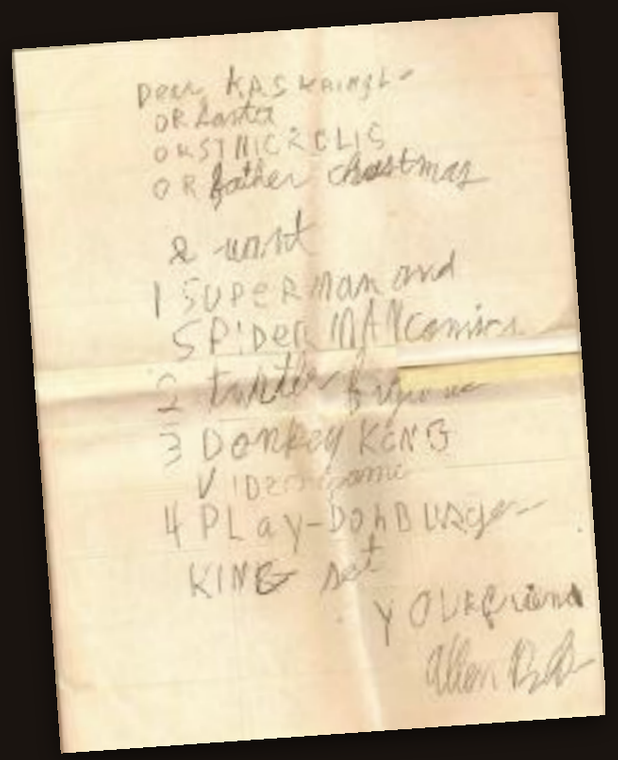


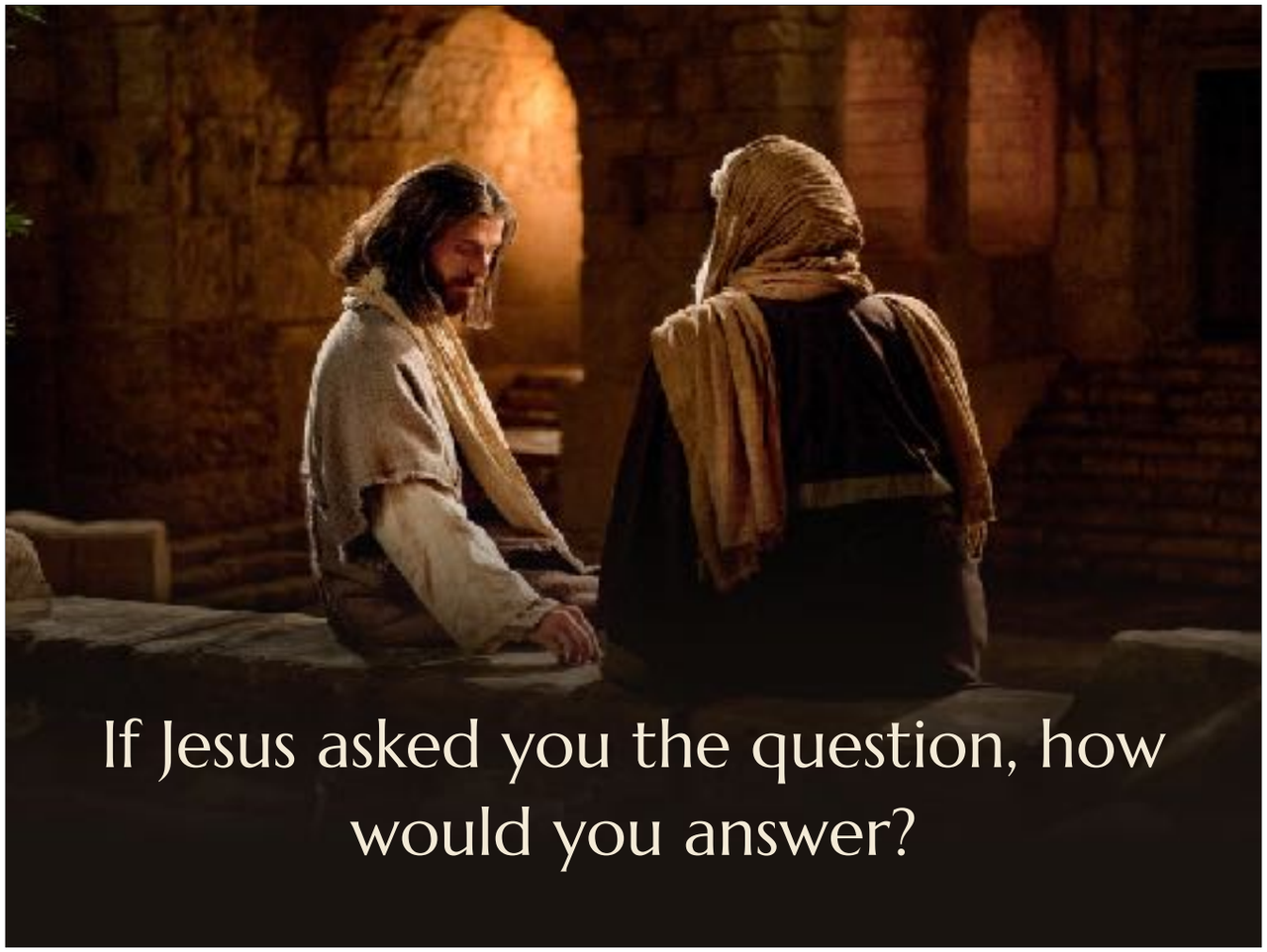
[Sources] Scenic background generated with OpenAI image generation for this presentation on 2026-08-31. Prompt: Ancient path descending toward the Sea of Galilee at sunrise; no text or modern objects.

