

EPISTLE – 10 /11/2024

In Mark 12:38-40, Jesus warns against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law, criticizing their desire for public recognition, desire for wealth, and long prayers to impress others. He condemns their exploitation of vulnerable people, like widows, and promises that they will face severe punishment. There is a tension religious leaders face between authentic faith and populist tendencies. While supportive of traditional liturgical garments, they advocate simplicity, avoiding ostentation as a gesture of humility. Reflecting on Jesus' teachings, they emphasize humility and private devotion as central to authentic faith, contrasting this with the populism and showiness some leaders pursue today.

But along with humility, Jesus also has some choice denunciations for those “who cheat widows out of their money.” We live in dangerous times. Young, but especially the elderly, are cheated out of their livelihoods daily by unscrupulous thieves.

The local SAPS recently made residents of Glenhaven aware of the schemes of thieves. Here is the advice of the SAPS, edited for clarity.

1. Do not trust anyone with your money. Avoid promises of short term-high interest investments. Most often, a “quick way” to make money is a scam.
2. Phishing calls from firms that want “to refund you.” NEVER give out banking details on a call.
3. Social Media phishing: messages saying you “won something, click to claim your prize.” Or messages saying your bank card is about to expire.” Go into your bank or phone company to check. The caller saying they

are from MTN/Investec/Liberty etc may not be! Even if they have your ID number.

4. Never let someone take your card out of sight. They can easily clone it and steal your CVV.

5. Be wary of ATMs and any help offered you. If it swallows your card block your card immediately via your bank, even a temporary block.

6. Be wary of banking apps on your mobile device. Do not use those apps in public places and close down the app totally when done. Be wary of games apps and pictures; these can load malware onto your device; and avoid question games – do you really need to know whether you are a potato or a tulip bulb? These can lead you to click bad links that put your money at risk.

7. Don't keep PINs on your mobile devices. NEVER give anyone a One Time Password (OTP) – never! I no longer have a personal voice message for missed calls because AI can capture my voice in 3 seconds of speaking.

Everyone wants to steal your money. Take care; don't be a victim of fraud; be wary of social media. Jesus has some stern words to say to thieves who steal from widows.

Be safe, folks! These thieves are professionals who can outwit you in a single lapse of focus.

Peace,

Craig G. Morrison

10 November 2024

