

From the Temple to the Table

Text: Matthew 22:1-4; Mark 11:11

Jesus had just come triumphantly into Jerusalem through the thronging millions of people. The Pharisees did not like what they saw. John 12:19: "The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him." It was now Sunday evening and our Lord has returned to respite in Bethany.

1. Monday

We have a visual prophecy in the fig tree. Mark 11:12-14; Mark 11:20, 21. This was prophecy of what was happening to Israel. In between the fig tree's cursing and the next day's confirmation of the cursed fig tree, our Lord cleansed the Temple. In disgust our Lord overthrew the tables of the money changers, declaring his house to be a house of prayer (Matthew 21:12-17). Then in compassion he turned to the blind and lame and healed them (Matthew 21:14). The children spontaneously began to praise Christ. On the way out of the Temple our Lord did not permit the moneychangers to take their wares on a shortcut through the Temple (Mark 11:16).

2. Tuesday

The inflamed chief priests and scribes demanded where Jesus received His authority. He stumped them by asking the simple question found in Luke 20:4: "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?" If they answered from Heaven, the question would then beg the answer, then why did they not believe him? If they answered that his baptism was of men, they believed their lives would be in jeopardy, for the people would want to stone them. Therefore, our Lord need not answer them.

Jesus then gave the parable of the two sons. One refused outright to go and work in his father's vineyard and then changed his mind. The second son promised to go and then did not go. Jesus rebuked the procrastination and dishonesty of the Pharisees, declaring that publicans and harlots were very willing to neither procrastinate or refuse the offer of Christ and His kingdom (Matthew 21: 28-32).

In Matthew 21: 33-41; Mark 12:1-9; Luke 20: 9-16, Jesus tells of the man who planted a vineyard and prepared it. He then lent it out to some husbandmen. When it was time for the harvest, the owner sent two separate visits from his servants, who were all killed. Matthew 21:37: "But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son." Matthew 21:39: "And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him." The Lord made the application from Psalm 118: 22 and 23: "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes."

In Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17 and Luke 20:20-26 we see our Lord is being asked about paying taxes. Luke 20:24 and 25: "Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Caesar's. And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's." I believe our Lord was teaching a message that backfired on the Pharisees by appealing that they who are made in the image of God should likewise render unto God their life, their soul, their all.

In Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27 and Luke 20: 27-38, the Sadducees tried to trick Jesus in the question concerning the resurrection. Jesus astonished these unbelieving Sadducees by declaring, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matthew 22:32).

In Matthew 23 Christ severely rebukes the Pharisees for being like the whitened sepulchers, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones. Matthew 23:26: "Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also."

In Matthew 24:1-51; Mark 13:1-37 and Luke 21:5-38, Christ is asked, "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matthew 24:30. In this extensive answer our Lord warns of impending judgement and judgment at the end of the present dispensation.

In Matthew 25 Jesus gives the parable of the ten virgins, followed by the parable of the talents. Matthew 26:1-5; Mark 14:1, 2 and Luke 22:1, 2, Jesus prophesies His crucifixion in two days. And at that very time Caiaphas, chief priests, scribes and elders were plotting Christ's death. In Matthew 26:14-16; Mark 14:10, 11 and Luke 22: 3-6, Satan enters Judas Iscariot and he meets with the chief priests and captains agreeing for a price to betray Jesus.

3. Wednesday

Jesus enters the Temple again and He is in an area where only Jews are allowed and we read in John 12:21: "The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus." The door is now opening wide for the Gentiles to enter into the Kingdom. In just a few verses later Jesus says in John 12:32: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." In the remaining part of John 12, our Lord issues one more appeal and warning to the Jews to accept Him and come to the light. John 12:46: "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness."

4. Thursday

In Matthew 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16 and Luke 22: 7-13, the Passover is prepared for Christ and the disciples. In Matthew 26:20-25; Mark 14:17-21 and John 13: 21-35 our Lord reveals that He will be betrayed and Judas is subtly exposed as the one. Mark 14:21: "The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born."

In Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25 and Luke 22:14-23, Christ institutes the Lord's Supper with the remaining elements of the Passover, that being the unleavened bread and the cup.

In John 13:1-20; Matthew 26:31-35; Mark 14:27-31; Luke 22:31-38 and John 13:36-38, Jesus washes the disciples feet and prophesies that Peter would deny Him.

In John 14: 1-15, Jesus announces that He is going to His Father's House and while there He would prepare a place for His disciples. And He tells the way there. John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto

the Father, but by Me.” Later in John 14:16-31, Jesus promises the gift of the Holy Spirit, who will be the Comforter. In loving mercy, our Lord says in John 14:27: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

Although the Lord is telling His followers He must go, He calms them with the promise of the Holy Spirit coming as Comforter. He adds one more very important teaching in John 15:1-17. He said in John 15:5, “I Am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing.” So to abide in Christ is the command (John 15:4). In lovingkindness, Jesus says, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). Our Lord goes on to remind His disciples in John 15:16: “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”

In John 15:18-John 16:33, Christ tells His disciples that they shall experience persecution, but again, they shall receive help from the Comforter.

It is now that our Lord prays the high priestly prayer in John 17 of which all who believe are the recipients. John 17:9, 10: “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.” John 17:20: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.”

Our Lord is soon to pass over Kidron’s Brook and into Gethsemane. He has now come to the hour of the very purpose for His coming. John 17:4: “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” Onward to the cross!

-Pastor Pope-