

Gospel of Mark: Jesus The Saving King

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[0 : 0 0] and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus said to 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? Tell them, the Lord needs it, and he will send it back here shortly. They went and found a colt outside the street, and tied it at the doorway. As they untied it, some people standing there asked, what are you doing untying that colt? They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had caught in the fields. Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David. Hosanna in the highest. Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve. The next day, as they were leaving

Bethany, Jesus was hungry. Seeing 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. On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise to the temple courts. 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. Chief priests and teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd were amazed at his teaching. When evening came, they went out of the city. 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.

Have faith in God, Jesus said. I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, go throw yourself into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. 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 him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.

Please keep your Bibles open there, and we'll look at that in just a sec. Well, let's pray and ask for God's help as we look at his word together. Let's pray.

[3 : 5 1] Father God, we thank you so much for your word. We thank you for having a gospel, the gospel of Mark, which has been written down, recorded for us, so that we can learn about who Jesus is, and all that he has done for us. We pray now, Father, that you would speak to us through your word.

Help us to listen well, and help us to be people who see Jesus for who he is, and that we may be encouraged and built up. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Our present government are now halfway through their five-year term.

But with another tough budget proposed next month, the support is most definitely dwindling.

Recent polls show that they have lost points, while the opposition have all gained points.

Now, how different that is to the early days. They were welcomed into office with enthusiastic cheers, the saviors of our land.

[5 : 2 4] But great expectations have come crashing down. One moment, they are the hope of the nation. The next, they are public enemy number one.

Well, the crowds that were following Jesus towards Jerusalem were expecting great things. They had lived under foreign rule for the best part of 600 years, most recently under the might of the Romans.

But now Jesus had come displaying his supreme power and absolute authority. He had raised the dead.

He had controlled nature. He had fed the hungry with just a few loaves and a couple of fish.

Expectations were high. Look at verse 9, chapter 11.

Those who followed, or those who went ahead of Jesus and those who followed shouted, Hosanna! Which means save! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

[6 : 35] The saviour of their nation had come. But within a day, those expectations had crashed.

Look at verse 18. The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him.

In fact, very soon, everyone would be on the side of the chief priests. One moment, they were the hope of the nation. The next, he was public enemy number one.

Was Jesus the king as he claimed? Or was he some political failure? Well, as Jesus arrives into Jerusalem, the final week before his death, we see that he is a king, but not the kind of king we expect.

In fact, what he offers is greater than any of our expectations. So first, the king has come.

[7 : 48] Jesus has been slowly making his way towards Jerusalem. And as he travelled, so his band of supporters grew.

So if you go back to chapter 10, verse 1. Chapter 10, verse 1. Jesus then left that place, that's Capernaum, and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan.

So he's making his step slowly towards Jerusalem. Again, crowds of people came to him. Now look at verse 46. Then they came to Jericho, a step closer, as Jesus and his disciples together with a large crowd were leaving the city.

So people were anticipating or expecting great things. The crowds began to follow him. What miracles was he going to do now? How was he going to overthrow the occupying force of the Romans?

Well, to help us gauge the excitement, Mark highlights three actions of great significance. First, Jesus had come to the Mount of Olives.

[9 : 14] Look at verse 1 of chapter 11. As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethpage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives.

You say, what's so interesting about the Mount of Olives? Well, listen to this from one of the prophets. The prophet Zechariah. It's on the screen.

This is what he says. The Lord will go out and fight against those nations as he fights in the day of battle. On that day, his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem.

Now, Jesus has just arrived, this self-proclaimed king, and he's come to the Mount of Olives.

Second, Jesus tells his disciples to go and get a colt, or which could be translated also as a donkey. Verse 2. He says to the disciples, 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.

[10 : 23] Verse 4. They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. Verse 7. When they brought the colt to Jesus, they threw their cloaks over it, and he sat on it.

Well, you think, well, what's so interesting about that? Well, again, listen to the same prophets.

