

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
10-16-24

Mark 11

Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King – Verses 1-6

¹ As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, ² saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³ If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.’” ⁴ They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, ⁵ some people standing there asked, “What are you doing, untying that colt?” ⁶ They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go.

11:1-6 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 Zechariah 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.

Praise For Jesus – Verses 7-11

⁷ When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. ⁸ Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. ⁹ Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, “Hosanna!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” ¹⁰ “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!” “Hosanna in the highest heaven!” ¹¹ Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

11:7-10 The people exclaimed, “Hosanna!” (meaning “Save!”) because they recognized that Jesus was fulfilling the prophecy in Zechariah 9: 9 (see also Psalms 24:7-10; 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.

11:10-11 Like those who witnessed Jesus’ victory parade into Jerusalem, we have expectations for what we think God should do to make life better, safer, and more enjoyable. Like excited spectators, we can’t wait to see suffering stopped, injustice corrected, and prosperity begun. Like the people on the road to Jerusalem that day, we have much to learn about Jesus’ death and resurrection. We must not let our personal desires catch us up in the celebration and shouting lest we miss the meaning of true discipleship. In our excitement and celebration, we must remember that following Christ involves hardships. It may include suffering, even death.

Jesus Curses A Fig Tree And Clears The Temple Courts – Verses 12-14

¹² The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. ¹³ Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. ¹⁴ Then he said to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard him say it.

11:12-14 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.

11:13-14 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 when the leaves were beginning to bud. The figs normally grow as the leaves fill out, but this tree, though full of leaves, had no figs. 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.

The Temple Cleansed – Verses 15-19

¹⁵ On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, ¹⁶ and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. ¹⁷ And as he taught them, he said, “Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers. ¹⁸ The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching. ¹⁹ When evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city.

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.

11:15-19 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, making it all but impossible for non-Jews to spend any time in worship (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.

Return To The Cursed Fig Tree – Verses 20-24

²⁰ In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. ²¹ Peter remembered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!” ²² “Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. ²³ “Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will

happen, it will be done for them. ²⁴ Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

11:20-23 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 illustration to show that God can do the impossible. 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, prayed, "Everything is possible for you. . . . Yet not what I will, but what you will" (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 can express our desires, but we should want his will above ours. Check yourself to see if your prayers focus on your interests or God's.

Prayer And Forgiveness – Verses 25-26

²⁵ "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. ²⁶ But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

11:25-26 Forgiving others is tough work—so much so that many people would rather do something totally distasteful than offer forgiveness to someone who has wronged them. For a person to pray while bearing a grudge, however, is like a tree sprouting leaves and bearing no fruit (11:13). True faith changes the heart. Real prayer dismantles pride and vengeance, filling the holes with love. Real faith seeks peace. For our churches to have prayer power, there must be harmony and forgiveness evident in the body of believers. Let go of hurts, abandon grudges, and forgive others.

The Authority Of Jesus Questioned – Verses 27-28

²⁷ They arrived again in Jerusalem, and while Jesus was walking in the temple courts, the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders came to him. ²⁸ "By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you authority to do this?" ²⁹ Jesus replied, "I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ³⁰ John's baptism—was it from heaven, or of human origin? Tell me!" ³¹ They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?'" ³² But if we say, 'Of human origin' ..." (They feared the people, for everyone held that John really was a prophet.) ³³ So they answered Jesus, "We don't know." Jesus said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

11:27-33 The religious leaders were in a quandary. They had wanted to trap Jesus with a question that would show him to be either a blasphemer or a weird fanatic. Instead, Jesus had countered their question with a question about John the Baptist. Now they would have to try to save face. They had not stood up for John or tried to get him released— John had irritated them just as Jesus was doing (see Matthew 3:7-10). Always cloaked in self-interest, these religious leaders were only concerned about position and reputation; they weren't looking for the truth. In John 3: 19, Jesus summed up this attitude: "People loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil." People who reject Jesus' claims have a greater problem than intellectual doubt; they are rebelling against Christ's control of their lives. They try to ask tricky questions, but don't really want an answer. Sincere seekers, however, will find the truth (Matthew 7: 7-8).