

Commentary on Mark chapter 11, by Chuck Smith 3.6.22

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March memory verse John 16:33 (NKJV) These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

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And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, [they were] at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt [that is] tied, whereon never man [has] sat: loose him, and bring him. And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye [just tell them] that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway [immediately] he will send him hither [they'll let him come]. And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place [outside of the place] where two ways meet [the two streets met]; and they loose [untied] him. And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing [untying] the colt? And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded [that the Lord needs him]: and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus, and [they] cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him. And many spread their garments in the way; and others cut down branches off the trees, and [they] strewed them in the way [path]. And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest. And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all [of the] things, and now the even tide was come, and he went out [returned] unto Bethany with the twelve ([Mar 11:1-11](#)).

So, this is on a Sunday. And Jesus makes His entrance into Jerusalem riding the colt. Matthew's gospel and Luke's gospel gives us more details. They tell how the Pharisees objected to the cries of the disciples, saying that it was blasphemous because they were acknowledging Him as the Messiah. This is the first time Jesus had allowed any public proclamation of Himself as the Messiah. They were crying forth a Psalm that was definitely a prophetic Psalm of the Messiah: [Psalm 118](#). "Behold the stone that was set of not you builders, the same has become the chief cornerstone. This is marvelous; it is the work

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of God, it's marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" This is [Psalm 118](#), and they are quoting from this Messianic Psalm. And so that is why the Pharisees said, "Lord, you better rebuke them; you better stop them. That's blasphemy." And Jesus said, "I'll tell you the truth. If I would stop them, these very stones would start crying out." And so Jesus, fulfilling the prophecy of [Zechariah 9:9](#), "Rejoice, O daughters of Jerusalem! Shout for joy! For your King cometh unto thee. But He is lowly; He is sitting on a colt." And here He comes riding in on a colt, just as the scriptures predicted. He looks around the temple, and then He leaves with His twelve disciples, as they go back over to Bethany to spend the night.

The next day would be Monday. And we read,

And on the morrow [that would be Monday], when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry: And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves [on it], he came, if haply [by chance] he might find any thing thereon: and when they came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet ([Mar 11:12-13](#)).

Of course, this would have been in April, and figs generally do not become ripe until summertime. However, over there they have a first ripe fig. And usually, they precede even the leaves, so that by the time the leaves come on the tree, these figs are pretty well developed. So, seeing this fig tree with leaves, He figured there might be some of these first ripe figs on it. Coming to it, finding no fruit,

And Jesus answered and said unto it [the tree], [Let] no man eat fruit of thee hereafter [this] forever. And his disciples heard it. And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple ([Mar 11:14-15](#)),

Now, this was Monday, the day after the triumphant entry.

and [he] began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and [he] overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves; And he would not suffer [allow] that any man should carry any vessel through the temple ([Mar 11:16](#)).

They were using the temple for a shortcut to get from one side of the city to the other, and they were carrying their things through the temple. And He stopped that. He was taking control. Now, this is the second time Jesus

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cleansed the temple. At the beginning of his ministry, John records how He cleansed the temple. Now this is at the end of the ministry, and again He is cleansing the temple. The thing that He is striking out against is those who are making merchandise of the things of God. And He has a real thing against those who would make merchandise of the things of God.

In the temple they were changing money, because the priest would not accept Roman coinage in the temple treasury. When you dropped your offering in, it better not be Roman coins, because they are unclean. That's Gentile money. "The only money we will accept are the Jewish sheckles." So, when you got paid, you got paid in Roman coins. You want to give to God your tithes, so you have to change your Roman coins for the Jewish sheckles so that you can give God your offering. So these fellows, the moneychangers, were sitting there in the temple. They had their tables all out, and they would change money for you at exorbitant rates. So they would really rip you off. "You want to give to God?" Well, they'll get their ten or fifteen percent by changing the money for you. "You want to offer a dove to God? We have kosher doves, guaranteed to be accepted by the priests." Because you could get a dove outside of the temple, out on the streets of Jerusalem. You could buy a dove for fifteen cents. But you buy one of those doves out on the street, and the doves were for the poor people who needed to make an offering to God. If you couldn't afford to offer a lamb or an ox or whatever, offer the dove. It's for the poor people. And out in the street, you buy one for fifteen cents. But you bring one in off the street and the priest would examine it carefully until he found a blemish and he said, "You can't offer this thing to God. Take it out of here." But these that were sold in the temple precincts at the priest's little booths, no questions asked. But you had to pay five bucks for one. So, they were ripping people off. And it angered Jesus that they would take advantage of people who were wanting to come to God, ripping them off for their desire to come to God. And so, "He overthrew the tables of the money changers and the seat of those that were selling doves."

And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves ([Mar 11:17](#)).

