

Are we truly following Jesus, or are we only “fair weather” Christians? What evidence is there of healthy fruit in your life?

In Mark 11:25 Jesus brings up forgiveness, and the importance of forgiving others. **How does forgiving others align with bearing healthy fruit as a follower of Jesus?**

Read Mark 11:27–33. **Who’s in power here? What does Jesus do to disarm them?**

Read Mark 12:1–12. **Who is this parable about? Why do you think Jesus decided to speak in a parable here?**

Most scholars believe that the “man” in the parable represents God, the “vineyard” is Israel, and the tenants (“vine-growers”) are Israel's leaders. The meaning of this parable was clear to the religious leaders. Jesus had exposed their plot to kill him, but the approval of the people temporarily shielded Jesus from their wrath.

Read Mark 12:13–17. **Again, what powerful group challenges Jesus? How does he deal with their challenge?**

Now read Mark 12:18–27. **Who comes at Jesus? What does he say that nullifies their argument?**

LAST WORD

The path of discipleship will not be our “best life now.” Jesus gave us fair warning that following him would require sacrifice, involve suffering, and change our hearts completely. Jesus wants us to shape our lives to look like his—giving of ourselves every day in sacrificial love. That takes intentional thought every minute of the day.

We serve a servant-king. Jesus came not to lord his power over us but to serve us with every scrap of his life. He asks that we follow him and do the same, always prepared to receive him when he returns.

So take a few minutes and think about how you’d respond if Jesus showed up on your doorstep today.

How has following Jesus looked different than you first expected?

What circumstances tempted you to give up on him? What helped firm up your faith instead?

What does sacrificial love look like in your relationships?

GO DEEPER

The Go Deeper section has two potential functions. It can supplement your small group discussion by providing extra discussion material. We’ve highlighted a

Horizontal lines for writing.

place where each of the following segments could fit in the Discuss section of the study guide.

But you can also use these sections as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting.

1. Background: Why was riding a donkey significant to Jesus's entry to Jerusalem?

Jesus instructed his disciples to find a colt that had never been ridden and bring it back to him before he entered Jerusalem (Mark 11:1–3). Matthew and Luke tell us that it was the colt of a donkey. Why a donkey, and one that had not yet been ridden?

Animals that had never been ridden were considered suitable for sacramental purposes, as seen in Numbers 19:2 and Deuteronomy 21:3, in which they were sacrificed to atone for another's sin. In 1 Samuel 6:7, two milk cows that had never been yoked (made to work in labor) were conscripted to pull the ark of the covenant back to Israel. By choosing to ride an animal thus far set apart from common work, Jesus added an element of sacrament and sacredness to his entry to the city.

Though we see the donkey as a lowly animal, in the Middle East it was

Why?

What was the difference between this couple and the widow in the temple?

Reflect on your own willingness to give generously.
