
a *Grace Notes* course

The Gospel of Mark

an expositional Bible study

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Lesson 11

Mark 11:1-33

Grace Notes

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The Gospel of Mark

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Instructions for Completing the Lessons

There are sixteen (16) lessons in the MARK course curriculum, one lesson for each chapter.. There will be questions in the Quiz for each lesson on the topics that are named here.

Begin each study session with prayer. It is the Holy Spirit who makes spiritual things discernable to Christians, so it is essential to be in fellowship with the Lord during Bible study.

Instructions

Read the introduction to the study of Mark.

Study the Mark chapter for this lesson, by reading the verses and studying the notes. Be sure to read any other Bible passages that are called out in the notes.

Before taking the Quiz, **Review** all of the notes in the Mark lesson.

Go to the Quiz page and follow the instructions to complete all the questions on the quiz. The quiz is "open book". You may refer to all the notes and to the Bible when you take the test. But you should not get help from another person.

When you have completed the Quiz, be sure to SAVE your file. If your quiz file is lost, and that can happen at Grace Notes as well, you will want to be able to reproduce your work.

To send the Quiz back to Grace Notes, follow the instructions on the Quiz page.

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Chapter 11

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said: *Only he who believes will be obedient.*

Man will not be obedient as a result of nothing. He must believe, have faith and trust in the one he is obeying. In our passage this morning we are going to see an example of obedience, that was a result of faith.

Karl Barth: *The Easter message tells us that our enemies, sin, the curse, and death, are beaten. Ultimately they can no longer start mischief. They still behave as though the game were not decided, the battle not fought; we must still reckon with them, but fundamentally we must cease to fear them any more.*

How can that be true? It can only be true in your life by faith -

Each of the four Gospels record the Triumphant Entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem. Each one includes information that is unique to the purpose of that Gospel.

The Gospel of Mark records the event in subtle terms. It includes the basic information without some of the spectacular aspects found in the other Gospels.

Mark's purpose is to show his readers that the Lord presented himself as the Messiah to Israel, that this fulfilled the Messianic prophecies, and that while he was received that day, within four days the same crowd that hailed him as their king would shout out *Crucify Him* -

We see contrasts regarding the passion of Christ. His consistency and man's inconsistency. His obedience and man's disobedience. His faithfulness and man's unfaithfulness.

Mark 11:1-3

We see the Lord drawing near to Jerusalem and giving instructions to His disciples:

And as they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples, and said to them, Go into the village opposite you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here. And if anyone

says to you, Why are you doing this? you say, The Lord has need of it; and immediately he will send it back here.

Both Bethany and Bethphage are east of Jerusalem and accessed by going over the northern slope of the Mt. of Olives. Bethany was the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus and became the resting place of Jesus each night prior to the night of his arrest. Bethphage is close to Jerusalem and would have been considered a suburb of the Holy City.

The village to which he sends his two disciples would have been Bethphage.

Now he gives them some very specific instructions:

1. As soon as you enter the village
2. You will find a colt, of a donkey, on which no man has ridden
3. Untie it and bring it here
4. If anyone questions what you are doing tell them the Lord needs it and he will send it back

These specifics can be accounted for in either of two ways. First, we can assume that the Lord was given information by God in a miraculous manner that told Him where this colt was to be found. Or, we could also consider that the owner of the colt and the home where it could be found was with the Lord and gave him use of the animal.

We have no way of knowing for sure, but we do know that the disciples unhesitatingly, followed the instructions.

Mark 11:4-7

The obedience of the two disciples:

And they went away and found a colt tied at the door outside in the street; and they untied it. And some of the bystanders were saying to them, What are you doing, untying the colt? And they spoke to them just as Jesus had told them, and they gave them permission. And they brought the colt to Jesus and put their garments on it; and He sat upon it.

In these verses we see four things regarding faith and obedience:

1. The execution of obedience

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2. The opposition to obedience
3. The vindication of obedience
4. The fulfillment of obedience

Execution of obedience

The disciples did not question the instructions of their Lord. They immediately did what he told them to do, although what he told them to do was rather odd.

I think it is interesting that these disciples so quickly followed the Lord's instructions. Considering the religious thinking of the day, the instructions were contrary to what most people would have believed to be the way the Messiah would enter Jerusalem.

Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

The Rabbis had a real problem with this verse. They saw the single advent of the Messiah as an advent of triumph and victory. How would it be that the King would enter Jerusalem in such a lowly manner?

Eventually the Rabbis reconciled this by stating in the Babylonian Talmud that: *If Israel was worthy the Messiah would come on the clouds of heaven, if they were not worthy, lowly and riding upon an ass.*

Israel had rejected the Word, the Prophets, and now the Son of God. Israel was not worthy, and the Messiah would enter Jerusalem in a humble and lowly fashion, fulfilling the Rabbis' testimony of their unworthiness.

The disciples, contrary to what seemed logical, obeyed:

The two disciples executed the instructions, being obedient by faith.

Their faith was not in the logic of what was said or the current religious thinking, but in a person they trusted fully, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The human tendency of the sin nature would be to argue, to seek a reason, to question. They did not; they just did what the Lord told them to do.

Their motive for their obedience was the person of Christ. Not some plan or some base gain. They did what they did by faith in the Lord.

On the Lord's part, he gave them specific instructions; he gave them His Word. They had the influence of divine truth in their lives.

In the same way, Christians today are called upon by the Lord through His word to do that which may be contrary to our logic, our ideas, our rationale our plans. We must be obedient, by faith, to a person, not a plan or idea, trusting our Lord Jesus Christ.