Look at what it says on the screen. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion.

Shout, daughter of Jerusalem. See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Do you see what Jesus is beginning to say to all the crowds of people? And then there was the shouts of the crowd.

Verse 8. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. And those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, Hosanna!

[11 : 27] Which means, save! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David. Hosanna!

Salvation! In the highest! Now, verse 9, this Hosanna, is actually a quote from Psalm 118.

And if you were to read that psalm, it's all about being surrounded by an enemy and looking forward to a king who's going to save.

Look at what some of that psalm says on the screen. Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous. The Lord's hand has done mighty things.

O Lord, save us. O Lord, grant us success. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Now, can you feel the expectation building?

[12:24] The Mount of Olives. Jesus riding on a colt. Shouting, Hosanna! Save the rescuer! The long-awaited king has finally come.

The great deliverer. The mighty warrior. All the crowds are gathering around him. He's ready for battle. The saving king has come to overthrow the might of the Romans.

The stage is set. And look what he does. Verse 11. Jesus entered Jerusalem.

If you're going to have a revolution, it might as well be in the capital where everybody knows. Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

Sorry, did we miss something there? Is that it? Is that it? He just wanders around the temple.

[13:27] He says nothing. He does nothing. He just walks around. And then he just heads out of town. The king has come.

But not as we expect. You see, we too have our expectations of Jesus, don't we?

I guarantee if we were just to ask everybody now what you expect Jesus to do for you, there'd be a whole list of things. And like the crowd, our concern is very usually physical and it's temporal.

It's all about me in the here and now. We want Jesus to heal us now. We want Jesus to give us a better job now. If Jesus is king, well then surely he'll listen to my wants and my demands and do what I say.

Well, Jesus is concerned about the physical. He is concerned about the temporal. But he offers us so much more. So much more.

[14:34] For Jesus had come to establish a kingdom. But an eternal kingdom. A kingdom of peace and justice, beauty and joy. Where we live in perfect relationship with God for all eternity.

And Jesus had come as a warrior king to fight a battle. But he came to fight not a physical one, a spiritual one.

For he came to fight our greatest enemy, destroying sin and death and defeating Satan as he would die on a cross so that we could be forgiven and welcomed into his kingdom.

The king has come. But he's not always the king that we expect. The problem is not that our expectations of Jesus are too high.

Our expectations of Jesus are too low. We're focused on the here and the now when he's offering us something far greater for all eternity.

[15:41] What Jesus offers is greater than we could ever dream or imagine. So the king has come.

Second, the king has spoken. Verse 12. The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry.

Didn't have time for his porridge that morning. Seeing in the distance a fig tree and 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. Now it seems like Jesus got out on the wrong side of the bed, didn't it?

He's a bit upset. What did the tree ever do to him? You're not having fruit anymore. Well, as we've seen, every action of Jesus in this event is loaded with significance.

[16:49] And what Jesus says to the fig tree, May no one ever eat fruit from you again, becomes a visible image. It's like a mini parable for what Jesus is about to say to the temple and its leaders.

You have become fruitless and I am going to put an end to your practices. Look what Jesus does in verse 15.

It's really radical. On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there.

Instead of starting a revolution, he begins a demolition. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves and he wouldn't allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts.

Now, in our minds here, we've got to picture hundreds upon hundreds, even thousands of people all coming into this outer court area of the temple.

[17 : 59] It's a bit like a farmer's market with all kinds of livestock being sold for sacrifices and people selling it and people buying it. It's noisy. It's crazy.

And Jesus just bursts into the middle of it and starts kicking them out all over the place. Pandemonium. Now, this outer court where Jesus goes and starts throwing things about, was actually designed to keep certain people out and only let certain people in.

Foreigners and outsiders. So if you weren't a Jew, you weren't allowed past that area. The only people allowed in were the Jews who came to buy an animal for sacrifice or sell an animal for sacrifice.