What Do You Want?



This is the time of year where the question is what do you want? So how would you answer that question (and not necessarily with something Christmas related)?

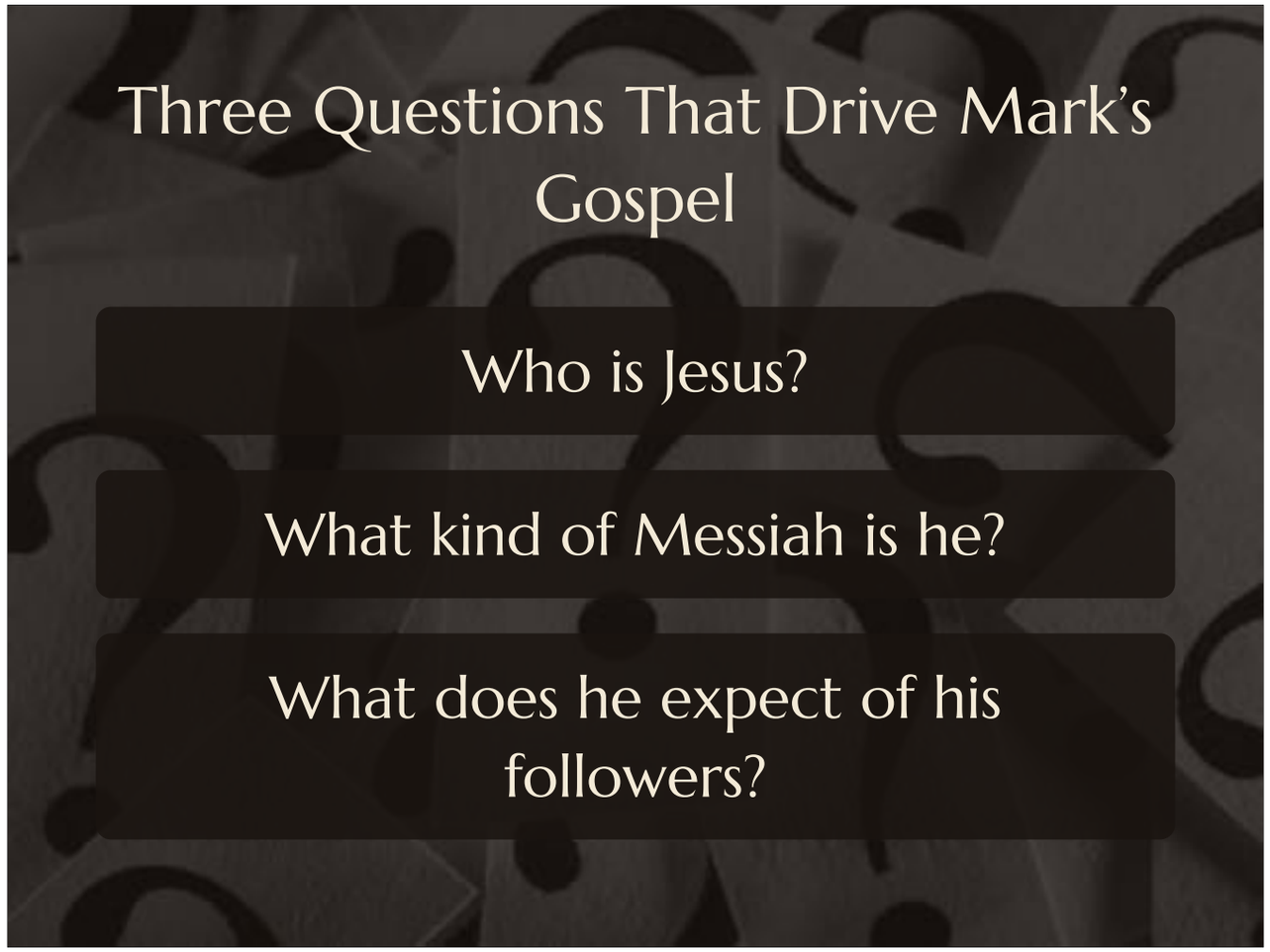
My son-in-law answers “peace on earth” but my wife says, “I can’t wrap that!”



