



Bible Study  
2014-2015

## *Heart of a Servant*

### The Gospel of Mark

LESSON 11

Years ago I sat at a small oak table in the midst of a confined kitchen filled with aromas very unfamiliar to me. Though it was difficult to understand much of what was said through Romanian words and broken English, I understood enough of the story to share in the family's tears and feel their struggles as they recounted their move to America. The mother and father had left their home in Bucharest, their careers, all of their family, friends and the familiar, in hopes to provide their only child with an opportunity to become a professional tennis player. Instead, they learned the competition was too steep, the training too expensive, and now they were beyond poor, hopeless, and homesick.

Pictures were pulled out as the mother wept over her dearly missed sister. Letters and cards that had been given to them as they left Romania were spread out on the table; handled so frequently they almost looked antique. The family now had regrets and remorse and were looking for anyone that could possibly help get them back home. They groaned in their lack of preparation, not realizing what they were in for by coming to the States.

Impending separation, whether by death or by distance, causes many people to get their priorities in order before their expected departure. Relationships are evaluated with meaningful "last words" spoken with those who are most important. The trivial and superficial things in life tend to drop off and that which has the most precious value takes the forefront. Doctors and pastors alike will often use the phrase, "Go home and get your house in order" to convey this same principle.

In Mark 11, we have the great privilege of listening to Jesus' last words, during His last week, and watching Him get "His Father's house in order." Unlike the Romanian family, Jesus' actions, His words and His relationships were all carried out with perfection and have much to teach us about our own priorities. Jesus knew His time on earth was nearly over, so let us listen and watch Him with a sensitivity to His urgency in conveying what was important.

*"The bitterest tears shed over graves are for words left unsaid and deeds left undone."*

*~ Harriett Beecher Stowe*

#### **Read Mark 11:1-11**

As our chapter begins, we read about Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (Matthew 21:1-11, Luke 19:29-40, John 12:12-19) heralding Him as the Messiah, the Promised One. It would be of particular interest to the Roman onlooker who would be accustomed to the parade given to victorious generals whose army had killed at least 5,000 enemy soldiers, conquered new territory, captured important prisoners and was bringing home treasures. The general would ride in a gold, elaborate chariot, surrounded by his military officers with priests offering incense to their gods.

1. Look up both 1 Timothy 6:15 and Revelation 19:16.

- a. What do both verses say about Who Jesus is and what He is called?
- b. In your own words, describe the **contrast** of our King's triumphal entry (what He rode on, who attended, and so on).

2. Look up Matthew's account in chapter 21, and read verses 15-16.

- a. Who were the two sets of people angry and critical about the praise that was coming from the children to Jesus? From past lessons, what do you remember about them?

b. What was Jesus' response to their criticism?

c. Turn to Luke 19:39-40. Who else was in the crowd and what did they tell Jesus He should do?

d. What was Jesus' response to their criticism?

- e. From both of these accounts, we see that there were different groups of “religious” or seemingly spiritual people that criticized and tried to hinder both children and disciples from worshipping the Lord. It is not a spiritual position in ministry (like the chief priest or a senior pastor), or the knowledge of God’s word (like the scribe) that will give the ability to see, understand or worship the Lord. It is to those that are humble, childlike and a true disciple that Jesus grants the ability to see Him in life and understand His work in their midst. Jesus said in Matthew 5:8, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Though the children and the disciples were verbally condemned, they were the ones Jesus accepted and rose up to defend.

Stop for a few minutes and ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart and ways as David did in Psalm 139:23-24. Ask Him to show you if you have been critical of others in their worship or service to Jesus. Ask Him to reveal to you any attitudes towards others that may be hindering you from seeing when Jesus is actually in your midst or in the circumstances you are criticizing. Write down anything you want to bring before the Lord here.

*“It seems to me, as time goes on, that the only thing that is worth seeking for is to know and to be known by Christ -- a privilege open alone to the childlike, who, with receptivity, guilelessness, and humility, move Godward.”*  
~ Charles H. Brent

3. Psalm 118:25-26 is being cried out by these nameless people, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” Hosanna means “Save now, we pray.” Though they shouted His praises for coming that day, those praises also sealed the warrant for His arrest and execution within the week.

- a. Have you ever felt like you were being “sent” somewhere or to someone for the Lord? This can include anything from a work environment, family gathering, special event, or even a one-on-one conversation with someone. The key is that you were going “in the name of the Lord,” as His representative and for His purposes. Recount the circumstances briefly.
  
- b. Luke 18:29-30 (and Mark 10:29-30) can be appropriately applied to what Jesus modeled for us. These verses are a powerful promise to not only the missionary, but any one of us who are being called of the Lord to **leave behind** precious people, places, or possessions for the kingdom of God, His name or the gospel’s sake. Jim Elliott, martyred missionary to the Auca Indians, said this, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” What encouragement from the Lord do you hear in this verse and the inspired words of our martyred brother?

