

23S11 Mark 11:15-33 (Part 26) Jesus Cleanses the Temple

Hello everyone. Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. I hope everyone is doing well. Today we are continuing our study of the gospel according to Mark with Mark 11:15-33 (Part 26) Jesus Cleanses the Temple

Before we start, we need to understand a little about this amazing book in the bible. Most historians believe Mark was the first written account of Jesus' life, ministry, death and resurrection. The identity of Mark is not known for sure, but most believe this is John Mark. John Mark is spoken of by Luke in Acts as the cousin of Barnabas, John Mark is mentioned in many other books on the New Testament. Many believe he spent time traveling with Peter, so it is thought that much of Mark's gospel is actually from the perspective of Peter. We also believe that John Mark knew Jesus. There are accounts that Jesus stayed at Mark's mother's home, there are also some unique story details in Mark that are not in either Matthew's or Luke's accounts. We will try to highlight some of these as we go through the stories in Mark.

I'm reading from the New American Standard version (NAS) today.

Let's read Mark 11:15-33 (NAS) *¹⁵Then they came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple area and began to drive out those who were selling and buying on the temple grounds, and He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves; ¹⁶and He would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple grounds. ¹⁷And He began to teach and say to them, "Is it not written: 'MY HOUSE WILL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL THE NATIONS'? But you have made it a DEN OF ROBBERS." ¹⁸And the chief priests and the scribes heard this, and they began seeking how to put Him to death; for they were afraid of Him, because all the crowd was astonished at His teaching. ¹⁹And whenever evening came, they would leave the city. ²⁰As they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up. ²¹And being reminded, Peter said to Him, "Rabbi, look, the fig tree that You cursed has withered." ²²And Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. ²³Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted to him. ²⁴Therefore, I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted to you. ²⁵And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you for your offenses. ²⁶But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your offenses." ²⁷And they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple area, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him, ²⁸and began saying to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things, or who gave You this authority to do these things?" ²⁹But 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. ³⁰Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men? Answer Me." ³¹And they began considering the implications among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Then why did you not believe him?' ³²But should we say, 'From men?'"—they were afraid of the people, for they all considered*

John to have been a real prophet. ³³Answering Jesus, they said, “We do not know.” And Jesus said to them, “Neither am I telling you by what authority I do these things.”

Let's pray. **Dear heavenly father, guide our discussion today such that your message is clear to each of us. As we read your words from Mark, help us see what Mark wants his readers to understand and why. I pray that you help me stay out of the way so your hope and peace can be shared with us. I pray this in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.**

Now, let's take a closer look at these verses, Mark 11:15-16 (NAS) *¹⁵Then they came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple area and began to drive out those who were selling and buying on the temple grounds, and He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves; ¹⁶and He would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple grounds.*

Remember, the day before was Palm Sunday and the triumphant entrance into the city. Jesus went to the temple, looked around and left. Now the next day, he's back and cleaning the house literally. But it is more than just a cleansing of the house, Jesus is effectively stopping the sacrificial system by driving out the money changers and those selling animals. This is a major disruption.

Next, Mark 11:17 (NAS) *¹⁷And He began to teach and say to them, “Is it not written: ‘MY HOUSE WILL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL THE NATIONS’? But you have made it a DEN OF ROBBERS.”*

Jesus makes a big scene, disrupts the daily temple activities, and then starts to teach. I think Jesus has everyone's attention don't you think. Jesus has made a big accusation and I'm sure most people understand what he means.

Next, Mark 11:18-19 (NAS) *¹⁸And the chief priests and the scribes heard this, and they began seeking how to put Him to death; for they were afraid of Him, because all the crowd was astonished at His teaching. ¹⁹And whenever evening came, they would leave the city.*

Who do you think you are Jesus? Can you imagine what they were saying and the tone and pompousness in their voices? We are in charge, not you.