But if Jesus asked you that same question today, what would be your answer?

What is interesting is for most of us, we would probably struggle with an answer. And many of the things we want, is not what we need.

My grandson wants an assault rifle, but that's not happening.



As we have seen in Mark, three questions drive his gospel.

The first is Who is Jesus? In the first 8 chapters, that is the question. It is what comes out of the mouth of Herod as he wonders about his identity or the people in the Capernaum synagogue when they hear his teaching and watch him cast our a demon. It comes from brine-soaked disciples after he calms the storm.

But the second question comes to a head in Mark 8. Peter confesses, You are the Messiah. But then he has no idea what that truly means, thinking in a very human dimension of power and position. The question which is the thread from chapter 9 forward is what kind of Messiah is he?

But then, underlying all of this is the deep stream that we keep asking today. What does he expect from his followers? If he is the Messiah, and he serves and gives his life a ransom for many, what does that compel from those who claim to follow him?

Our Previous Lessons

3 Years of Ministry

(raising the dead, casting out demons, healing the sick, feeding multitudes, and calming storms)

Teaching that Amazed

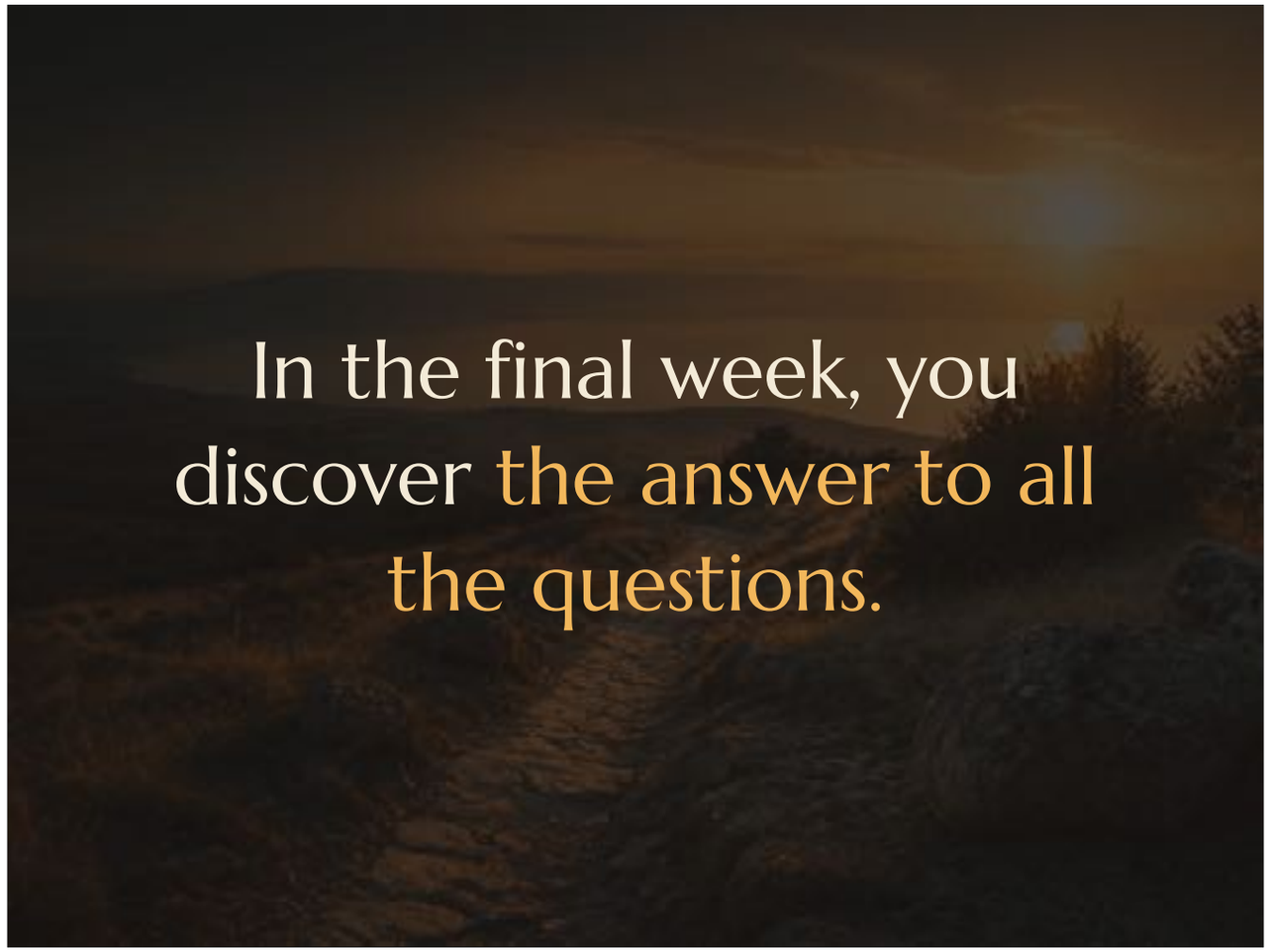
Statements that Fueled Rage

In all of our previous lessons, we covered 3 years of ministry.

In it there are Miracles such as raising from the dead, casting out Demonds, healing the sick, feeding the multitudes, and calming storms.

There are also teaches that leave the crowds stunned with with their simplicity and their depth. Who is this man, is what they keep asking?

But there were also statements that fueled rage from the Jewish leaders, claims to forgive sins and to ignore Sabbath traditions.



But now today, we narrow our focus to a single week which will answer all of those questions.



Just to get our bearings, here is a map of where Jesus will go. He will travel from Galilee, through Perea along the Jordan until he comes to Jericho and then he goes to Jerusalem but leaves each night for Bethany. It is at this places, things happen.

In Jericho...

a Blind Man



We will start in Jericho where he comes across a blind beggar who the locals see as a nuisance but Jesus sees him much differently. His name is Bartimaus.

2 Blind Men

Start of this journey:

The blind man healed in two stages ...
he could see clearly

At the end:

Bartimaeus who wants to see

Mark frames this around two blind men.

In Mark 8, in Bethsaida, as the journey commences, he meets a blind man. As we saw in last week's lesson...Jesus spits on his eyes and lays his hands on him and he can see but not clearly. But Jesus touches him a second time, and it says "he saw clearly."

It is the paradigm of what Jesus is trying to convey. Can you see who he is clearly?

But at the end, he comes to Jericho and meets Bartimaus who has only one request..I want to see.

It is the subtle challenge of the Gospel..do you want to see Jesus clearly?

“Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means ‘son of Timaeus’), was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’”

Mark 10:46–47

Mark relates his story. Bartimaus is begging by the side of the road doing as he has always done...begging, looking for any scrap he can find. Apparently, he can hear the crowds around him and the whispers and he wants to know what is happening. Someone probably says “Jesus has come to town.” That quickens his pulse. This is a man of action and he begins shouting Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.”

We will see how significant that cry is.

"Jesus stopped and said, 'Call him.' So they called to the blind man, 'Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you.' Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. 'What do you want me to do for you?' Jesus asked him. The blind man said, 'Rabbi, I want to see.'"

Mark 10:49–51

People were telling him to shush but it caught Jesus' attention (as needs do) and he stops and wants to talk to him. The beggar throws his cloak aside so he can move more quickly and comes.

Jesus asks him the question we started our class with. ...what do you want me to do for you?

Notice, a beggar's usual response is "alms" etc. (Think about Acts 3 and that beggar at the temple.)

What do you want me to do for you?

"Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. 'Teacher,' they said, 'we want you to do for us whatever we ask.' 'What do you want me to do for you?' he asked. They replied, 'Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.'"

Mark 10:35–37

I want you to notice this has arisen before. In Mark 10, James and John want something out of Jesus, but notice how different the beggar is from the power-hungry brothers.

"'Go,' said Jesus, 'your faith has healed you.' Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road."

Mark 10:52

He gets his request. But Jesus says, "your faith has healed you."

