

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 14TH, 2025 // GOSPEL OF MARK

TRIUMPHAL ENTRY (MARK 11:1-11) "WHEN THEY APPROACHED JERUSALEM..."

This section begins what is referred to as Holy Week, starting with Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and ending with His resurrection a week later.

- The Gospel of Mark, the shortest of the four Gospel accounts, spends six of 16 chapters on this one week of Jesus' earthly ministry, showing just how important it is.

"GO INTO THE VILLAGE..."

Jesus sent His disciples to a village a couple of miles outside of Jerusalem to retrieve a colt in preparation for His arrival into the city.

- Did Jesus make arrangements with the colt owner beforehand, or was this a sign of His omniscience? Either way, this **shows the care of Jesus to go before us and prepare the way** (Deuteronomy 31:8).

"THE LORD NEEDS IT..."

This is the first time in Mark's Gospel that **Jesus refers to Himself as Lord**.

- Previously, Jesus had asked those around Him not to tell others what they had seen and heard, but now, as **the time grows closer for Jesus to fulfill His plan on the cross**, He is slowly revealing who He is and what He has come to do.

SENT BY GOD

The crowds **welcomed Jesus as royalty**, laying their coats and branches down like a red carpet and **crying out "Hosanna"**, meaning "save now."

- They wanted Jesus to set them free from the captivity of Roman oppression and establish His Kingdom immediately. **They honored Him as king but not as the King of Kings who came to deliver humanity from sin and death.**

"FOOLISHNESS TO THOSE WHO ARE PERISHING"

The Romans would have mocked the Triumphal Entry. To them, a triumphal entry was a conquering general riding into town on a golden chariot with a large procession, not a Nazarene riding a donkey with coats as a saddle.

- **To those who do not believe, the message of salvation through Jesus' death is absurd** (1 Corinthians 1:18).

"AFTER LOOKING AROUND AT EVERYTHING..."

Jesus' triumphal entry was not just the beginning of Holy Week nor was it just the beginning of the end of Jesus' earthly life. **It was the beginning of judgment for those who do not accept Jesus.**

- After evaluating the people of God in the temple, **Jesus paused and went back to Bethany before returning the next day to render judgment** (Daniel 5:27).

A HOUSE OF PRAYER (MARK 11:12-19) FALSE ADVERTISEMENT

Verses 15-19, dealing with the temple, are sandwiched between verses about a fig tree. Though they seem unrelated, both passages show **Jesus' response to something being other than what it claims**.

- Leaves on the fig tree indicated that the tree would produce figs in season, but **Jesus knew that it would never produce fruit**.

PROFESSION WITHOUT REALITY

Jesus cursed the tree, and this is the only recorded destructive miracle He performed. **The tree was not cursed for not having fruit, but because it professed to have fruit but did not.**

- **God is displeased when His people appear to have fruit but are all leaves and no fruit**. God is not impressed with those who "talk the talk" but do not "walk the walk."

MISTREATED THE POOR AND OUTCAST

Jesus **overturned the money changers' tables and the chairs of those selling doves**.

- Paying temple tax and purchasing sacrifices were commonplace, but these traders worked with the temple priest to **force the poor into paying inflated prices to offer sacrifices**. Plus, all of this **took place in the outer courts**, which was the only place a Gentile could worship and pray.

USING THE CHURCH FOR PERSONAL GAIN

Jesus would not permit anyone to carry goods through the temple.

- The temple covered most of the eastern side of the city and was a barrier for those who wanted quick passage through the city. By not allowing people to carry goods through the temple, **Jesus was correcting those who regarded the temple as a convenient passage or a means of profit**.

"HE WAS TEACHING THEM"

Jesus quotes Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11 when telling the chief priest and scribes, **"My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations... But you have made it a den of thieves!"**

- The rest of the quoted passage in Jeremiah contained prophecies of God's destruction of Solomon's temple, and by their reaction, **the hearers obviously understood what was implied**.

LOOKING FOR WAYS TO SILENCE JESUS

Jesus spoke directly to the scribes and chief priests about them believing they were one thing when they were something entirely different, and in response, they **"started looking for a way to kill him."**

- **When Jesus speaks to our flaws and shortcomings, will we respond with repentance or seek to silence Him?**

FRUIT (MARK 11:20-25) RETURNING TO THE CURSED FIG TREE

Jesus had just quoted scripture that warned about coming judgment, and in returning to the fig tree, it is noted that the tree withered from the roots up. This miracle alludes to the **coming of complete and swift judgment**.

- It would not be long before **the second temple would be completely destroyed in 70 A.D.** by the Roman army, led by commander Titus.

WE HAVE GOT TO HAVE FAITH

In response to Peter's reaction, Jesus begins to tell His disciples about **prayer and faith** to encourage them that **these things give them access, not the temple**.

- This is reminiscent of Habakkuk's words when he learned the first temple would be destroyed by Babylonians. Though distraught, he says, **"The righteous...will live by...faith"** (Habakkuk 2:4).

"HAVE FAITH IN GOD"

- Jesus uses hyperbole here in talking about faith that moves mountains.
- Jesus was not instructing His followers to try to move literal mountains. Instead, He wants us to truly believe that **our prayers can overcome great difficulties**. We must have faith when we pray, but **it is placing our faith in God that moves mountains**.

"THEREFORE I TELL YOU..." (V. 24)

Jesus often taught on prayer, so what is recorded here is not exhaustive. We are to pray in **God's will, and we know God's will is for us to forgive as we have been forgiven**.

- Jesus mentions this after talking about faith that can move "mountains" because a hardened or unforgiving heart may be the biggest "mountain" that needs to be moved.

THE MISSING VERSE

Some translations like the KJV and NKJV include **"But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses"** (v. 26).

- Mark 11:26 is "missing" from modern translations because **the earliest and most reliable Greek manuscripts of Mark do not contain v. 26**. It was most likely added to match up with Matthew 6:15.

HE PREPARES THE WAY

- God is not distant or a passive observer in our lives. He is active. He guides us and provides for us even if the path ahead is unknown to us.
- We can find peace and confidence along the path by trusting that God has already been there.
- Our paths are not random. God knows what is ahead and will provide what we need.

DEN OF THIEVES OR HOUSE OF PRAYER

- The church is not a hiding place for the unjust but a place of refuge and healing for all nations.
- Let us not hide behind false securities of rituals and traditions. Are we trying to blend in, thinking we are something other than what we truly are?
- Instead, let us be a people who come out of hiding and bring everything into the glorious light of Christ through full confession and repentance.

BEARING FRUIT

- In the same way that a figless tree could not satisfy the physical hunger of Jesus, if we are all leaves and no fruit, we will be ineffective in meeting the spiritual hunger of the people in our community.
- Let us all honestly evaluate ourselves and ask, **"If Jesus were to lift up the leaves of our lives, would He find fruit?"**