So the disciples went to Bethphage and just as the Lord promised, found a young donkey tied outside a house. Now as they were executing obedience they received opposition

And some of the bystanders were saying to them, What are you doing, untying the colt?

These bystanders merely questioned the actions of the disciples.

We will find that as we execute obedience to the Lord there will be those who not only question, but ~~criticize~~criticize, and even condemn our actions of obedience.

Our Lord has not promised us a life without opposition. As you get serious about following the Lord you can bet there will be detractors who will oppose you.

On the following day as the Lord goes into the Temple, every religious group present takes their shot at Him, but he stands firm on the Word.

Following the Day of Pentecost the apostles were opposed at every turn. But they concluded in Acts 5:29 *But Peter and the apostles answered and said, We must obey God rather than men.*

We need to examine how the disciples responded to this opposition to their obedience.

And they spoke to them just as Jesus had told them, and they gave them permission.

Principle: They did not get involved in some lengthy discussion as to why they were doing what they were doing. They told them what the Lord said.

1. Your only defence for following the Lord is the

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Word of God.

2. Those who oppose you will not listen to logic or reason or any explanation. You may try as you will to convince them, but you will be casting pearls before swine.

3. If you give the Word as your defence either one of two things will happen. The Word will convict and convince the ones opposing you - or it will not.

4. Speaking to Titus Paul emphasized the principle of standing firm on the Word:

Titus 1:9 Holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with doctrine, that he (the communicator) may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

5. We too often try to vindicate our faith and obedience by arguments of Human viewpoint. Maybe we will convince someone that what we believe and do is right, but if we do so by human viewpoint and not the Word, so what?

We may have won the argument, but we did so by that which was apart from the Lord.

6. These disciples' faith was **VINDICATED** by the Word of the Lord. They told the bystanders exactly what Jesus had said:

And following shows us the **FULFILLMENT OF THEIR OBEDIENCE:**

And they brought the colt to Jesus and put their garments on it; and He sat upon it.

Now remember that this colt had never been ridden before. That fits with what we are seeing in this passage.

Principle: Better to be a jackass and be obedient, than to be a superior creature, man, and be disobedient.

This also fulfilled the law regarding an animal that was dedicated for a sacred purpose. It was not to have been used in any common way prior to its use by the priests. This animal had a most important task, to bring the king into the city.

Mark 11:8-10

Describes the triumphal entry of Jesus, King of kings and Lord of lords, into the Holy City,

Jerusalem.

And many spread their garments in the road, and others spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields. And those who went before, and those who followed after, were crying out, Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the highest!

Now the custom for a pilgrim coming to Jerusalem to worship during the time of the Passover was to enter the city with great joy but also in a humble fashion.

Even if you had ridden your mule to the city you would dismount and walk through the gates. Yet here we see Jesus, who had walked to the city, find a colt and ride through the gates.

This is the king entering the city, his city, that was the place of his temple. While this was not the customary way to come into Jerusalem to worship, He was not there to worship. He was there to claim the victory of the Cross.

1. Many spread garments
2. Other spread branches, not necessarily palms
3. They cried out four things:

a. Hosanna: *God save us.*

b. *Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord:* A customary greeting in ancient Israel

c. *Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David:* Here is where we see their anticipation of Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. They hoped that Jesus was the promised king, but they would be disappointed, not because he was not the king, but because he was not the king according to their ideas. He was not there to defeat Rome, but Sin and Satan at the Cross.

d. *Hosanna in the highest:* Orientation to the fact that salvation had to come from God.

The people showed tremendous enthusiasm, but this enthusiasm is without the confidence of knowing Christ as savior and king.

Mark 11:11

Once in the city Jesus goes to inspect the Temple,

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His Temple where from the time of Moses and the tabernacle to the time of Jeremiah His very glory was present in the Holy of Holies.

This was like visiting one's home but here after centuries of absence:

And He entered Jerusalem and came into the temple; and after looking all around, He departed for Bethany with the twelve, since it was already late.

What He saw was something that would require dramatic action. He saw the money changers, the thieves, the ones who cheated the people. They would be dealt with on the next day.

Jesus and His disciples made the journey back to Bethany as they would each night until he was betrayed.

In 1930, the Communist leader Bukharin journeyed from Moscow to Kiev. His mission was to address a huge assembly. His subject, atheism. For a solid hour he aimed his heavy artillery at Christianity, hurling argument and ridicule. At last he was finished and viewed what seemed to be the smoldering ashes of men's faith. *Are there any questions?* Bukharin demanded. A solitary man arose and asked permission to speak. He mounted the platform and moved close to the Communist. The audience was breathlessly silent as the man surveyed them first to the right, then to the left. At last he shouted the ancient Orthodox greeting, *CHRIST IS RISEN!* The vast assembly arose as one man and the response came crashing like the sound of an avalanche, *HE IS RISEN INDEED!*

A famous symphony conductor was once asked what instrument he felt was the most difficult to play. After thinking a while he said second violinist (second fiddle). He added that there were many first violinists around but to find someone who really enjoyed being second fiddle was rare, and yet without a second fiddle there would be no harmony.

In the Christian life we have an abundance of first fiddles, but we also need the service of the second fiddles to produce harmony.

On the morning following the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, the Lord and his disciples,

having spent the night in Bethany, are returning to the city.

The Lord is going to use a very insignificant incident to teach his disciples what is about to occur to Israel because of their lack of faith and productivity.

Mark 11:12

And on the next day, when they had departed from Bethany, He became hungry.

The walk from Bethany to the Temple mount was a distance of about two miles. Bethany was on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. As Jesus and his disciples came over the northern saddle of the hill they came first to Bethphage. The name Bethphage means house or place of early figs.

