. Read Isaiah 9:6-7. What descriptions are given of the coming child?

Answer: He is called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. He will rule on David's throne and establish an everlasting kingdom.

Dig Deeper:

Why is "Mighty God" such an important description?

Answer: It shows that the promised Messiah would not be merely an ordinary human ruler. The Messiah would have a divine identity.

Big Question:

How does this help us understand what Jesus was saying in Mark 12?

Answer: Jesus is not simply saying, "I am related to David." He is showing that He is the promised Messiah who is greater than David. The Old Testament points toward a Savior who is both connected to humanity and possesses divine authority.

8. Pastor Virgil said, "If you know what you are looking for, you are more likely to see it." How could that idea apply to reading the Bible?

Answer: When we understand the Bible's big story, we begin to recognize how different passages connect. We can see God's promises, His character, and how Scripture points us toward Christ.

Dig Deeper:

What can cause us to read the Bible without really seeing what it is saying?

Possible Answers:

Distraction, rushing, boredom, assuming we already know the story, reading only to check a box, not asking questions, or approaching Scripture without wanting God to change us.

Challenge:

Instead of asking only, "What does this verse say?" also ask:

- What does this teach me about God?
- What does this teach me about Jesus?

- What does this reveal about people?
 - Is there something I need to believe, change, obey, or trust?
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PERSONAL REFLECTION

9. What is the difference between knowing **about** Jesus and actually **knowing Jesus**?

Answer: Knowing about Jesus means knowing facts: He was born in Bethlehem, He performed miracles, He died on the cross, and He rose again. Knowing Jesus personally means trusting Him, believing the gospel, turning from sin, and following Him as Lord.

Dig Deeper:

Can someone know a lot about Jesus and still not follow Him?

Answer: Yes. The religious leaders in Jesus' day knew the Scriptures extremely well, yet many rejected Jesus.

For Students:

You can grow up in church and still need to personally respond to Jesus. Your parents' faith cannot become your faith automatically. Your youth pastor's faith cannot become your faith automatically. You must personally respond to Christ.

10. Imagine someone says, "I believe Jesus was a good person, but I don't think I need to follow Him." How would you respond based on Mark 12?

Answer: Mark 12 presents Jesus as much more than a good person. Jesus is the Messiah and Lord. If He truly is Lord, then His identity demands a response.

Dig Deeper:

What are some common ways people today reduce Jesus to something less than Lord?

Possible Answers:

- "Jesus was a good teacher."
- "Jesus was a nice example."
- "Jesus was a prophet."
- "Jesus just wants me to be happy."
- "Jesus is part of my life, but He doesn't need to control my decisions."

Follow-Up:

What is wrong with each of these views?

Answer: Each one makes Jesus smaller than Scripture presents Him. Jesus certainly teaches us, loves us, and gives us an example—but He is also the Messiah, Savior, and Lord.

11. What are some areas where teenagers might say Jesus is Lord but have difficulty actually surrendering control?

Possible Answers:

- Friendships
- Dating and relationships
- Social media
- Entertainment
- Language
- Schoolwork
- Popularity
- Appearance
- Anger
- Forgiveness
- Future plans
- Sexual choices
- Money
- How we treat people we don't like

Dig Deeper:

Why is surrendering control so difficult?

Answer: Because we naturally want to be in charge. Following Jesus means trusting that His wisdom is better than ours—even when His commands are difficult or unpopular.

Personal Challenge:

Ask yourself:

"If Jesus really is Lord, what is one area of my life where I am still trying to be in charge?"

Students do not have to share their answer unless they want to.

12. Pastor Virgil said, "There is no stopping what God will do through us if His church did not care who got credit for it." What does that mean for students?

Answer: We don't have to be the most popular person, get recognized, or receive credit for serving God. Our goal is to make Jesus known, not make ourselves famous.

