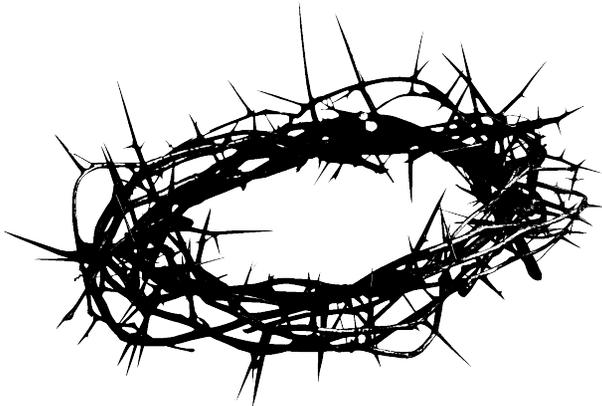


Read through the Bible



Mark
Week 5



Monday, March Thirtieth

Did you know that it's been almost a month since we've had rain in the Tampa Bay area?! For decades now, meteorologists have been predicting weather patterns with a fairly decent degree of accuracy. Some patterns are easier to predict (a period of sunshine) while others are a little more difficult (the path of a hurricane). Nonetheless, they still do their best to predict what we can expect on a day-to-day basis. In today's passage, Jesus accurately predicts what will happen to Him in Jerusalem.

Read: Mark 10:32-45

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- What did Jesus predict would happen? (see verses 33-34)
- What did James and John request? How did Jesus respond? (see verses 35-40)

What did Jesus mean when He said, "Can you drink the cup I drink?" (v. 38) In this particular instance, Jesus wasn't referring to a literal drink like water or wine. Instead, He was telling them that He was about to endure the divine cup of wrath in order to save people from their sin (consider what He said right before this in 10:33-34). James and John were so eager to sit next to Jesus in glory that they claimed they could also drink of the same cup, even though they really didn't understand what He meant. Jesus' response – "You will drink the cup I drink" – foreshadows the reality that James and John (and the other disciples) would also suffer for His name.

- How did Jesus describe what it means to be 'great,' and who did He use as an example? (see verses 42-45)

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Jesus tells us that in order to be 'great' in His kingdom, we must be ready to become a servant and slave of others (see verses 43-44). How does this notion support or challenge the way(s) you approach serving others in the community?

Tuesday, March Thirty-First

How do you know that a movie is great if you've never seen it before? Chances are, those around you told you it was great, and you believed them. In today's passage, a man believes in Jesus without ever seeing Him.

Read: Mark 10:46-52

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- How did Bartimaeus respond when he heard that Jesus was nearby? (see verses 46-47)

Notice that Bartimaeus didn't immediately ask for his sight. He more generally wanted Jesus to have mercy on him.

- How did Bartimaeus respond to the crowd's attempt to silence him? (see verse 48)
- How did Bartimaeus' response in verse 48 indicate that he knew who Jesus was?

Is it true that seeing is believing? Bartimaeus had never seen Jesus before, and yet, he had heard enough about Him to believe that He was the Messiah from the line of David that the Jewish people had been waiting for. Bartimaeus' response is a great contrast to many of the religious leaders that Jesus interacted with. They had seen Jesus do miraculous things and still did not believe, while Bartimaeus literally hadn't seen anything and yet believed wholeheartedly. Jesus' response in verse 52 drives this point home: "Your faith has healed you."

- What did Bartimaeus do after he received his sight? (see verse 52)

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

In today's passage, Bartimaeus would not let others deter him from reaching out to Jesus. Think about your current practice of prayer. What situations deter you from regularly reaching out to Jesus? Consider work, family, home, and other obligations.

Wednesday, April First

In the Disney movie *Aladdin*, the song *Prince Ali* describes the triumphal entry of a local prince into the city of Agrabah. The opening lyrics to the song really capture the grandeur of Aladdin's arrival: "Make way for Prince Ali! Say hey! It's Prince Ali Hey! Clear the way in the old Bazaar. Hey you! Let us through! It's a bright new star! Oh come! Be the first on your block to meet his eye! Make way! Here he comes! Ring bells! Bang the drums! Are you gonna love this guy!" In today's passage, Jesus makes His triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

Read: Mark 11:1-11

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

You probably realized that today is not Palm Sunday. So...why are we reading this passage today? The short answer is that Mark spends one-third of his entire account (chapters 11-16) on the events that we observe and celebrate during Holy Week. Thus, we can't necessarily slow down to match the dates, as there is a lot to cover in these next few chapters. Buckle up!

- Read Zechariah 9:9. How does this verse provide a richer understanding of what Jesus had instructed His disciples to do in verses 2-3?

Matthew was more concerned with connecting prophecies to Jesus' actions than Mark (remember, Matthew was writing to a Jewish audience, while Mark was writing to a largely Gentile audience). As a result, Mark's account rarely gives us a glimpse into why Jesus was doing what He was doing.

- What did Jesus do at the temple? (see verse 11)

Remember this verse for tomorrow's reading, as Jesus will be coming back to the temple to make some major changes.

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Take some time today to sing a hymn or Christian song that focuses on praising our great and gracious King!