In fact, all around that area where Jesus was kicking people out or upsetting all their tables, there were these signs that were read in all kinds of different languages for all the foreigners who ever came near.

This is what it said. No foreigner may enter within the railing and enclosure that surrounded the temple. Anyone apprehended shall have himself to blame for his consequent death.

[19 : 20] The temple was meant to be the place where people could come and meet God. This was the place where you could come in and talk and pray to God.

But if you were a foreigner, if you weren't one of the special people, then you were shut out and if you even tried to get in and you were caught, you'd be killed.

It begins to explain why Jesus got understatement of the year a little bit upset. He came to confront it, to put an end to all their practices.

Verse 17. As he taught them, he said, is it not written my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations?

for all people? Rather than welcoming people, a sign of fruitfulness, he's saying, you are barring people, a sign of being fruitless.

[20 : 28] The prophets had anticipated a time when all nations, when all peoples would be welcomed. Go back with me to Isaiah chapter 56.

It's about the middle of your Bible, thereabouts. Isaiah chapter 56. If somebody's got a page number using a red Bible, they could tell me and I'll shout it out.

Isaiah 56. 743. 743. Look at what was anticipated.

Look what people were looking forward to. Isaiah 56. And we'll pick it up in verse 3. Isaiah 56.

Verse 3. Let no foreigner who has bound himself to the Lord say, the Lord will surely exclude me from his people. Verse 5.

[21 : 38] To them, that is, the foreigner, the outsider, I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters.

I will give them an everlasting name that will not be cut off. Verse 7. These, these outsiders, these foreigners, I will bring to my holy mountain, that's to the temple, and give them joy in my house of prayer.

Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar, for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations. You see, God's plan, his great expansive plan, was that through Jesus Christ, he would make it possible for all people to be able to come to God and to be part of his kingdom.

No wonder. Look back at Mark chapter 11, verse 18. No wonder the chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him.

And soon, all the crowds would be on their side too. One moment, the hope of the nation, the next public enemy, number one.

[23 : 06] Why? Why would people turn so quickly? Well, they wanted a king who would tell the people to get out. They wanted a king who was going to kind of keep themselves nice and pure and get all the foreigners and the outsiders away and make it all nice and comfortable again.

But Jesus came to tell people that they could come in, that they were welcomed in. They wanted to get rid of the outsiders. Jesus is saying, I have come for the outsider.

The king has spoken, but not as we expect. Now, like the chief priests, I think we too can play temple games, can't we?

We don't think this much of a temple, but we can still play the game. We don't like to say it, but we can sure think it. We don't want their kind coming in here.

We can't let those sorts of people be part of this church, could we? But who are we to put restrictions on people?

[24 : 23] The only way any of us can come to God, the only way any of us can enjoy God and know God is through the once and for all sacrifice of Jesus. It's the same for us all.

When Jesus barged into the temple and started kicking tables over and chucking the animals all around the place, when he broke up the place for buying and selling sacrifices, he was saying to the people loud and clear, I am the sacrifice for your sins.

I am the way into God's kingdom. You don't need to do this. I am the one who will deal with your sin once and for all.

The way is now open for all to come, regardless of your nationality or your background. It doesn't matter what your race is or what your religion is. I welcome all who will come to me.

And here's the challenge. how will people ever know they are welcomed if they don't know they're welcomed? There's no point in people saying oh they're all welcome.

[25 : 38] How does people know they are welcomed into his kingdom? Well Jesus came into the world, the saving king. He came in to invite people, to tell people, to show people what the kingdom was all about and to say that through me you can enter.

So we too must go into the world within our communities, within our families, around about us, to welcome people to Jesus.

So the king has come, the king has spoken, and third, the king has commanded. Look at verse 20. in the morning, so he's kind of going in and out of Jerusalem in this passage here, in the morning as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots, and Peter remembered and said to Jesus, Rabbi, look, the fig tree you cursed has withered.