#### **Read Mark 11:12-14, 20-24**

4. The area of Bethphage and Bethany was well-known for fig production. By nature, a fig tree initially produces premature fruit that grows and once it begins to ripen, leaves will grow to cover and protect the tender fruit that is ready for harvest. Though it was early in the season for figs, Jesus saw the leaves as an outward promise that could meet His inward hunger.
  - a. Throughout the Bible the fig tree is a symbol of the nation of Israel (Hosea 9:10, 16 and Nahum 3:12). Practically apply this principle to the picture given to us in Mark 11:12-13. What is Jesus saying about Israel?
    - b. Jesus was giving a warning to His people. And so it is with us, that there cannot be just an outward attendance to church, spiritual events, hanging out with Christian friends or even being involved in a Bible study or serving in a ministry position. These are all “outward leaves” that either reveal or conceal what lies beneath.



b. In John 8:31, Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.” Turn to Luke 8:15 and use this verse to explain practically how we abide in the Word and write down what you see about fruit.

c. *For deeper study:* The fruit of the Spirit is listed in Galatians 5:22-23 and Ephesians 5:9. There is fruit unto holiness in Romans 6:22 and fruit from our righteousness in Proverbs 11:30 and 2 Corinthians 9:10. Jesus said in John 15:8, that we will bring glory to God the Father when we bear these kinds of fruit in our lives. Write out every word in John 15:16 and think of the reality that GOD CHOSE YOU...and it is not solely for salvation, but a divine calling while you are here on earth. Selah.

*“God does not so much want us to do things as to let people see what He can do.”*

*~ A. B. Simpson*

d. Notice that Jesus ties in answered prayer with fruit in that verse. Now go back to Mark 11:22-24 and see this same principle. A life that abides in Christ and His Word, will bear heavenly fruit for the Father’s glory. And one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit in a believer’s life is faith. As mountains are symbolic of obstacles in scripture (Zechariah 4:7), Jesus is trying to show them that there is no opposition large enough to hinder the faith-filled prayer of an abiding believer. Do you believe this? Or do you have areas in your life where you believe things will never change because of their size or difficulty?

*“We are all faced with a series of great opportunities brilliantly disguised as impossible situations.”*

*~ Chuck Swindoll*

**Read Mark 11:25-26**

6. Here Jesus tells the disciples of an obstacle more obstinate and resistant to movement than a giant mountain: unforgiveness. It isn't the size or complexity of our trials that are the problem, it is our will and hearts that can be formidable foes to faith and primary problems to fruit production.
- a. Corrie TenBoom once said "Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart." Some people wait until they **feel** like they can forgive or they withhold forgiveness until the other person repents and asks for it. In this verse, there are NO conditions or limitations set by Jesus. Fill in the blank with key words from verse 25 that the Lord is speaking with parentheses added for emphasis.

"And \_\_\_\_\_ (no exception of certain times) you stand  
\_\_\_\_\_, If you have \_\_\_\_\_  
(no exception of sins committed) against \_\_\_\_\_  
(no exception on who commits the sin), \_\_\_\_\_ him,  
that your Father in heaven may also forgive \_\_\_\_\_ your trespasses."

- b. There are certain lies the enemy loves to echo to a person to keep them in bondage to bitterness and unforgiveness. It is a mixture of the truth with a lie...which still makes it a lie. It is the fear that if you forgive someone who has caused great harm or hurt, especially if there has been no repentance or brokenness over their sin, that it means that you must trust them as if they never sinned. Jesus' forgiveness and our justification is that He treats us "just as if we had never sinned against Him." But **we** are not to be judges nor justifiers, only fruit inspectors. Trust is earned and when someone bears the fruit of repentance, trust can be rebuilt, but is still optional. Forgiveness, on the other hand, is not an option but mandatory if we want to be forgiven by God. Write down a summary of what Jesus says in Matthew 18:32-35 about this topic.

- c. The word “torturer” or “tormentor” in the Greek is “a person serving as a guard in a prison, whose function was to torture prisoners as a phase of judicial examination.” His love for a person is so great that He goes to extensive lengths, with immeasurable patience and allows extreme trials in an effort to bring them to Himself. His mercy is limitless and His grace is perpetual. What does He say is the one thing that separates us from Him and will interfere in our prayer life from Isaiah 59:2? Write out the verse here.
- d. The New Living Translation uniquely explains John 2:23-24 like this, “Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many began to trust in him. But Jesus didn’t trust them, because he knew human nature.” He knew that their love was conditional, their praise temporary, and their humanity prone to sin, so He did not place His trust in man. Look up Jeremiah 17:5-8. Write down the difference between a person who solely trusts in other people versus the person who places their trust in the Lord.

