

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCT 3RD-4TH, 2020 // BOOK OF MATTHEW

THE KING ARRIVES (MATTHEW 21:1-11)

A LONG BUILD FOR A SHORT HOMECOMING

Jesus making His way into the capital, Jerusalem, has been building since chapter 16. From a human perspective, this was the high point of Jesus' popularity.

- The crowds would soon turn on Him because they failed to see that Jesus wasn't there to defeat Rome. **Jesus was there for a much bigger reason, the Cross.**

PREPARING TO MAKE THE TRIUMPHANT ENTRY

As Jesus pauses on the Mount of Olives that overlooks the city, He tells two disciples that they will "find a donkey tied to her foal," and that they should get this donkey for Him.

- This not only fulfilled prophecy from Zech. 9:9, it showed that **Jesus is omniscient and His mission had been preordained.**

LAYING DOWN THEIR COATS

The disciples got the donkeys and made a makeshift saddle with their coats for Jesus. **This is the only mention of Jesus not walking.**

- "A very large crowd spread their clothes on the road" and some used palm branches as **Jesus humbly rode a donkey like a peaceful king.** This is why we call the Sunday before Easter Palm Sunday.

"THOSE WHO FOLLOWED SHOUTED..."

The massive crowd yelled, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" which literally means *Savior, please save us!* This cry was important because it identified a need to be saved and Who the Savior was, Jesus.

- The problem comes when the people realize that **salvation also means redemption, and redemption demands sacrifice.**

THIS IS STILL THE CROSSROAD TODAY

If we're to be saved and delivered, we must take Jesus for all He is. In order to be redeemed (regain possession of) we must have a desire to build a relationship with Jesus. This starts with **humility, submission, and obedience.**

- **This is when Jesus' popularity decreases: when we are called to no longer pursue our ambitions, but His.**

HIS IDENTITY WAS STILL A LITTLE UNCLEAR

As Jesus entered the city and rode through the streets, "the whole city was in an uproar" as they told everyone that "the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee" has arrived.

- The people asked, "Who is this?" but the answer was incomplete. **Jesus was more than a prophet, He was God in the flesh.**

GOD'S HOUSE (MATTHEW 21:12-17)

WAIT, JESUS GETS MAD?

When Jesus got to the city center where the temple was located, He saw that for-profit business was taking place in the temple courtyard and he "threw out" the business owners and "overturned" their tables. The practice of selling sacrificial animals near the temple was a good and practical idea, but it began to go too far.

IT GOES BACK TO A HEART ISSUE

Once again, Jesus challenges us to go deeper. It wasn't that selling animals was wrong, but that the prices became inflated and **the religious community cared more about business than the Word of God.** Jesus was furious because **what should have been a house of prayer became a house of profit.**

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE MONEY

It isn't just greedy money-makers that are guilty of distorting the church. If the church gets derailed by being relevant, too politically charged, or becomes a place to hear self-help seminars and not the Gospel, Jesus gets upset.

- **The focus of the weekend assembly is to worship, pray, read the Word, and take communion.**

JESUS MODELS THE PURPOSE OF CHURCH

After dealing with the improper actions in the church, Jesus models the proper actions by healing the blind and lame while the children shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

- **The church is a place where people are to come to be set free, be healed and helped, and to celebrate the fact that the Savior loves us.**

"...THEY WERE INDIGNANT."

The hypocritical religious leaders were furious about the children calling Jesus the Savior and they wanted Him to tell them to stop.

- Jesus sarcastically asked the leaders if they had ever read Psalm 8:2. In this, **Jesus was claiming deity and pointing out that the leaders should have recognized Who He was.**

LOOKING FOR THE WRONG PERSON

It is impossible to see God if we're always focused on ourselves. The reason the religious people missed Christ as the King is because they were seeking selfish ambitions.

- Because accommodations were limited and Jesus was frustrated with the arrogant religious leaders, Jesus stayed out of town in Bethany that night.

PRODUCTION (MATTHEW 21:18-22)

THIS STORY WAS DIFFERENT IN MARK'S GOSPEL

The main points in Mark's account of the fig tree story are the same, but the chronology is different, leading some people to be troubled by the discrepancy.

- Rearranging events to emphasize certain elements was a completely normal and accepted thing in Matthew's time as long as the events were still true.

JESUS WAS HUNGRY

As Jesus and the 12 went back into the city the next morning Jesus stopped at a fig tree to get a snack, but the tree He stopped at wasn't bearing fruit.

- Jesus was setting up a lesson. Fig leaves tend to cover the fruit, **so one can be mistaken that the tree is being productive when they see large leaves.**

THIS MAKES JESUS PRETTY MAD

Fruit trees have a specific function, to produce fruit. When this one wasn't, Jesus cursed it and it withered away.

- This mini-drama illustrated that Jesus would do the same to the rebellious religious people in Israel. It is also a lesson for us, **people called to be known by the "fruit" we produce (Mt. 7:15-20).**

WHAT FRUIT SHOULD WE BE PRODUCING?

For the Individual: Gal. 5:22-23 tells us the Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. **For the Church:** Matt. 28:19-20 tells us to disciple, baptize, and teach. Jesus also tells us to serve the community.

- **Js. 2 clearly tells us to believe and produce works.**

WE ALSO HAVE LIMITED TIME

When Jesus tells the tree that "May no fruit ever come from you again!" this is referring to the opportunities given to us to repent, but we consistently refuse.

- **Not only do we only have one life to dedicate to Jesus, but if we consistently turn from truth, our hearts grow colder and less receptive to it (Rom. 1).**

"HOW DID THE FIG TREE WITHER SO QUICKLY?"

Jesus tells His disciples, "Truly I tell you" that if you have faith in God fruitless "trees" will be dealt with and mountains in our lives will be "lifted up and thrown into the sea."

- **Without faith, it all falls apart. A life without faith in Jesus produces the wrong fruit and is a life of obstacles and chaos.**

ANYTHING I ASK FOR?

Scripture explains scripture. When Jesus says that if we ask for anything through faithful prayer we will receive it, He's saying the same thing He said in 18:19. **We receive whatever we ask for if we are praying for His will.**

- **Christians are to be submitted to the will of God. It boils down to a trusting that God knows what we need.**

FAITH & FRUIT

Are we living in and displaying **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control?** Are we as individuals advancing the Kingdom through our families, marriages, work places, and leisure spaces? Do we fully understand that **"faith without works is dead?"** Every responsible person has moments of worry. The question is **where do we run for relief of that worry?** Without a trust and reliance on Jesus, worthless fruit, obstacles, and chaos will creep into our lives and render us unproductive and lost.

WE HAVE TO ADDRESS THE HARD TRUTHS

What is the fruit of our lives? Does it align with what Jesus wants to see from us? If we are honest, **do we trust that regardless of how the world shapes up, Jesus is the sovereign King of Kings?**