So here was this visual reminder to his disciples to tell them that look, there is no longer any need for a temple. temple. There is no need for this religious ritual, there is no need for all these religious rules anymore.

We don't need all these priests wandering around in their flowing robes. It is fruitless. It will produce nothing in you or for you.

[27 : 11] It is dead, it is lifeless, it gives you nothing. Nothing. Jesus says, I am the way to the kingdom, I am the sacrifice for your sins, I welcome all people who come to me.

So, verse 22, what's the response? Have faith in God, Jesus answered.

If Jesus is the king who has come to establish his kingdom, if Jesus welcomes in all people to come to him, then the only response is, have faith in God.

This is what the king commands. Trust me, I can do for you what nobody else can do for you. Look at verse 23.

I tell you the truth, Jesus says, if one of you says to this mountain, maybe it was the Mount of Olives he was looking at, if one of you says to this mountain, go through yourself into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.

[28 : 22] Now, is Jesus saying that we're to go around and command the mountains and tell mountains to jump into the sea? I don't think that's what he's saying.

What he is saying, or what he's making clear is that he can do for us what nobody else can do for us. We can go looking to everyone else and everything else and they'll offer all kinds of things, but only Jesus can offer us new life, eternity with him, the gift of his Holy Spirit within us, being welcomed into his family, giving forgiveness, peace and joy, transformation of a whole life.

only Jesus can do that for you. In other words, we should expect from Jesus what we can't expect from anyone else. Our problem is not that our expectations are too high, our expectations are set too low.

Jesus offers to us more than we could ever expect to imagine. And the way to express our faith is simply through prayer.

Look at verse 24. How do I show my faith? Verse 24. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it and it will be yours.

[29 : 51] Just pause on that and think about that. God's eternal kingdom, forgiveness of all your sins, welcomed into his family, given the gift of the Holy Spirit, peace and joy in abundance and grace and mercy overflowing to you every single day, his family, the people of believers around you, all of this, how do we get it?

Ask in prayer, a prayer of faith. prayer. That's all we have to do. Through prayer we exercise our complete dependence and place all our confidence in Jesus.

We don't have to do anything. Just pray and ask and you will receive it. so let me ask this question, have we obeyed the king's command?

Have we put faith in Jesus the king? Well, here's the test for each one of us to find out if we have faith in Jesus.

Here's the test. Do I have faith in Jesus? Well, look at verse 25. And when you stand praying, when you're asking for the kingdom, when you're exercising faith in Jesus, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.

[31 : 40] Do you see what it's saying? The evidence of faith in Jesus is forgiveness of other people. An unforgiving, grudge holding, record keeping person is a sign that you do not have faith and are not in the kingdom.

Look, if you know the forgiveness of Jesus, if you have experienced the forgiveness of Jesus in your life, you will forgive others. And nobody's saying it's easy, but if Jesus has given us this welcome into his family, into his kingdom, if Jesus has forgiven you, then you will not hold anything against another person.

In fact, you will do all that you can to reach out to them and seek reconciliation and welcome them just as Jesus has welcomed us.

The evidence of faith in Jesus is that we are forgiving of others, each other.

And then lastly, expect great things. The King has come. He has come to establish his eternal kingdom. The King has spoken.

[33 : 07] He opens up the way for all people to come to God. The King has commanded. He calls us to put our faith and our trust in him. If we look to Jesus and demand the King to do things our way, we'll always be disappointed.

But if we submit to his way, we will discover he will do more than we could ever expect or imagine. He is a great saving King who does more than we could ever expect or imagine.

Let's talk to him right now. Let's pray. Father, thank you so much for your word.

Thank you for Jesus, the great King. Please help us to understand Jesus as you portray him and as he comes to us.

help us to have right expectations but help us to see all that he has come to do and to give to us.

Thank you, Jesus, that you are our great King.

[34 : 34] Help us to trust you each and every day. Help us to follow you where you go and help us to live for you wherever we are.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, we're going to sing our final song in response to to up. You will be a