Mark 11:13

And seeing at a distance a fig tree in leaf, He went to see if perhaps He would find anything on it; and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs.

The Lord is going to teach his disciples a Bible class and use as an illustration the very common fig tree.

You can find a Bible class in almost anything you see. Nature itself reveals the existence of God and throughout the Bible we see natural illustrations used to teach divine principles.

Here the fig tree is going to teach the barrenness and lack of productivity of Israel.

The Lord saw the fig tree, it was in full leaf. However, the last statement in the verse tells us it was not the season for figs.

The fig tree bears fruit twice a year. There is a small early crop that come in late April or May. This incident was just before that first crop. The full crop comes in the fall in October about the time of the feast of Tabernacles.

Jesus, of course, knew that it was not time for the early crop but he is going to use this to illustrate a point.

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Mark 11:14

And He answered and said to it, May no one ever eat fruit from you again! And His disciples were listening.

There are two Greek words translated SAY:

- 1) LALEW which puts emphasis on a process
- 2) LEGW, used here, puts emphasis on content

So what is said is of importance in its content not in the process that will result

He spoke directly to the tree: *May no one ever eat fruit from you again.*

Putting this together, the wish or desire that no one will eat of this tree looks to a coming age, an age the disciples did not yet know of, the Church Age.

So what we actually have is an imprecatory prayer by Jesus regarding a fig tree.

But more so we have an illustration of the Lord's rejection of Israel who has and will reject him. They have been unfruitful and barren and now will wither.

Before we see what happens on the next day, let's read Luke 13:6-9

And He began telling this parable: A certain man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it, and did not find any. And he said to the vineyard-keeper, Behold, for three years (Length of Christ's public ministry) I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground? And he answered and said to him, Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.

Do you notice something unusual about that parable? It doesn't have an ending. What happened next year? Did it bear figs or not, was it cut down, or not?

The end of the parable is not a parable, but a miracle that is going to occur on the way to Jerusalem.

So let's go back to Mark 11:20.

Mark 11:20-21 Both the parable and the events of the preceding morning:

And as they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up. And being reminded, Peter said to Him, Rabbi, behold, the fig tree which You cursed has withered.

You would think that after being with the Lord for three years that nothing would surprise the disciples, but this did.

This was a time of the year that the fig tree should have been blooming more and more every day. But now it has, in one day, completely withered.

The verb WITHERED is a perfect, passive, part and looks at the fact that the tree had been caused to die.

FROM THE ROOTS UP is a statement that attests to the miracle that has occurred. This tree did not wither because of some blight that infested its leaves but from the very root.

Just like Israel, whom the tree illustrates, was sick in its rejection of the Lord from its roots.

Sin, disobedience, and rejection of God comes from the inside, from the roots of the soul.

Peter sees the withering of the tree as a miracle:

John Laidlaw says: This incident stands alone among the miracles as the only one that is not of a beneficial or merciful character.

It is a harsh miracle but it will remind the disciples of the harsh rejection that Jesus is soon to face.

Mark 11:22-25 The Lord explains what has happened:

Now here is where two levels of fulfillment of events and two levels of explanation often exist.

1. Jesus explains what has happened, not what it means
2. It will be a couple of days later that Jesus, in the upper room discourse (John 13-16) will explain the Church Age and the disciple that will come to Israel.
3. That disciple is illustrated by the withered fig tree. The disciples do not know about the coming Church Age at this time.

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4. Jesus uses this situation to explain what happened next, not what it means.

This was an answer to the prayer Jesus prayed that no man would eat of this one tree in the coming age.

When we come to these passages we will examine the power of prayer but notw we want to see the principle of prophecy. To do that we have to learn a little bit about fig trees.

The doctrine of the fig tree: Any horticulturist should like this:

1. The fig tree was used in the Old Testament for a sign of prosperity blessing and also for judgment on Israel:

Zechariah 3:10 In that day, declares the Lord of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and under his fig tree.

Jeremiah 8:13 I will surely snatch them away, declares the Lord; There will be no grapes on the vine, And no figs on the fig tree, And the leaf shall wither; And what I have given them shall pass away.

2. The fig tree had two seasons for giving fruit. One in late spring and the second full season in the fall (around the time of the Feast of the Tabernacles).

3. The Lord's earthly ministry illustrated the first season of the figs, the early season. But Israel was found lacking faith as the fig tree lacked fruit.

Hosea 9:10 I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your forefathers as the earliest fruit on the fig tree in its first season. But they came to Baal-peor and devoted themselves to shame, And they became as detestable -

The Lord had every right to expect acceptance and obedience from Israel, but instead there was rejection.

4. In the near east figs grow both wild and in orchards. The wild fig tree that is not pruned and cared for grows low to the ground, uncontrollable, very wild. The fig trees that are cared for grow very tall, very uniform and give off much more fruit than their wild cousins.

In the same way the Lord cares for his people.

Rejecting that care, they become wild, low to the ground, uncontrolled, and lack the full fruit of the believers who allow the Lord to care for them and prune them.

5. The fig tree was also one of the fruit trees that were planted at the edge of the field and people who had need could come and pick figs. The fig tree also provides shade under which travelers would often find rest.

In the same way, the people of God are there, at the edge of the field of the world to offer nourishment and shade to others. If we are the Lord's fig trees, we are to minister to others.

6. One interesting thing about figs is that the actual flower is found inside the hollow of the fruit and is not seen unless it is cut open.

In the same way the Lord must cut us open so that the flower of faith can be seen by a lost and dying world. We experience the pruning and cutting open under pressure, so others can see the flower of the soul.

7. Between the spring harvest and the fall harvest, the figs were fertilized by packing dung around the base of the tree. When this was done there was a dormancy that occurred that would ensure an even more abundant crop in the fall.