Thursday, April Second

When word of possible quarantines and shutdowns spread throughout the country in early March, some people began buying up items in an attempt to resell them at a significantly higher price. For example, two brothers in Tennessee bought 17,700 bottles of hand sanitizer in the hopes of profiting off of people in need. In today's passage, Jesus calls out a group of price gougers.

Read: Mark 11:12-19

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- What did Jesus do to the fig tree with no fruit? (see verses 13-14)

The fig tree had the leaves, but not the fruit. Throughout His ministry, Jesus cautioned His disciples against those who appeared to be 'good' but did not bear fruit.

- Who did Jesus drive out of the temple? (see verses 15-16)

Many people traveling to Jerusalem had to travel long distances to get there. This meant that when they came to the temple to offer sacrifices, they had to often buy from the merchants because it wasn't practical to bring doves and cattle on their long journey to the holy city. The merchants knew this, which is why they would price-gouge the people and profit off their desperation. When Jesus arrived on the scene, though, He could not stand to see His Father's house turned into a "den of robbers" (v. 17). In kicking these deceiving salespeople out of the temple, Jesus made it clear that the temple was not to be used for personal gain.

- How did the chief priests and teachers of the law respond to Jesus' words? (see verse 18)

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

The day before, Jesus went to the temple and saw what the problem was. He then came back the next day and addressed it. Think of a current problem that you are facing. What steps might you take to address it? Spend some time in prayer.

Friday, April Third

Sometimes, when the FBI or local police raid an office or home, the person residing there questions their ability to be there. "Hey, what are you doing?! Get out of my house! You have no right to be here! By whose authority are you here?" Typically, the law enforcement officers will show the agitated person a warrant signed by a judge as proof that they can indeed search the premises. In today's passage, the chief priests and teachers of the law question the authority of Jesus.

Read: Mark 11:20-33

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- According to Jesus, what should our intent be when we turn to Him in prayer? (see verses 23-24)
- According to Jesus, what must be done in order for God to forgive our sins? (see verse 25)
- What did the chief priests and teachers of the law want Jesus to tell them? How did He respond? (see verses 27-33)

In yesterday's reading, Jesus drove the price gougers out of the temple. After hearing about this, the chief priests and teachers of the law came to Him and wanted to know who had given Him the authority to do this. While Jesus' response may initially appear like He was dodging their question, He was actually challenging them to consider whether they were actually seeking truth or simply looking to trap Him. Specifically, if they believed that John the Baptist was from the Lord, then they would also believe what John had said when he proclaimed that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. Because the chief priests and teachers of the law could not agree to this, Jesus determined that He would not answer their question.

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Jesus says that when we pray, we should also forgive those who have wronged us (v. 25). During your prayer time today, take some time to forgive those who have recently wronged you.

Saturday, April Fourth

Have you ever played the game *Jenga*? In this interactive and nerve-wracking game, players stack blocks in rows of three on top of each other to form a tower. Then, they have to remove blocks one by one without knocking over the tower. While there are many strategies to playing this game, the one thing you never want to do is remove all three of the blocks on the very bottom of the tower. If you do that, you'll definitely lose the game! In today's passage, Jesus describes why He is the essential piece in God's kingdom.

Read: Mark 12:1-17

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- In the parable, how did the farmers treat the servants who had come to collect fruit from them? (see verses 2-5)
- How did the farmers treat the son of the vineyard owner? (see verses 5-8)
- How did the vineyard owner respond? (see verse 9)
- How did Jesus underscore this parable? (see verses 10-11)

In the construction world, the capstone (or cornerstone) is traditionally the stone by which the entire structure is built upon. Without it, the building cannot stand. By quoting Psalm 118:22-23, Jesus made it clear that He was the cornerstone that the chief priests and teachers of the law had rejected. Verse 9 indicates that they would regret their rejection of Him!

- How did Jesus answer the question of whether or not people should pay taxes? (see verses 15-17)

The deadline to file taxes may have been extended, but Jesus reminds us that we should still pay our taxes!

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

In addition to paying our taxes, Jesus also reminds us that we should give to God what is God's. What might this look like for you in this current season of your life?

Sunday, April Fifth

Throughout our lifetimes, we sometimes find ourselves wondering about heaven. What will it be like? Will we recognize people? What will we be doing? Will we have a sense of time? What will we feel? Will our cats and dogs be there? While God has not revealed to us the specific answers to many of these questions, He has given us a solid understanding through His Word of what we can expect (and not expect). In today's passage, a group of Sadducees ask Jesus a specific question of what the resurrection will be like.

Read: Mark 12:18-34

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

- How did Jesus respond to the Sadducees' question of marriage at the resurrection? (see verses 24-27)

The Sadducees were focused on understanding what worldly matters like marriage would look like in eternity. But Jesus is quick to shut them down: our identity won't be found in things like who we are married to; it will be found in who we are to God. As His children of the resurrection, that will be the primary identity that matters (v. 25). In this sense, while we will assuredly be reunited with all of our brothers and sisters in Christ (including our earthly Christian spouses and family members), our concern will not be over things like whose spouse belongs to who.

- According to Jesus, what are the two greatest commandments? (see verses 28-31)

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Write the two greatest commandments someplace where you will see them every day. As you prepare to journey through Holy Week, spend some time each day reading over these two commandments and consider how you might put them into practice.

Questions? Comments? Contact Pastor Chris at chris.futch@oursaviorfl.org or (727) 344-2684.