**The Gospel of Mark: A Disciple’s Mirror**

***Reflections on Following Jesus --*** From A Handbook on Cross-Bearing

**Mark 11:1-25**

***Tree, Temple, and Triumph. . .*** Living and Praying with Faith, Power and Purpose

**What’s (happening in) the story?** Messiah takes charge.

On “Palm Sunday” Jesus rides triumphantly into Jerusalem, but by Friday He is crucified for crimes not His own. How and why? The crucifixion crowd was not the celebration crowd. The conflict is between Jesus and the religious leaders of the Law and the Temple. Mark is writing to the Church which was trying to make sense of the general Jewish non-acceptance of Jesus as Messiah and God’s love for all nations. Though the Temple was doomed to destruction (Mark 13:1, 2), God’s plan for His people was still on track, and nothing would stop those who lived by grace and walked by faith.

**What’s the challenge in the story?** How do we interact with God’s plans?

Jesus had promised to make His disciples “fishers of men,” but how can it be if God’s Temple has become defiled and its leadership corrupted? Mark’s message is much like Jeremiah’s: while outward religion may fail, God’s sovereign plan for the nations would be worked out in a family of faith, not a structure of stones. Jeremiah 7-8 shows how God protects His name, not corrupt religion or temples.

**What are the key elements in the story?**

* ***The Procession: Jesus enters Jerusalem as Messiah. 11:1-11***

 Jesus is welcomed by the people who believe Him to be the Christ.

* ***The Picture: Jesus curses the fruitless tree. 11:12-14, 20, 21***

Drama: A barren tree is destroyed to make room for fruitful ones (Luke 3:9; 6:44; 13:6-9).

 In between acts, Jesus takes the Temple to task.

* ***The Prosecution: Jesus condemns the temple leaders. 11:15-19***

Referencing Jeremiah 7 & 8, Jesus demonstrates publicly against the system which had replaced

 God’s love for the nations with love of money.

* ***The Promise: Jesus schools the disciples in grace and faith. 11:22-25***

Jesus uses the disciples’ surprise about the dead tree to reaffirm the power of faith (believing in

 God’s promises, not making up your own) the priority of prayer, and the primacy of grace in the

 forgiveness of sins.

**What’s the big idea (main point) of the story?**

All that opposes God will be destroyed, but His people will flourish fruitfully in their mission of grace, praying in faith and practicing forgiveness.

***So, let’s take a look at ourselves in Mark’s mirror. . .***

1. In what do you trust? Politics, religion, gold, or God? God is not impressed by institutions, but righteousness. 1 Peter 1:23–2:12

2. For what do you pray? Jesus is not advocating displacing dirt. His point is that nothing can stop God’s plans, so our prayers should be saturated by grace and forgiveness. Bear fruit! Gal. 5:22-23