Looking at this dispensationally, the Jewish religious calendar is silent from the spring to the fall. This silence and lack of feasts foresaw the insertion of the Church Age. During this time the fig tree was packed with dung. This represents God's discipline, the fifth cycle of discipline on Israel during the CHURCH AGE

today Israel is packed with the dung of discipline, but in the fall, the tribulation, the fruit of believing Israel will be abundant.

It is during this time, between the harvest of the figs, that we as Christians, believers in Christ in the Church Age, can be the fig trees that produce and give the fruit of faith to the World.

Two applications can be drawn from this event:

1. The fig trees and their fruit belong to the one who owns the orchard. The Lord Jesus Christ is the owner of the orchard and he can expect

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production. Whatever production we have belongs to Him.

He, as the Lord of the orchard, will provide everything we need to produce the fruit of faith.

He will care for us, prune us, and cut us open so that we can take the doctrine we are learning and thinking and apply it to our relationship with God, to self, and to others. The fruit of our production belongs to Him.

2. When there is no fruit, no application of the Word, no production, the Lord of the orchard has every right to remove the barren tree.

He did this with that actual tree outside of Jerusalem in our story.

He is doing that right now with Israel under the fifth cycle of divine discipline.

But he will also do it with us. He has a right to expect production and if there is no fruit there, he will remove us, taking the ministry he has in store for us, with all its blessings and giving it to another.

Principle: Do not be withered with no fruit, and have your ministry given to another.

The attitude of worship is not found in this text but in context. Worship is not an isolated experience or service but a manner of life. Worship is appreciating and adoring God who has done everything for you.

On this second day of the final week of Christ's ministry before the Cross we see Jesus exercising what we might call today tough love.

We saw last week how he cursed the fig tree that represented unfaithful and unproductive Israel.

Now, as He enters the city of Jerusalem and comes to the Temple, we see what is perhaps the most violent act of his ministry, the cleansing of the Temple.

There are actually two occasions on which Jesus drove the moneychangers out of the Temple. One was early in His ministry and is recorded in John 2:14-17, and the second cleansing of the Temple recorded here in Mark 11.

Mark 11:15

And they came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to cast out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who were selling doves.

The event takes place in the Temple grounds in what is called the outer court or the Court of the Gentiles.

Here was the only place on the Temple mount that Jews and Gentiles could mingle. This was also the place reserved for Gentiles who wished to come to the Temple to pray and worship. But it was no longer a place of prayer and worship, it had become a commercial center for the High Priests to line their pockets with profit.

This market, in the court of the Gentiles and under the control of the High Priest Caiaphas, was rather new in origin and was the result of a political struggle between the High Priest and the Sanhedrin or Jewish council.

Prior to A.D. 30, about three years before this time, there were four markets located on the western slope of the Mount of Olives where pilgrims and worshippers could purchase animals for sacrifice, exchange money into the approved Temple shekel, and buy other items approved for worship.

Part of this exchange was legitimate and followed Old Testament law and teaching:

1. The Temple tithe, tax, and offering could only be given in the approved coin. At this time it was the Tyrian shekel which was the closest available equivalent to the Old Hebrew shekel.

Exodus 30:13, This is what everyone who is numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), half a shekel as a contribution to the Lord.

2. Also the markets provided a place to purchase doves for the offerings by the poor, the women, and for the offering made to testify to the cleansing of leprosy.

Leviticus 12:8, But if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, the one for a burnt offering

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and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean.

So the markets provided an inexpensive place to purchase doves for the sacrifices

3. Also, the markets would exchange an animal, a lamb, or a bullock, that was not fit for the sacrifice for one that was. This was like trading in a used car.

Exodus 12:5 Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats.

4. The four markets were governed by the Sanhedrin and while they did operate for profit, the profit margin was limited.

The profit went to the Sanhedrin and soon the Priests sought a way they could tap into some of this market.

When Caiaphas became the High Priest he enacted a number of reforms. Soon he decided to go into competition with the Sanhedrin and open up his own markets on the Temple grounds.

So while the motive was profit for the priests, the purpose a political move to exclude the Sanhedrin from making any profit off the pilgrims who came to worship at the Temple.

Now the priests were in a position of political strength.

1. The priests were the ones who controlled the Temple mount area and they had an ideal location to set up their market, right in the court of the Gentiles.

2. Also, the priests determined if the coin for the Temple Tax was acceptable. If they decided a coin was too worn, they could reject it and require the coin to be exchanged, for a slight fee, with another coin.

3. The priests also decided if the animal for the offering was acceptable, and even if the dove met the required standards. If they were not, and they usually were not, they required you to trade for an approved animal or dove.

4. The power of the priests would effectively shut down the four markets on the mount of Olives

controlled by the Sanhedrin. So this was politics and profit.

5. But what was even worse was that this market was set up in the court of the Gentiles and thus eliminated the possibility of any Gentile coming to the Temple to worship God.

It is into the midst of this political, profit, and power struggle that the Lord Jesus Christ comes and take decisive action that restores something the priests had forgotten about - worship.

Mark 11:15,16

And He entered the temple and began to cast out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who were selling doves; and He would not permit anyone to carry goods through the temple.

Jesus did three things:

1. Threw the merchants out of the court
2. Overturned the tables of the money changers and sellers of doves
3. Prevented anyone from using the Court of the Gentiles as a shortcut from one part of the city to another

One writer has well said that Jesus' spirited protest brought together not only Old Testament prohibitions but also religious requirements of the day.

Zechariah 14:21 And there will no longer be a tradesman in the house of the Lord of hosts in that day.