Faith heals people because it drives them to the right source for healing. It has happened over and over. The woman with the issue of blood turns to the only answer she has. So does this man.

The Blind Man Could See

He saw his condition... have mercy

He saw who Jesus was... son of David

He saw where he could be healed... called to Jesus

He saw what to do next... follow Jesus

The blind man saw more than the sighted. As we have seen, some have ears that cannot hear or eyes that cannot see.

This is a man who saw his condition. He asked for mercy, that twin of grace which means favor unearned and undeserved. He wanted what we all need...mercy.

He saw Jesus for who he was. He uses, the first time in Mark's gospel the term "son of David." It is the messianic term, one that will see again. He sees him for who he is, the Messiah promised.

He saw where he could be healed. So many people want their spiritual conditions put back together but they turn to philosophy or self-help or an influencer of some kind. He knew no one could help him but Jesus so what's where he goes. Until people are driven to the cross, they can never be whole.

And finally, he saw what to do next. He got up and followed Jesus. So different than the rich man who goes sorrowfully because he is rich. Here is a poor man who follows Jesus and what the rich man could not attain.



Turning from Jericho, he makes his way through the winding uphill climb toward Jerusalem. Here we will find three key locations. One is Bethany, where Lazarus lived and where his resurrection still brought fascination. On the way is Bethphage where the Mt. of Olives is located, something that becomes prominent in the days to come.

Then is Jerusalem.

One small notice. In these texts there is a repeated idea. Jesus never spends the night in the city of Jerusalem but keeps going back to Bethany. It tells you Jesus is not the Jewish insider but someone who is different.

A Moment Prepared For

"As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying to them, 'Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, "Why are you doing this?" say, "The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly."'"

Mark 11:1–3

As they approach, Jesus tells two disciples to make preparations. It is not for Passover a few days away but something else, something grander.

When you read this text you discover the intentional and purposeful moment that is coming. The right animal and the people who simply let two strangers untie it and lead it away without challenge.

God was making plans and putting them into motion.

It says that the colt should be "unridden." Why?

Animals never used are considered sacred for God's use...you did not sacrifice farm animals in service to God, only those never used.

As they are told, they say, "The Lord needs it." This is a sacred moment.

The Prophetic Moment

"Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Zechariah 9:9

So we come to a prophetic moment.

Every Jew knew the words of Zechariah (although we seldom read the book). In Zechariah 9:9, comes these strange words spoken 5 centuries before.

It speaks of a king, the king that is from the lineage of David riding on a colt.

There is all kinds of significance to this. When Solomon is crowned king, he rides into Jerusalem through the Kidron Valley on a mule. This is what the son of David does.

And now, the the haze of history, they become clear.

"Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,

A 'Hosanna!'

B 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'

B 'Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!'

A 'Hosanna in the highest heaven!'"

Mark 11:9–10

And so Jesus takes the same route into the city as Solomon did in the same way Solomon did.

And this crowds shouted. What they said is a crescendo.

There is a pattern in ancient literature in a pattern of A-B-B-A. (Not talking about the Dancing Queen music group!)

The first and last lines are parallel and the middle lines are parallel. They emphasize the message in a dramatic way.

They shout Hosanna which means "Lord save us."

But in the middle you see the reason for the first and last. Jesus comes in the authority of God and brings a kingdom...and you hear that term again, that royal term, the messianic term...son of David.

And it closes with Save us. Here we find the shout of triumph. The king has come to save us. But they still did not know fully what that would mean.

The Fig Tree



A curious thing happens that seems like an aside or an interruption. Jesus comes across a fig tree on the way from Bethany.

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

Mark 11:12–14

Jesus sees a fig tree, lush with leaves and he was hungry. He went for fruit but it had none. The reason is that it was not the season for fruit.

And Jesus curses it and says he will never bear fruit again.

Why does he curse a fig tree without fruit?

Why does he curse a fig tree without fruit?



On the heels of that, with it seemingly in the background, he comes to Jerusalem.(Take some time orienting them in the temple.)

“On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said, ‘Is it not written: “My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations”? But you have made it “a den of robbers.”’”

Mark 11:15–17

What God expects in the temple

Jesus drives them out of the temple.

