



DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS

Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

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Photo: Our Daily Bread

MISSING THE BASICS

You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.

Matthew 22:29

READ Matthew 22:23-33

For decades, McDonald's ruled fast food with their Quarter Pounder burger. In the 1980s, a rival chain cooked up an idea to dethrone the company with the golden arches. A&W offered the Third Pound Burger—larger than McDonald's—and sold it for the same price. Even more, A&W's burger won numerous blind taste tests. But the burger bombed. Nobody bought it. Eventually, they dropped it from the menu. Research revealed that consumers misunderstood the math and thought the Third Pound Burger was smaller than the Quarter Pounder. A grand idea failed because people missed the basics.

Jesus warned of how easy it is to miss the basics. Religious leaders, scheming to trap and discredit Him during the week He was crucified, posed a strange, hypothetical scenario about a woman who was widowed seven times (Matthew 22:23–28). Jesus responded, insisting that this knotty dilemma wasn't a problem at all. Rather, their problem was how they didn't "know the Scriptures or the power of God" (v. 29). The Scriptures, Jesus insisted, aren't first intended to answer logical or philosophical puzzles. Rather, their primary aim is to lead us to know and love Jesus and to "have eternal life" in Him (John 5:39). These are the basics the leaders missed.

We often miss the basics too. The Bible's main aim is an encounter with the living Jesus. It would be heartbreaking to miss it.

By **Winn Collier**

PRAY & REFLECT

Dear God, sometimes I get lost even amid good things. Please help me. Amen

How do you miss Scripture's basics? How can you return to the basics . . . to Jesus?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Matthew 22 contains one of the many examples in the Gospels of a "shame/honor contest." Much of the Eastern world today is still rooted in the concept of shame and honor because those cultures are more defined by community expectations than by individual rights. In Western culture, however, the individual is more prominent. In a shame/honor contest, the goal is to take honor from someone and bring shame on them. This requires an audience - the community.

In Matthew 22, the religious leaders attack Jesus in front of the crowds with a series of questions intended to dishonor Him in the eyes of the people (v. 15). Christ answers with irrefutable wisdom, and the religious leaders fail in their attempts to shame Him.

– By **Bill Crowder**

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