Also the Babylonian Talmud states that no one was allowed to enter the Temple Mount with a staff, sandals, or his purse and it specifically denied the use of the court of the Gentiles as a short-cut.

What Jesus was doing was completely in line with the Scriptures and even the Talmud. And He, whether the priests recognized Him or not, was the Lord of this House.

Mark 11:17

Rarely does the Lord do anything without teaching a principle from his actions:

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And He began to teach and say to them, Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? But you have made it a robbers' den.

The Lord teaches from two Old Testament passages, both found in the major prophets:

Isaiah 56:7 Even those I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples.

Jeremiah 7:11 Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your sight? Behold, I, even I, have seen it, declares the Lord.

I think it very interesting that the Lord gives this as a reason for doing what he did. It was because the priests had eliminated a place for the Gentiles to come and worship at the Temple.

NATIONS is ETHNOS where we get ETHNIC and refers to Gentiles.

It states that he was teaching DIDASKW, which is the most formal type of teaching, appropriate for the Temple. It indicates that the message was prepared and had a purpose.

The purpose was to re-open the Temple to anyone, Jew or Gentile, who wished to come and worship God.

Then, as a second line of reason, the Lord quotes from Jeremiah and indicates that the priests have turned His House into a den of robbers.

This was probably true: Some sources indicate that the priests and the merchants were in league with a band of thugs who would rob those who were coming to Jerusalem to worship. They would take their lambs and bulls for the sacrifice and resell them to the people at the Temple market.

The primary problem was that by entering into this illegal trade, the Priests prevented people from worshipping God. That is worse than anything else they could do.

Principles:

We see some problems with what the priests did in establishing the Temple markets:

1. Disregarded the Word of God: The Old Testament prohibited such activities at the Temple but the priests did not care.
2. A lust for power and money: These lusts became more important to the priests than their purpose of worship.
3. An inordinate competition: They were competing for power and profit with the Sanhedrin.
4. An insensitivity to others: They excluded an entire group of people from worship and did not so much as bat an eye.
5. An increasing Greed: In the three years the market had operated, the priests sought more and more wealth and power.
6. An attitude of superiority formed in arrogance: The priests decided the Gentiles were inferior and expendable and did not deserve a place to worship.

We have to consider our actions today and ask if we too exclude others from what we have with the Lord? We may do so out of some greed for power, profit, or some political maneuvering?

The priests of Jesus' day pre-judged the Gentiles, found them to not measure up to their human standard, and then denied them a part of the Temple worship.

Problems we face today:

1. We pre-judge others: We base our judgment on their looks, background, sometimes even the color of their skin. In our arrogance we judge at first sight, know everything about a person. So often we are wrong.
2. We judge according to our standards, rather than seeing others as God sees them. We see others through our own weakness and strengths, which are both part of the Sin Nature.
3. We dismiss people: We even come up with opinions that we have no use for some other person, and who ever gave us the idea that we are to use.

Mark Lesson 11

Everything the priests were doing and so many things believers do today denies the unconditional love we are to have for others, the same unconditional love God has for them.

Mark 11:18,19

This verse shows us that the actions of tough love that Jesus displayed when he drove the money changers out of the Temple, did not wake up the religious leaders but added to their callousness.

And the chief priests and the scribes heard this, and began seeking how to destroy Him; for they were afraid of Him, for all the multitude was astonished at His teaching.

When evening came, they would go out of the city.

Instead of responding positively and taking the rebuke, the chief priests and scribes reacted negatively and plotted to destroy the Lord Jesus Christ.

We see FOUR things in this passage:

1. They heard Him: They had correct information and that information required a choice to be made. They now knew, from the Scriptures, they were wrong. They could have confessed their sins and moved on. But they did not. Instead they became more callous.

Principle: The more you reject doctrine the more callous you will become.

2. They began to plot how they might destroy Him: They wanted him dead. He had disrupted their little profit making scheme, and they concluded that the way to deal with this was to kill him.

Principle: He gave them the message of God, quoting chapter and verse. But they rejected the message and wanted to kill the messenger.

3. They were afraid of Him: The truth of God will either bring comfort or fear depending upon which side of the truth you are on. They were on the wrong side and they were afraid.

We see that they were also afraid of the people. Remember, these men were a political group, so the popular opinion of the masses affected them, but only to the point of changing their tactics.

4. But the people (the crowd) were astonished at his doctrine:

The word used is EK-PLES-SW and means to be struck with amazement but it does not indicate any change of mind or heart. Only to be amazed. The people listened, were amazed, but did not learn the truth that was taught.

So even the people were merely reacting to doctrine taught and soon would move on to some other form of amusement with no change or challenge.

Conclusion:

Whether scribes or priests or people, the message of truth did not get through. The people present that day walked away amazed but that is not the purpose of the Word.

The Word of God is given to set you free, to change you life, to bring abundance and purpose.

Today as then, Christians are amazed, astonished, but it means nothing

Vance Havner has said: We carry checks on the bank of heaven and never cash them at the window of prayer - we lie to God when we pray rather than rely upon him after we pray.

We are going to see the Lord Jesus Christ instruct his disciples regarding prayer. We are going to see the challenge of relying upon God, by faith, in prayer.

We now come to the third day of the final week of Jesus' ministry preceding His sacrifice on the Cross.

We have studied the Triumphal Entry and the Cleansing of the Temple. We have also examined the cursing of the fig tree.

The opening verses of this paragraph beginning at verse 20 have already been studied and we noted:

1. The fig tree represented unproductive and unfaithful Israel

2. The fig tree will wither and be set aside in the CHURCH AGE and the Church will serve Christ

3. The Lord cursed the tree and the next day, in our passage, the disciples see that it has withered.

Mark Lesson 11

When asked about this, Jesus explained what happened but not why it happened.

