

Lesson 18: Mark 1

Chapter 10 was filled with stories that are quite familiar to us. While the Pharisees continue to “test” Jesus in order to find fault with him, Jesus welcomes children and encourages His disciples to do likewise. Jesus has a strong stance against divorce. He warns those who listen, that it is difficult for the wealthy to enter the Kingdom of God, but “with God all things are possible.” Jesus again tells His disciples that he will be delivered over to the high priests and he will be condemned, killed by the Gentiles and after three days He will rise again. James and John ask to be able to sit at His right and left side when He comes into power. As they reach the city of Jerico, on their way to Jerusalem, a blind man calls him “Jesus, Son of David.” The blind man seems to have more “vision” than most. Jesus restores the man’s sight declaring that faith had made him well. This chapter begins with Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem. One third of Mark’s Gospel focuses on the Passion. This is the beginning.

1. Read Mark 11:1-11 and footnotes. Share any helpful footnotes.

a. Now read Zachariah 9:9- Exult greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout for joy, O daughter Jerusalem!

Behold: **your king is coming to you, a just savior is he, Humble, and riding on a donkey, on a colt**, the foal of a donkey.

Reflection: What does Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem teach us about His view of kingship?

b. Reflection: How do you think Jesus knew about the colt/donkey and why did he choose to ride such an animal?

c. Check footnotes (or google) for the meaning of “Hosanna”.

d. Read Psalm 118:22-29 and Luke 19:38-40 below. Read again Mark 11:8-10. Why would the words of the people in Jerusalem anger the Pharisees and scribes?

Psalm 118:22-29 The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;²³ the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. ²⁴The LORD has done it this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad. ²⁵LORD, save us! LORD, grant us success! ²⁶Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you. ²⁷The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine on us. With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar. ²⁸You are my God, and I will praise you; you are my God, and I will exalt you.²⁹ Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

Luke 19:38-40 “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” ³⁹Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus,

“Teacher, rebuke your disciples!” ⁴⁰“I tell you, he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

2. Read Mark 11:12-14, Hosea 9:10 and Micah 7:1-3 here: Hosea 9:10 Like grapes in the desert, I found Israel; **Like the first fruits of the fig tree, its first to ripen, I looked on your ancestors.** But when they came to Baal-peor and consecrated themselves to the Shameful One, they became as abhorrent as the thing they loved.

Micah 7:1-2 Woe is me! I am like the one who gathers summer fruit, when the vines have been gleaned; There is no cluster to eat, **no early fig** that I crave. ²**The faithful have vanished from the earth**, no mortal is just! They all lie in wait to shed blood, each one ensnares the other.³ Their hands succeed at evil; the prince makes demands, The judge is bought for a price, the powerful speak as they please.

2a. The fig tree is a symbol for what? (See Hosea and Micah above)

2b. What was the condition of the tree in Mark 11:13?

2c. If fruit is a symbol of spiritual salvation, or fruits of the spirit, what does the condition of the tree suggest?

2d. What is Jesus trying to teach his disciples here?

3. Read Mark 11:15-19 and footnotes. Share any helpful footnotes with your group. The Cleansing of the Temple is recorded in all four of the Gospels. It is sandwiched between two sides of the fig tree story in Mark's Gospel.

3a. What message is Jesus trying to relay with his actions in Mark 11:15-19?

3b. Reflection: Your body is a temple for your soul. How can *you* keep the "thieves" away?

3c. Reflection: What is it about Jesus' actions that would cause the Temple authorities to become furious? (There are both *spiritual* reasons and *practical* reasons. Check footnotes for help.)

4. Read Mark 11:20-26 and footnotes.

a. Jesus' judgment of the "fig tree" had visible consequences. What happened to the tree?

b. What does Jesus say about the power of faith in these verses?

c. How is 11:25 a hopeful message for Israel?

5. Read Mark 11:27-33 and footnotes.

a. Jesus returned to the Temple area. Who approaches Jesus in 11:27-28.

b. What specifically do you think they are inquiring about in 11:28?

c. Why does Jesus answer their question with a question?

d. What do verses 11:30-32 reveal about the group questioning Jesus?

e. What can we learn from Jesus about discussing controversy with those with hardened hearts?