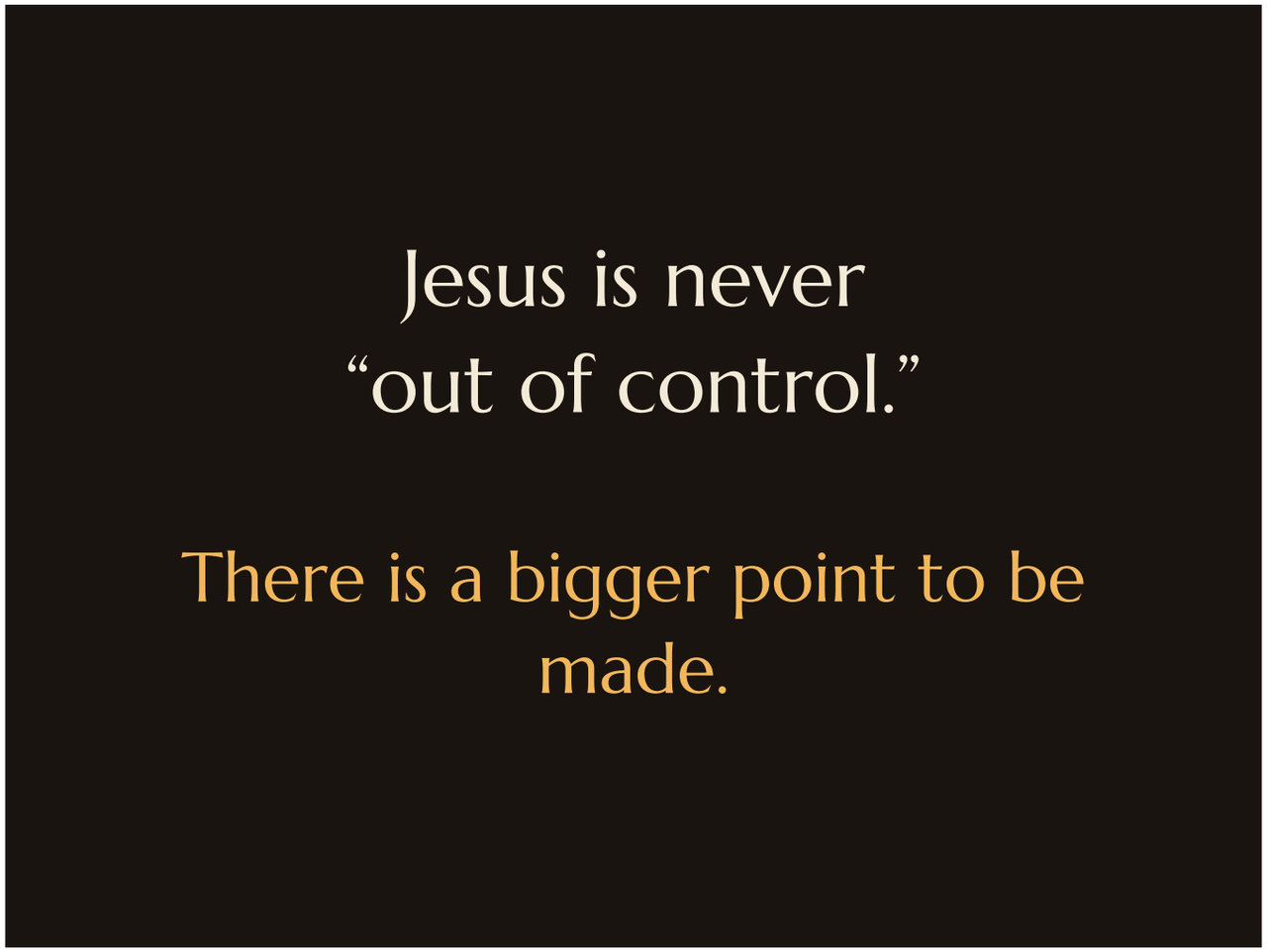
When he enters the temple courts, he sees “business as usual.” And it is not as God commanded. - Josephus reports 255,600 lambs offered at the Passover of A.D. 65. At ten people per lamb, that implies nearly 2.7 million celebrants in Jerusalem.

I want you to compare this to what Isaiah saw in the temple in Isaiah 6..the Lord, high and lifted up. But all he sees is a bazaar.

He throws over the tables, and makes people drop their goods on the floor where they stand.

He said God has expectations of what happens in this place and it is not marketplace but prayer and worship.

And it says that Jesus drove them out of the temple.



Two things are important. Jesus is never “out of control.” We tend to portray Jesus with nostrils flaring reacting to this scene out of anger. It never says that. Jesus was not the one to let his emotions control his response (unlike us).

But the truth is there is a bigger point to be made.



“In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. Peter remembered and said to Jesus, ‘Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!’”