The disciples barely understood that Jesus was going to have to suffer and die. They had no concept of the coming CHURCH AGE Jesus would teach them of this age but not until the night of the Lord's Supper (John 13-16).

Now, as Jesus and His disciples are walking to Jerusalem, He tells them what happened when he cursed the fig tree on the previous morning.

What happened was a miracle: An answer to prayer.

Mark 11:20,21

And as they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up. And being reminded, Peter said to Him, Rabbi, behold, the fig tree which You cursed has withered.

Jesus knows that very soon he will teach the disciples about the withering of Israel and the beginning of the Church. He sets aside the prophetic meaning of the fig tree and uses the surprise of Peter to teach about faith and prayer.

There is a PRINCIPLE in this: Even the truth, apart from its proper foundation, can be a distraction.

1. If Jesus had launched into a lesson on prophecy, the formation of the church and the discipline that is to come upon Israel, the disciples would have been distracted from the more important events of the Cross.
2. Proverbs 29:11 refers to the fact that only a fool, or one under pressure, lets his whole mind be known.
3. Jesus would not try to explain prophecy while walking to Jerusalem, but he would begin to lay a foundation.
4. The foundation for understanding the things of God will always include faith.
5. So he will explain the basics of faith and prayer and later that week talk about prophecy.
6. In application we must recognize that we are to at all times give truth to others, but first we must

lay a foundation of faith and trust in God and His Word.

Mark 11:22

And Jesus answered saying to them, Have faith in God.

Here we very clearly see the transitive nature of faith. The Lord does not just say have faith, but have your faith in the one who counts: God, the one who can do everything and anything, God, the one who is all powerful, God.

Faith is the foundation of prayer and is essential to prayer preparation:

Principles:

1. Prayer is not a formula or technique by which we get God to do what we want.
2. The Name it and Claim it Crowd looks at prayer as a technique that puts God into a box, controlled by the believer following some set procedure.
3. This is not prayer based on faith in God. Faith in God presumes that God is in control, His plan is perfect, and His timing is perfect.
4. Faith is preceded by an understanding of the Word of God:
Romans 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.
5. Faith in God relies upon His will as being more important than our will.
6. Therefore: Any prayer of faith will be based upon knowing the Word and the Will of God.
7. Any prayer based upon the Word and the Will of God, mixed with our faith in Him and His Word will be answered.

John 15:7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.

Whatever is asked is asked according to the principle of Faith in God, His Word and His Will.

Mark 11:23

Faith forms the foundation in prayer, and now that the principle of faith in God is stated, we

Mark Lesson 11

move to the second phase of prayer: The prayer itself:

Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, Be taken up and cast into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it shall be granted him.

When Jesus said this he was in the northern saddle of the Mt. of Olives.

There will be a time, in God's perfect timing when that mountain will split and be moved and Jerusalem will become a sea port.

Zechariah 14:4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.

Now what about other mountain?

Isaiah 42:15 I will lay waste the mountains and hills, And wither all their vegetation; I will make the rivers into coastlands, And dry up the ponds.

So there is coming a time when God will move the mountains of earth. Do you believe it? Do you have faith in God and His plan and His perfect timing.

These verses all look to the second Advent when Jesus will return to judge the earth, move mountains, and establish His millennial reign for 1000 years.

Principles:

1. Prayer must be preceded by faith in the one to whom you are praying, God.
2. In prayer you request that God does something according to His will and His word.
3. The content of prayer must be the content of the Word of God.

I John 5:14-15 And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever

we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

4. When we pray a prayer by means of faith in God, according to His Word and Will, he says YES. And then by faith we wait upon Him and His perfect timing.

The latter part of verse 23 picks up prayer pursuit. To pray believing and without doubt, even after the prayer is prayed:

- and does not doubt in his heart -

The warning in verse 23 is that there be no doubt. To doubt that God will do what he has promised to do, is to fail at stage one, no faith in God.

- but believes that what he says is going to happen, it shall be granted him.

NOTICE: Believes it is going to happen.

Happens: A futuristic pres, middle voice, ind. mood

Shall be: A future, mid, indicative.

Both middle voices look at benefit in the plan of God and His perfect timing

The present tense of happens looks at the believers attitude of faith, and his faith in the perfect timing of God.

The future looks at the assured reality of the outcome of the prayer that is by faith in God and according to His Word

Principle: The Word and Will of God are more real than the immediate situation of that mountain not moving an inch.

Whereas FAITH prior to the prayer is a noun, an attitude that comes from knowing God's Word, BELIEVE is a verb, a mental action that continues after the prayer is prayed.

Example: You pray with faith in God that you will have his highest and best, his happiness, his abundant abounding life. Then you believe and move on in the routine of the Christ Centered Life. When the timing is just right, the reality is yours.

Mark 11:24

Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you.

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1. "Prayer" is the process: faith in God, praying to God, in the name of the Son, in the power of the Spirit
2. "Ask" is the Attitude: Making a request of someone in a superior position. Knowing the superiority of God and the inability of man. This looks at the attitude of humility.
3. "Believe" looks beyond the prayer to the mental action that initiates the routine function of the Christian life.
4. "Receive" looks at the reality: A greater reality of things not seen yet part but which are part of God's plan.
5. "Granted" looks at God's perfect timing: A future tense with the pronoun you in the dative of advantage. The advantage is having God grant to you what he wants you to have according to his perfect timing. His timing brings the advantage.

Mark 11:25

The Lord deals with what could be a prayer blocker or even a doctrine blocker. It is something that will inhibit the routine function of the Christ Centered Life.

