



Gospel of Mark Bible Study

Session #14 January 26th – 31st Mark 11:1-26

Tuesday 6am @LW – Tuesday 5:15pm @AV

Wednesday 10am & 6:15pm @LW

Sunday 10:30am @AV

The Triumphal Entry - Mark 11:1-11 Life Application Notes

11:1-2 This was Sunday of the week that Jesus would be crucified, and the great Passover festival was about to begin. Jews came to Jerusalem from all over the Roman world during this week-long celebration to remember the great exodus from Egypt (see Exodus 12:37-51). Many in the crowds had heard of or seen Jesus and were hoping he would come to the temple (John 11:55-57).

Jesus did come, not as a warring king on a horse or in a chariot, but as a gentle and peaceable king on a donkey's colt, just as Zech. 9:9 had predicted. Jesus knew that those who would hear him teach at the temple would return to their homes throughout the world and announce the coming of the Messiah.

11:9-10 The people exclaimed "Hosanna" (meaning, "Save!"), because they recognized that Jesus was fulfilling the prophecy in Zech. 9:9. (See also Psalm 24:7-10; Psalm 118:26.) They spoke of David's kingdom because of God's words to David in 2 Samuel 7:12-14. The crowd correctly saw Jesus as the fulfillment of these prophecies, but they did not understand where Jesus' kingship would lead him. This same crowd cried out "Crucify him!" when Jesus stood on trial only a few days later.

Study Questions:

1. What kinds of events or occasions do we celebrate with parades?
2. What did Jesus ask the disciples to do? (11:2-3)
3. How did the disciples' experience match with what Jesus said? (11:4-7)
4. Why did the people spread cloaks and branches on the road for Jesus? (11:8-10)
5. What do you think the disciples thought about what Jesus asked them to do?
6. When has God told you to do something that you thought was unusual or difficult to justify?
7. How should you react the next time a situation arises that you don't understand?

Jesus Clears the Temple - Mark 11:12-19 Life Application Notes

11:11-21 In this passage, two unusual incidents are related: the cursing of the fig tree and the clearing of the temple. The cursing of the fig tree was an acted-out parable related to the clearing of the temple. The temple was supposed to be a place of worship, but true worship had disappeared. The fig tree showed promise of fruit, but it produced none. Jesus was showing his anger at religious life without substance. If you claim to have faith without putting it to work in your life, you are like the barren fig tree. Genuine faith has great potential; ask God to help you bear fruit for his kingdom.

11:15-17 Jesus became angry, but he did not sin. There is a place for righteous indignation. Christians are right to be upset about sin and injustice and should take a stand against them. Unfortunately, believers are often passive about these important issues and instead get angry over personal insults and petty irritations. Make sure your anger is directed toward the right issues.

11:15-17 Money changers and merchants did big business during Passover. Those who came from foreign countries had to have their money changed into temple currency because this was the only money accepted for the temple tax and for the purchase of sacrificial animals. Often the inflated exchange rate enriched the money changers, and the exorbitant prices of animals made the merchants wealthy. Their stalls were set up in the temple's court of the Gentiles, frustrating the intentions of non-Jews who had come to worship God (Isaiah 56:6-7). Jesus became angry because God's house of worship had become a place of extortion and a barrier to Gentiles who wanted to worship.

Study Questions:

1. If you could change one thing about your church, what would it be?
2. Why did the fig tree have no fruit? (11:13)
3. What did Jesus do to the fig tree? Why? (11:13-14)
4. What do both the cursing of the fig tree and the cleansing of the temple tell us about Jesus' attitude toward the people of Israel? (11:13-17)
5. The fig tree had leaves but no fruit; what is one area of your life that looks good, but isn't producing what God wants?
6. How can you grow and become more productive in one of your weak areas?
7. What specific steps can you take this week to concentrate on a weak area of your spiritual life, aiming to bear fruit for the Lord?

The Withered Fig Tree - Mark 11:20-26 Life Application Notes

11:13-26 Fig trees, a popular source of inexpensive food in Israel, require three years from the time they are planted until they can bear fruit. Each tree yields a great amount of fruit twice a year, in late spring and in early autumn. This incident occurred early in the spring fig season when the leaves were beginning to bud. The figs normally grow as the leaves fill out, but this tree, though full of leaves, had none. The tree looked promising but offered no fruit. Jesus' harsh words to the fig tree could be applied to the nation of Israel. Fruitful in appearance only, Israel was spiritually barren.

11:22-23 The kind of prayer that moves mountains is prayer for the fruitfulness of God's kingdom. It would seem impossible to move a mountain into the sea, so Jesus used that picture to say that God can do anything. God will answer your prayers, but not as a result of your positive mental attitude. Other conditions must be met: (1) you must be a believer; (2) you must not hold a grudge against another person; (3) you must not pray with selfish motives; (4) your request must be for the good of God's kingdom. To pray effectively, you need faith in God, not faith in the object of your request. If you focus only on your request, you will be left with nothing if your request is refused.

11:24 Jesus, our example for prayer, prayed, "Everything is possible for you. . . Yet not what I will, but what you will" (Mark 14:36). Our prayers are often motivated by our own interests and desires. We like to hear that we can have anything. But Jesus prayed with *God's* interests in mind. When we pray, we should express our desires, but want his will above ours. Check yourself to see if your prayers focus on your interests or God's.

Study Questions:

1. Why is it easy to hold grudges?
2. How did Jesus use a seemingly insignificant event as an opportunity to teach the disciples? (11:22)
3. On what do answers to prayer depend? (11:22-25)
4. How can holding a grudge affect the way God answers prayer? (11:25)
5. Why is it necessary to forgive others for what they have done?
6. When is it difficult for you to forgive others?
7. What can you do today to let go of a grudge or feeling of offense?

Bible Memory Verses: Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins. Mark 11:25-26