Mark 11:20–21

The point comes the next morning. As they are returning to Jerusalem after a night at Bethany, Peter notices that the fig tree is withered and will never be alive in the same way.



Three events

A fig tree without fruit... A temple emptied of its inhabitants... The fig tree withered and dead...

What does all of this mean?

“I will take away their harvest, declares the Lord. There will be no grapes on the vine. There will be no figs on the tree, and their leaves will wither. What I have given them will be taken from them.”

Jeremiah 8:13

God expected fruit and found none.

When you go back to the Old Testament, the prophets speak of Israel as the plant of God. It is mentioned many places but Jeremiah 8:13 is most pointed.

Jeremiah says there will be no figs on the tree and the leaves wither.

And...what I have given to Israel will be removed.

The Jews prided themselves on their fastidiousness to tradition, to their toeing the line on Sabbath observance, washing of hands, and tithing to the 10th. They looked righteous.

God expected fruit from his people, no physical but spiritual.. Heartfelt obedience, not empty ritual. Compassion for the needy, not greed for themselves. They wrapped themselves in the mantle of the temple and were satisfied that was enough. Their lives never measured the prayers recited, and they didn’t care to.

God expected fruit but found none. And because of that, they would lose something.

When Jesus drives the merchants from the temple, it is the vision of God looking for spiritual fruit and seeing only human enterprise and it was time to clean house.

The gospel would not be for the Jews because they were Jews but for those who saw Jesus for who he is and followed him as he commanded them.

Dangerous Times

“The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.”

Mark 11:18

This all brought dangerous times.

It reached a peak. After this, the the rulers started looking for a specie way to kill him and within a few days, it could come to fruition.

In dangerous times...

"'Have faith in God,' Jesus answered. 'Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, "Go, throw yourself into the sea," and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.'"

Mark 11:22–25

In all of this, Jesus turns to his disciples. Over the next days and into the future, three things will carry them through dangerous times.

In dangerous times...

1. Trust in God's power
2. Pray expecting
3. Forgive when you pray

First, to trust in God's power. He says, "have faith in God." When life feels overwhelming or out of control, God remains. In the coming days there were be changes unparalleled in human history. A death, burial, and resurrection. Within 2 months, God will bust into the human scene to establish his kingdom unlike any other. And they would face opposition and even death. But rely on God.

The reason is that he has tremendous power and ability. He can uproot mountains and tumble them into seas. So ask for what you need.

And then, remember to give the forgiveness to even your enemies because that is what Jesus is about to demonstrate.

Bartimaeus answers

Who is Jesus?

The fig tree answers

What kind of Messiah?

Have Faith in God answers

What does he expect of his followers?