And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions.

If we will remember the context, we will see why the Lord chose to deal with this one doctrine blocker.

He cursed the fig tree, that represented unfaithful Israel. They were to be disciplined and wither in the church age Israel had rejected Christ and would arrest Christ and manipulate the Romans to put Christ to death.

But Christ forgave them. As he stood there on the side of the Mt. of Olives, looking over Jerusalem, knowing he was to die, he forgave them of their sin.

Principles:

1. Forgiveness of others is part of unconditional love.

2. Forgiving others relieves your mental attitude. of vindictiveness, bitterness, and revenge.
 3. Forgiveness and unconditional love are the position of strength that you maintain as a believer.
 4. Forgiveness and unconditional love do not interrupt the outcome of the volitional decisions of others you forgive and love.
- REMEMBER: You cannot change anyone except yourself
5. Forgiveness and unconditional love allows you to continue in the plan of God doing what is the very best you can do for others.
 6. Jesus cursed the fig tree, it withered as would Israel, but he went to the Cross and died for their sins. And even while undergoing the pain of the Cross:

Luke 23:34 But Jesus was saying, Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.

7. When you are rejected, wronged, or hurt, you must maintain a position of strength that comes from forgiveness and unconditional love. That is the best thing you can do for someone else.

This is judicial forgiveness based upon the work of the Cross. We are forgiven and we are to forgive others.

When we do not forgive others, we harbor an attitude of arrogance towards others. We move out of fellowship through the sin of not forgiving.

Out of fellowship we are in a position of weakness and lack the spiritual strength to confess or receive forgiveness from God.

In order for God to forgive you, you confess your sins and regain the position of strength.

Principle: Don't let the sin of an unforgiving attitude rob you from the reality of the Christ Centered Life.

Dwight Eisenhower said: The older I get the more wisdom I find in the ancient rule of taking first things first--a process which often reduces the most complex human problem to a manageable proportion.

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Speaking of priorities, Pascal said: The last thing one knows is what to put first.

In this portion of our study of the life of Christ we are going to see the Lord refuse to change his priorities under pressure of attack by the Jewish council.

Mark 11:27

And they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, and scribes, and elders came to Him.

Jesus and his disciples had spent the night in Bethany and now, on the third day following the Triumphal Entry, they return to the Temple that he had cleansed the day before.

That night, while Jesus was out of the city the religious leaders met to conspire as to how they could get rid of Jesus.

Their first plan of attack was to trap Him in a heretical statement.

From Mark 11:27 to Mark 12:34 we have a record of the inquisition of Jesus Christ. We have three waves of attack on Christ and one Question in this section

We are going to examine the first attack:

Three key words:

CAME is a verb in the Middle voice, He came to this inquisition to his own benefit, even when it would lead to the Cross, it was beneficial for Him for through this He would provide salvation to mankind.

AGAIN, is the word PALIN, which refers to a repetition of an act that was designed to lead to a predesigned conclusion. Like hammering a nail. Here the conclusion was the Cross.

COME, as with the council coming to Christ, is also a middle voice. They came expecting to be benefited from their attacks upon Christ.

So we have a conflict expressed even by the Greek grammar. Christ came to the Temple as a benefit in God's plan. The council came expecting to be benefited by their attacks - who would win? Of course the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Chief Priests, Scribes, and Elders - Represents the council of the Sanhedrin that sat in authority over Israel in religious matters.

Mark 11:28

In their simple thinking they thought they could catch Jesus in some error that could be interpreted as heresy and thus put him to death.

This is so typical of the simplistic thinking of natural man. What they perceived as a profound question can be answered by most children in prep school.

Their question, and remember this was the Jewish supreme court, was very blunt:

By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do these things?

The THESE THINGS looks back to the previous day and the cleansing of the Temple.

Jesus is asked about his authority.

AT ISSUE IS AUTHORITY:

When we deal with any question of authority we are really dealing with that which is fundamental to all human behavior. Refine any issue down to its essentials and what is left is the question of authority.

Authority can either be:

YOURSELF - the principle of anarchy as you are a law unto yourself.

MAN - the principle of humanism with all its weaknesses

GOD - the absolute principle that the Creator God is sovereign over all.

In cleansing the Temple, Jesus did not act out of his own authority although as God he certainly could have, but he acted out of the authority of God as recorded in the Old Testament

He even quoted the text of Isaiah 56:7 to them reminding them that the Temple was to be a house of prayer for all nations.

His authority had been stated the previous day: The Scriptures - over which the Sanhedrin were pledged to be the custodians, and yet they had rejected the Word of God.

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Principle: They were not willing to accept the divine authority of God's Word on the day before, and they were not about to accept any explanation of authority on this day.

They were men in authority not oriented to authority.

Even presidents and kings, despots and dictators are under the authority of God.

Romans 13:1-7 tells us that even the rulers who do not believe they are under divine authority are under the strong hand of God.

For an authority to reject authority puts him in a position of weakness rather than strength.

Good authority will always be humble, submissive, and obedient to the authority over them.

Jesus Christ, God's Son, the God-man, was at all times under the authority of the Father.

The Sanhedrin saw themselves as the ultimate authority even rejecting the authority of the Word of God over them.

Thus, their question on authority is absurd and borders on heresy.

Mark 11:29

We see the way Jesus replies, He is calm and in control. He asks them a question:

And Jesus said to them, I will ask you one question, and you answer Me, and then I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

ANSWER is imperative mood, he commands them to answer

Mark 11:30

Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men? Answer Me.

NOTICE: Jesus asks about the baptism, not the man nor the ministry, but the baptism.

John's baptism had been a new thing in Israel with no precedent in the Old Testament. The Jews had Temple washings but not baptism like John's.