Boy! I wonder what Jesus would say about some of the churches today, with all their rip off schemes. I wonder what he would say about a lot of these letters that are sent out by many of these famous evangelists, letters that are filled with lies and deception. I get so upset when they write me these letters. I better not get on that. They listen to my tapes too. Maybe I will say something!

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And the scribes and chief priests [when they] heard it, and [they] sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine. And when even was come, he went out of the city ([Mar 11:18-19](#)).

Monday evening, He exits the city.

And in the morning [Tuesday morning], as they passed by, they saw the fig tree [and it was] dried up from the roots [died]. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold [look at], the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away ([Mar 11:20-21](#)).

Now, the fig tree was a symbol of the nation Israel. And here is a typical picture. Jesus was coming to the nation as the Messiah to receive the fruit. You remember the parable that Jesus said of how that the householder left his fields and his property in the hands of his servants. And he went away and he sent back at the time of harvest some of his servants that they might bring to him the fruit from his field. But these men who were in charge of the fields beat the servants and sent them away empty. So he sent other servants, but they continued to beat them. Some they killed, some they beat. And finally he said, "I will send my own son; surely they will reverence him." But when the son came, they said, "Look, here's the son. Let's kill him so we can take over the vineyard." And Jesus said, "What will the lord of that vineyard do?" And the Pharisees said, "Well, he's going to wipe them out." And Jesus said, "That's right," and then suddenly they realized, "Hey, he's talking about us." God was looking for fruit from the nation of Israel, the vine in [Isaiah 6](#). God planted the vineyard; He placed in it the choicest vines. He hedged about it and He dug the irrigation system and all, and it came time for Him to come and gather the grapes, but there was nothing but wild grapes. No real fruit. And so He'll let the vine go, and He'll give it out to others who will bring forth fruit.

Now, that's exactly what Jesus said was going to happen. The nation of Israel failed to bring forth the fruit that God was looking for, and thus, they were to be withered and die; and God would give out the vineyard, the work, to other nations, other people who will bring forth fruit. Jesus is still looking for fruit. He said, "I am the vine; My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that bringeth forth fruit He cleanses it that it might bring forth more fruit." "Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken of you. Abide in Me and let My words abide in you, that you might bring forth much fruit. For herein is the Father glorified." God is looking that you might bring forth fruit for the kingdom.

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Israel failed. Jesus came to the fig tree; it was barren. Thus, He cursed it. It withered and died. And now, He is looking for the fruit from our lives and the fruit of the Spirit is love. And how God desires to receive that love from you and from me. He looks for fruit in His garden.

Now Jesus used this incident to talk to them about faith. Peter said, "Look, wow, Lord! That was just yesterday, but look, that thing has already withered and died from the roots."

And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily [assuredly] I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them ([Mar 11:22-24](#)).

What a broad promise for prayer. But, note. Who was He talking to? The multitudes? Nope. He was talking to His disciples. Who are these tremendous promises made to as far as prayer is concerned? They are made to disciples. And what constitutes discipleship? First of all: deny yourself, take up your cross, follow Him. So, this is not just a broad promise that anybody can say, "Well, bless God. All I have to do is believe it and say it, and I'm going to have it. Alright! I want a new Mercedes. I want a home on Lido Island. I want a yacht on the dock. I say it; I'm going to have it. Praise God! Hallelujah!" And what's the first thing that makes a disciple? Deny yourself. "Oh, wait a minute. That yacht isn't denying myself." You see, these promises are made not to everybody, but to those who have denied themselves to take up their cross and follow Jesus. So it would follow that you're not going to use this prayer, this power through prayer, to fulfill your own lusts. But you would be using it to bring glory to God.

Then Jesus said,

And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any ([Mar 11:25](#));

Oh, the importance of forgiveness. "If you have aught against anyone, when you stand there praying, forgive them,"

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that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses ([Mar 11:25-26](#)).

That is heavy duty. You say, "What, does He mean what He said? Yes, but then, where is grace?" I don't know. "Isn't that then works?" Hey, don't ask me to change the words of Jesus. You say, "Well, how do you reconcile that with grace?" I can't. "Well, what do you do about it?" I forgive, like Jesus said. The forgiveness shows that Christ truly dwells in me. "For he who says abides in Him ought also to walk even as He walked." And as they were nailing Him to the cross, He said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." If I walked as He walked, I too must forgive. And Jesus said, "If you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." Forgiveness is one of the signs, that forgiving spirit is one of the signs that I am truly a child of God.

And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes and the elders ([Mar 11:27](#)),

This would be on Tuesday.

And [they] say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things? ([Mar 11:28](#))

By what authority, and who gave it to you?

I get a big kick out of a lot of people who come up to our young ministers and say to them, "Who gave you the authority to baptize? Who gave you the authority to be a minister?" Especially the Mormons make that challenge, because they have the twelve apostles who only can give authority.

And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, [it was] of men; they feared the people [then these people will stone us because they all think John was a prophet]: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things ([Mar 11:29-33](#)).