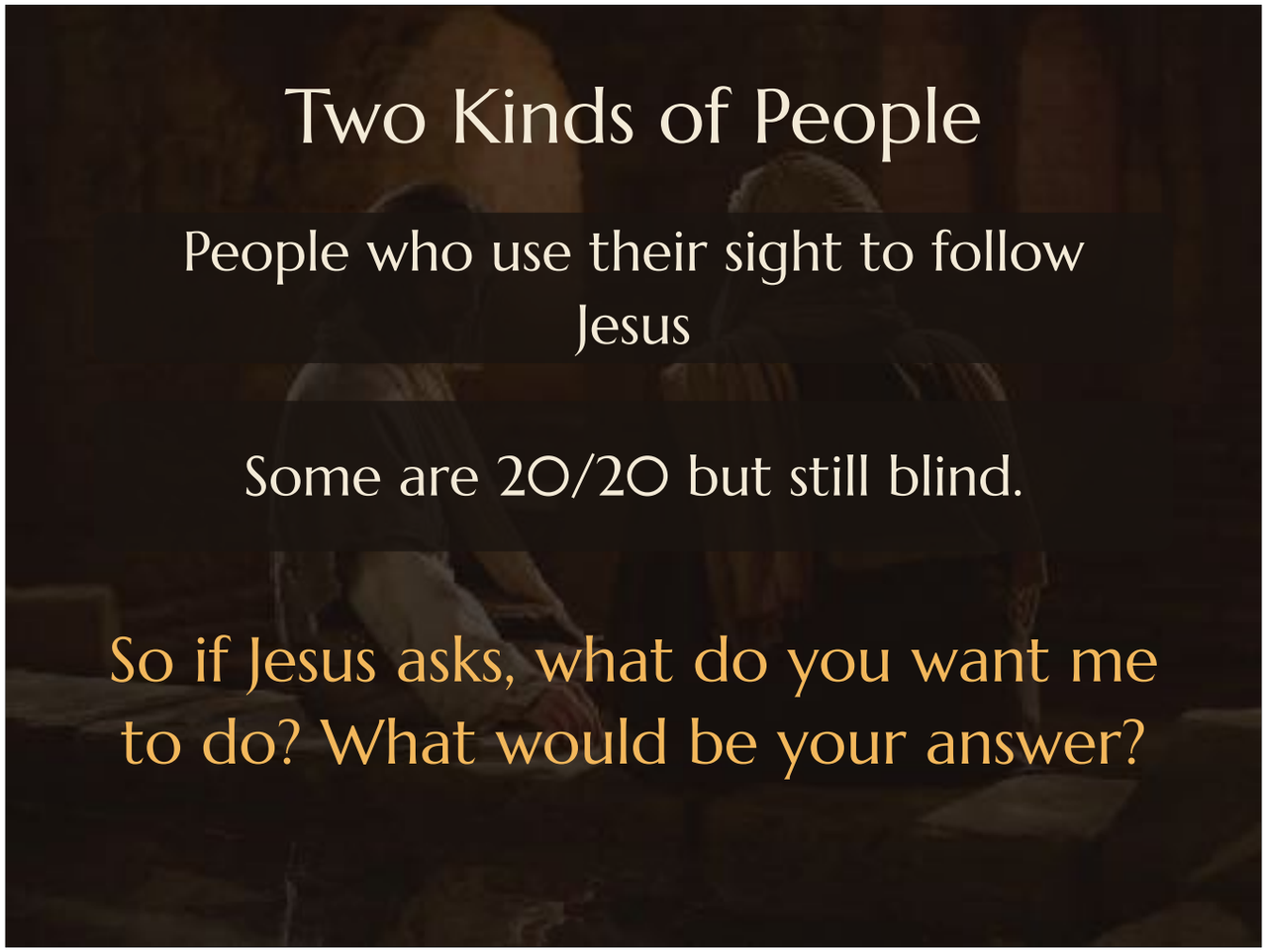
A beggar who knew what he wanted and followed



A tree that looked good but had nothing to show for it.

In this lesson, we meet a beggar who knew what he wanted and followed Jesus. He started blind and left sighted and satisfied.

And we met a tree that had all the appearance of fruitfulness but had nothing to show for it.



It is two kinds of people.

Some use their sight and follow Jesus wherever he leads. They know what they want...to see and follow.

But there are people who can see everything but who Jesus is.

The challenge for us is which are we?

FOLLOWING IN THE WAY · THE GOSPEL OF MARK

20/20 and Still Blind

Mark 10:46–11:10 · A blind beggar sees Jesus more clearly than the crowd

1 Three Questions Behind Mark

- Who is Jesus? The question of chapters 1–8.
- What kind of Messiah is he? The thread from chapter 9 on.
- What does he expect of his followers? The one we still ask today.

2 The Road to Jerusalem

- Final week: Galilee, Perea, Jericho, Jerusalem.
- Days in the city, nights in Bethany.
- Bethphage and the Mount of Olives come into view.

3 Two Blind Men

- Mark 8, Bethsaida: healed in two stages, then "he saw clearly."
- Mark 10, Jericho: Bartimaeus asks one thing: "I want to see."
- The challenge: do you want to see Jesus clearly?

4 The Cry — Mark 10:46–48

- A blind beggar sits by the Jericho road.
- He shouts, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"
- The crowd says hush. He won't.



"What do you want me to do for you?"

5 Same Question, Two Answers

- Jesus asks both: "What do you want me to do for you?"
- James and John: thrones in glory.
- Bartimaeus: "Rabbi, I want to see."
- A beggar would ask for coins. He asks for sight.

6 He Could See



"Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Mark 10:52

- He saw his need: mercy.
- He saw who Jesus was: Son of David.
- He saw where to go: to Jesus.
- He saw what to do: follow.

8 Hosanna! — Mark 11:9–10

A "Hosanna!" Lord, save us.

B "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

B "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!"

A "Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

They see the king. They do not yet know what kind of king.

7 A Moment Prepared — Mark 11:1–3

- Jesus sends two disciples for a colt no one has ridden: "The Lord needs it."
- This is planned and purposeful, not an accident.
- Zechariah 9:9: your king comes, lowly, riding on a colt.

The Big Takeaway: Do you want to see Jesus clearly? Ask for sight, then follow him.

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For One Page Summary