Jesus cleared away the non-essentials. They could not backtrack on this or play any opinion games. He put them in a dilemma.

He asks them by what authority did this new thing occur?

Man's authority or God's? All authority resides in either man or God - under whose authority are we?

Principle: In any given instance in life we are either trying to please men or please God. When we try to please men we are placing ourselves under their authority. When we please God we are placing ourselves under a higher authority.

Mark 11:31,32

John's martyrdom had made him a hero of the people. Thus these religious types were in a bind.

And they began reasoning among themselves, saying, If we say, From heaven, He will say, Then why did you not believe him? But shall we say, From men?-- they were afraid of the multitude, for all considered John to have been a prophet indeed.

Their fear of the people prevented them from giving their opinion regarding John. They did not like John because he refused to be under their pseudo-authority. John was under the authority of the State and under the authority of God, but rejected this little band of little people who tried to set themselves up as an authority.

The people respected John and the council feared the people.

That is interesting. The Sanhedrin, who saw themselves as the ultimate authority, were really a bunch of cowards fearing the ones over whom they attempted to rule.

They were more concerned with Public Relations than Truth. They wanted to protect themselves rather than raise the ire of public opinion.

If they had given an answer, even the wrong answer, the correction would have been given by the Lord. The people would have been upset, even angry at them. They would have been soundly criticized and in that criticism they may have been forced to re-evaluate their erroneous position.

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Mark 11:33

Instead, the wisest men in all Israel conferred and came up with no answer.

And answering Jesus, they said, We do not know.

They professed ignorance like a child caught in the act.

“Who did this?” “I don't know, not me!”

Jesus said their ignorance then required him to give them no answer.

And Jesus said to them, Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

Principle: God never has to prove that he is God, and Jesus never gave His energy to proving he was the Son of God.

His priority was service, completing the task for which he had been sent by the Father to earth.

His mission was not to prove his mission, but to complete it.

PRINCIPLE FOR US: You do not cast the pearls of truth before swine of unbelief.

Matthew 7:6 Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine,

lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

In the context of Matthew 7 the Lord was speaking to the religious hypocrites who denied his ministry and mission.

Their denial did nothing to prevent Him from completing his ministry and His mission.

When He went to the Cross he died for their sins, their sin of denial of Him.

The best thing he could do for them was not prove to them who he was, or by what authority he did what he did, but to just do it.

In the same way, we who are called by His name, too often think we have to prove or vindicate ourselves. We do not, that is not what we are called to do.

The greatest thing you can do for others, even for those who reject you and hate you, is to complete your mission, your destiny in the plan of God.

If we are to be conformed to the image of Christ our Savior, we will not waste time in proving ourselves, we will do as Christ did. Complete the mission.

Mark Lesson 11 Quiz

Instructions

The following questions relate to your study of this lesson.

To answer a question, type your response in the space provided after the word "Answer:". A question may be True/False, multiple choice, fill in the blank, or short answer type.

The last question requires you to write one or two paragraphs in "essay" form. Use the space provided; it will expand to accommodate your response.

You have choices about sending the quiz back to Grace Notes.

- If you received an email file containing the quiz, you can use the REPLY feature of your e-mail application to open the quiz. Enter your answers in the reply message. Then SEND the message to Grace Notes.
- You can enter your answers on these pages, then send the whole file back to Grace Notes as a file attachment. This is handy, but these lessons will average 100K to 200K in size. As an alternative,
- After you answer the questions here, copy and paste the whole list of questions into a new MS Word document; then, send the new file to Grace Notes as an attachment. The new file will, of course, be much smaller than this main file.
- Finally, you can print the Quiz pages on your printer and send your response back to Grace Notes in the regular mail. If you do this, send the mail to:

Grace Notes

% Warren Doud

1705 Aggie Lane

Austin, Texas 78757 USA

Whichever transmission method you use, when Grace Notes receives your completed Quiz, the next lesson will be sent to you, by the same means you received this one. EXCEPT: when you have sent in the FINAL QUIZ, we will send your certificate to you, by regular mail.

Mark Lesson 11

Questions on Mark Lesson 11

1. What is the purpose of the Gospel of Mark, as stated in this lesson?

Answer:

2. What were the disciples to find in the village (Bethphage) near the Mount of Olives?

Answer:

3. From Jerusalem, what direction would someone have walked to reach the towns of Bethany and Bethphage? [A. North; B. South; C. East; D. West]

Answer:

4. In what scripture is the prophecy concerning Jesus' riding into Jerusalem on a donkey?

Answer:

5. It was quite logical, according to the religious thinking of that day, to think that Jesus' would want to ride on a donkey? [True/False]

Answer:

6. What are the reasons given in Titus, that a preacher is to hold fast the faithful word?

Answer:

7. Where was the first place Jesus' went when he had entered Jerusalem?

Answer:

8. Jesus dealt with the moneychangers as soon as He arrived at the Temple. [True/False]

Answer:

9. What is missing from orchestra music if there is no second violin?

Answer:

10. Jesus and the disciples made a meal of figs when they were in the region of Bethany.

[True/False]

Answer:

11. What was the Old Testament law regarding what kind of money could be used for an offering in the Temple?

Answer:

12. Poor people were allowed to bring offerings of animals that were less expensive than those used by wealthier people. [True/False]

Answer:

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13. As long as a person brought the proper animal for sacrifice, it did not matter what condition the animal was in. [True/False]

14. When the disciples pointed out to Jesus that the fig tree had withered, what was His response?

Answer:

15. What was the challenging question Jesus asked the religious leaders, in response to their questioning His authority?

Answer:

End of Quiz