Next Mark 11:20-21 (NAS) *²⁰As they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up. ²¹And being reminded, Peter said to Him, “Rabbi, look, the fig tree that You cursed has withered.”*

So, after the big scene in the temple, Jesus and the disciples are on their way back from the mount of olives to the temple. Remember the fig tree from last session. Now it's time for Jesus to use that as his example or metaphor. The tree was fine the day before, but now it looks dead. I mean dead for days dead.

Next Mark 11:22-24 (NAS) ²²*And Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. ²³Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted to him. ²⁴Therefore, I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted to you.*

This is a shift in focus. The disciples see the fig tree withered but Jesus is using this to demonstrate the power of faith. You see this tree, it's nothing. With faith anything is possible with God. When we pray, pray with faith with no doubt.

Next Mark 11:25-26 (NAS) ²⁵*And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you for your offenses. ²⁶But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your offenses."*

In order to have the kind of faith Jesus is talking about, you have to be right with God and forgiving toward people. Forgiving does not mean you allow people to take advantage of you over and over. We must do what is right in the sight of God. We forgive those you hurt us and leave the rest up to God. We all fail and hurt others with malice or intent. We all need forgiveness, so we must also forgive others. If you don't forgive, then neither will you be forgiven. Ouch.

Next Mark 11:27-28 (NAS) ²⁷*And they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple area, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him, ²⁸and began saying to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things, or who gave You this authority to do these things?"*

Okay, here it comes. Jesus made a big scene yesterday and the Jewish leaders have had enough. They are confronting Jesus. Now what?

Next Mark 11:29-30 (NAS) ²⁹*But 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. ³⁰Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men? Answer Me."*

Jesus is turning the tables on them; he is the one asking the questions. You want to know my authority, then answer my question. Jesus is in charge.

Next Mark 11:31-33 (NAS) ³¹*And they began considering the implications among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Then why did you not believe him?' ³²But should we say, 'From men?'"—they were afraid of the people, for they all considered John to have been a real prophet. ³³Answering Jesus, they said, "We do not know." And Jesus said to them, "Neither am I telling you by what authority I do these things."*

Did they believe in John, it's doubtful. But they are scared of the crowd. John was popular, Jesus is popular. They say they don't know. These are the leaders who tell

people what to think and they don't know. Can you see they are forced to show they have no real authority? And Jesus tells them he does not need to answer their questions. We know he's already told the crowds whose authority he does things, but Jesus will not let the Jewish leaders dictate when or how he speaks.

Let's review.

- 1) Fig Tree? Jesus uses this tree to get the attention of his disciples. But Jesus redirects the conversation to the power of faith and the necessity of forgiveness. You can do many amazing things with faith but only if you are right with God. Only if you are forgiving others, so you also can be forgiven.
- 2) Cleaning House. Jesus has done this before. But he is disrupting the temple business, he is disrupting sacrifices. He is claiming to have the ultimate authority.
- 3) Authority So what about authority? The Jewish leaders think they are in charge, but they don't know. They should know. They are the ones who tell everyone what to believe. But confronted by Jesus, they don't know. Now in this simple act Jesus shows he actually has authority.

Let's Pray. Heavenly Father thank you for Bible. Help us to read and meditate on your words so we can hear the message you have for us. Help us to remember who you are Lord. You are our king, king of kings. You are our Lord, Lord over everyone. We can trust you, Lord. Help us to ask you for wisdom when we don't understand. I pray this in your Name Lord Jesus. Amen

Let me leave you with this today. I think we need to not miss Jesus's lesson for us on faith and forgiveness. Faith and forgiveness are connected. If we don't forgive others, how can we expect to be forgiven? If we are not forgiven, then we are not right with God. You can not have faith in God if you are not right with God. Without forgiveness, there can be no true faith in God.

What does this mean for you? We must forgive others. No matter what they do or did. We must forgive. This does not mean allowing someone to hurt you repeatedly. This means forgiving them, because you know they need it and you need it. Don't let unforgiveness affect your life. God knows best.

Thank you for joining me for our study of the gospel of Mark. Please email me comments or feedback. And if you liked the message, please share the link with your friends. Until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.