### **Read Mark 11:15-19**

Jesus had observed the filthy condition of the temple the day before (verse 11) and had a better time in mind when He would deal with the violation of His Father’s house. Staying within the same principal of prayer and obstacles, He is tenacious about eradicating anything and everything that hinders a heart from fellowship and worship. Whether it be outwardly empty rituals or inwardly embraced sins, His desire is purity and holiness and restoration of people with the Father.

7. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus leads His sheep and they follow after Him. But when there are wolves and goats or other enemies present to the sheep, they must be driven out because they will not follow the Shepherd.
- a. Focusing on verses 15-16, who were the three groups of people that were driven out and kept out of the temple area?
- 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.

- b. Describe in your own words, using other resources if you have them, what a “den of thieves” actually is.
8. Jesus had cleansed the temple earlier in His ministry, but the merchants all came back. Warren Wiersbe said this, “**Mere outward reformation does not last unless the heart is changed.** What began as a service to foreign Jews had become a business that had no place in the house of God. People used the temple as a shortcut from the Mount of Olives and the stalls and tables cluttered up the Court of the Gentiles where the Jews should have been witnessing about the true God to their Gentile neighbors.”
- a. Man will either conform to rules or be transformed by grace. The Lord desires your worship, singing, holy living, tithing, and anything you do for Him, to be a response of love not a conforming to His demands. One is motivated by fear of consequences and burdensome, while the other is joyous and light because of love. Which do you feel is more descriptive of your worship and relationship with the Lord? Explain.
- b. There are many applications to this passage, but viewing your heart as the temple of the Lord, is there anything that has crept in and been robbing you of your joy, your worship, your time in prayer or time in the Word? Are there things, or even a person/people, that have begun to interfere with your heart that was made to freely worship and honor the Lord?
- c. Take a moment to see the strong arms of Jesus flip tables, throw money, and crack a whip in righteous anger at the things and people that were hurting others in their relationship with the Father. It would do us good to be this tenacious about things that come into our lives to block our relationship with the Lord. Write a short prayer to Jesus about anything that has come to your heart from this section.

*“God wants us to worship Him. He doesn’t need us, for He couldn’t be a self-sufficient God and need anything or anybody, but He wants us. When Adam sinned it was not He who cried, “God, where art Thou?” It was God who cried, “Adam, where art thou?”*  
~ A. W. Tozer

**Read Mark 11:27-33**

9. Back in verse 18, we read how power that is mixed with pride will seek to destroy anything that threatens it. We might label it as insecurity or fear and psychologists might give it some sort of softening medical diagnosis, but Jesus shows that pride can be poisonous to the heart and destructive in those that have a position of power. In verse 28, those that hold positions of spiritual leadership call into question Jesus’ authority and demand His credentials. As we have studied before, pride will be blinded to anything that is Jesus.
  - a. Turn to Acts 7 and read verses 51-60 about the first church martyr. What exactly did the Holy Spirit say through Stephen in verse 51? Break it down into your own words without veering from the truth written.
  - b. As Stephen continued to speak the truth to them, what was their response in verses 54, 57-59?
  - c. What did Stephen see in verses 55-56 in the midst of their blind pride?
10. As we began the lesson focusing on Jesus’ last week, observing His final actions and listening to His last words, we see the Holy Spirit living in Stephen, doing and speaking exactly as Jesus. He gave out the truth despite the consequences and his heart was filled with grace to forgive those that sinned against him. Faithful to the end.
  - a. Read Acts 20:22-24. What was Paul facing?

- b. If the threat of problems and persecution did not move him, what is his explanation for such resilience (verse 24)?
- c. Jesus gave an invitation for those who wanted to be His disciples in the past in Matthew 16:24-26. It is the same invitation He gives us each day. What is it?
- d. What is His promise to you and I in verse 27 to help give us the same focus that Paul and Stephen had?
11. This chapter has given us much food for thought and prayer. As you end your lesson, look up Luke 16:15. Read this verse several times and meditate on its application. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you if there is an area in your thought life or in your actions that may be impressive to others in the world, but it grieves His heart. He knows that we have “blind spots” and sometimes do things or believe things in ignorance, not realizing God does not look on it with favor. Reflect on this here.

*“We’re here to be worshippers first and workers only second.*

*We take a convert and immediately make a worker out of him. God never meant it to be so.*

*God meant that a convert should learn to be a worshiper, and after that he can learn to be a worker...*

*The work done by a worshiper will have eternity in it.”*

*~ A. W. Tozer*