Example:

Maybe you invite someone to church and someone else gets to explain the gospel. Maybe you encourage a friend and never know how much it helped. Maybe you serve behind the scenes and nobody notices.

Question:

Does it still matter if nobody gives you credit?

Answer: Yes. God sees faithful service even when other people don't.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Choose one or more of the following to discuss as a group and commit to practicing before your next meeting.

Know Who Jesus Is

Read Mark 12:35-37 and Psalm 110:1 several times this week. Write down everything these verses teach you about Jesus. Bring one thing you discovered to share with the group.

Put Jesus in Charge

Identify one area of your life where you have difficulty letting Jesus be Lord. Pray specifically about that area each day this week. Ask God to help you trust and obey Him.

Look for Jesus in Scripture

Read one of these passages: Jeremiah 23:5-6, Micah 5:2, or Isaiah 9:6-7. Write down two things the passage teaches about the promised Messiah and how those truths connect to Jesus.

Use Your Gifts Now

Write down one ability, interest, or strength God has given you. Think of one way you can use it this week to serve another person, your church, your family, or your school.

Pray for Someone Who Doesn't Know Jesus

Write down the name of one person you know who may not have a relationship with Christ. Pray for that person every day this week. Ask God to give you an opportunity to show them Christ's love and, when appropriate, talk with them about your faith.

CLOSING PRAYER POINTS

Close your time together by praying as a group over the following:

- Pray that each student would understand who Jesus really is—not simply know facts about Him.

- Pray that students would recognize Jesus as the Messiah and Lord.
 - Pray for students who have questions or doubts about their faith, asking God to lead them toward truth.
 - Pray that students would have courage to follow Jesus when their friends or culture pressure them to do something different.
 - Pray that each student would recognize the gifts God has given them and begin using those gifts now.
 - Pray for friends, classmates, and family members who do not yet know Jesus.
 - Pray that your youth group and church would care more about making Jesus known than receiving recognition.
 - Pray that your group would become steadfast, faithful, and committed to the work God has given them.
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MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

1 Corinthians 15:58

"Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."

Memory Verse Challenge:

Ask students:

- What does **steadfast** mean?
- What does **immovable** mean?
- What does it mean to **abound in the work of the Lord**?
- Why is it encouraging to know that our work for the Lord is never wasted?

Answer: Paul is encouraging believers to remain faithful even when following Jesus is difficult. Because Jesus is Lord and has defeated sin and death, what we do for Him has eternal significance.

30-MINUTE LESSON PLAN

0–5 minutes — Opening

- Welcome students.
- Ask the opening question.
- Introduce the big question: "**Who is Jesus really?**"

5–10 minutes — Read the Scripture

- Read Mark 12:35-37.
- Read Psalm 110:1.
- Explain David's relationship to the Messiah.
- Emphasize: **Jesus is David's descendant, but He is also David's Lord.**

10–20 minutes — Dig Deeper

Discuss questions 3–8.

Focus especially on:

- Why Jesus is Lord.
- How the Old Testament points to Jesus.
- Why Scripture matters.
- Why Jesus is more than a good teacher.
- What His authority means for our lives.

20–26 minutes — Personal Application

Discuss questions 9–12.

Ask students to consider privately:

"If Jesus really is Lord, what is one area of my life where I need to surrender control to Him?"

Allow students to share if they are comfortable.

26–30 minutes — Challenge and Prayer

- Introduce one practical application for the week.
- Review the memory verse.
- Give students an opportunity to name people they can pray for.
- Close in prayer.

BIG IDEA TO REMEMBER

Jesus isn't just someone to know about. He is the Messiah, the Son of David, and the Lord over David. Because Jesus is Lord, He deserves our trust, our obedience, and our whole lives.

Fatherhood and Footstools – 08.16.2026 – Middle School and High School Adaptation

This lesson was prepared from a sermon preached at First Baptist Church Stanleyville on Mark 12:35-37 and adapted for middle school and high school students.