

JESUS FINAL WEEK – CONFRONTATION WITH THE JEWS

- we have been looking at the event of the final week in the life of Jesus that will lead up to His crucifixion and resurrection
 - Jesus had been ministering now for a little over 3 years, and is now making His final trip into Jerusalem
 - He had been telling His disciples for the last few weeks what was awaiting Him at Jerusalem
 - on the first day of week, the day we traditionally refer to as Palm Sunday, Jesus made His triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem
 - this was the Passover season, and some have estimated that there may have been a couple of million people in the Jerusalem area
 - up to this point, Jesus had shunned the public eye, often telling folks that His time had not yet come
 - now, on what is traditionally known as Palm Sunday, Jesus makes His very public entrance into the city of Jerusalem, riding on a donkey
 - this is an amazing event, and we see 3 Old Testament prophecies coming together. ([Zechariah 9.9](#), [Psalm 118.24-26](#), [Daniel 9.24-26](#))
 - While in the city Jesus came into the Temple area and cleaned house in fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy, [Malachi 3:1-3](#).
 - Jesus left after this and spent the night in Bethany
 - the next day, which would have been Monday, Jesus returned to the city
 - as Jesus came back the next day, He was hungry, and noticed a fig tree
 - He approached the tree because He saw that it had leaves, which is an indication that there should've also had fruit
 - upon closer examination, He found no fruit, so He cursed the tree
 - While in the city Jesus came into the Temple area and cleaned house in fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy, [Malachi 3:1-3](#).
 - Jesus left after this and spent the night in Bethany
 - This brings us to the third day, which would have been Tuesday
1. ([11:20-34](#)) LESSONS FROM THE FIG TREE
- the tree was dried up from the roots
 - Jesus used the opportunity of the withered tree to teach about having faith in God – “Have faith in God”
 - faith and doubt cannot exist together at the same time, it is one or the other
 - faith, without doubting, can move mountains

- one of the things that is true about answered prayer is that we have faith that God hears and answers

- prayer should always be according to God’s will, not our own”

- another key ingredient to our prayers being answered is forgiveness

- we can’t harbor bitterness and unforgiveness and expect God to answer our prayers

2. CHALLENGED BY THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS

(11:27-33) FIRST QUESTION: WHO GIVES YOU THE RIGHT TO SO THIS?

- the religious leaders challenge Jesus as He is walking in the Temple – Who gave You the right to do what you are doing?

- Before we are quick to judge these religious guys, how often does that same question arise when the Lord speaks to us about something in our life?

- Jesus answered their question with a question of His own

(12:1-12) JESUS RESPONDS BY TELLING THEM A PARABLE

- this parable was not addressed to the crowd, but to the hypocritical religious leaders who were questioning Him about what he was doing

- it would have been a familiar story to these guys because hundreds of years earlier, Isaiah had said the same thing ([Isaiah 5:1-7](#))

- Lesson = How often do we know what the Bible says but fail to understand how it applies to us?

- The man who plants the vineyard is God, the farmers that the landowner rents to are the leaders of the nation of Israel, and the vineyard is the nation of Israel.

- like the illustration of the fig tree, the owner was looking for fruit, but found none

- the patience of the Father in sending servants, which would speak of the prophets of the Old Testament

- finally, after much patience and repeated attempts, the Father sent His one and only Son

- like they had done with the previous messengers, they killed the Son

- Jesus once again quotes from [Psalm 118](#)

- this infuriated the religious leaders because they knew that Jesus had spoken this parable against them

(12:13-17) SECOND QUESTION: IS IT LAWFUL TO PAY TAXES TO CAESAR?

- the purpose of this question was not to get an answer, but to try and trap Jesus by His own words

- a question that many raise today about the separation of church and state

- the religious leaders were plotting and scheming on how they might trap Jesus by asking Him trick questions

- here people who disagreed significantly in their theology joined in the hatred for Jesus
 - they begin by trying to flatter Him, but remember their motive = they wanted to entangle Him
 - What do You think, Is it lawful . . .
 - always the question of legalism
 - the Herodians were more of a political group that advocated support for Herod
 - the only reason I mention this is because there are lots of folks today who want to bring politics into the church
 - we have certain responsibilities to the government
 - this is what Peter had to say about it = [1 Peter 2.17](#) - Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.
 - but money isn't the only thing stamped with an image
 - [Genesis 1.26-27](#) – Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His [own] image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.
 - we also have a responsibility to God who created us
 - are you faithfully surrendering your life to God
- [\(12:18-27\)](#) THIRD QUESTION: WHAT ABOUT THE RESURRECTION?**
- we move from the political realm to now addressing matters of theology and belief
 - The Sadducees were the ancient version of the modern liberal theologians.
 - they ask a ridiculous question about the resurrection, which they did not believe in, based on what Moses taught in the law ([Deuteronomy 25.5-10](#) - Marriage Duty of the Surviving Brother.)
 - there seems to be a growing number of people who call themselves believers but have questions about the Resurrection
 - they were guilty of the same things that a lot of people today are
 - not knowing the Scriptures, though they thought they did
 - it is possible to know a lot about the Bible, but completely miss the meaning
 - not knowing the power of God
 - Jesus simply told them that relationships would be different in heaven than they are here on earth
 - he then corrected them concerning their denial of the resurrection by asking them if they had not read in the Scriptures
 - how often our bad theology could be corrected by just reading the Word and taking it face value
 - God is the God of the living

- Heaven is real

(12:28-34) FOURTH QUESTION: WHAT IS THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT?

- the scribes were the ones who placed the importance on keeping the rules, and they had a lot of them - some say there were 613

- what had started out as the Ten Commandments had over the centuries evolved in volumes with very exacting rules as to how the Law was to be lived out

- thinking they were trapping Him, the scribe asked which one of the rules was the greatest

- Jesus simply takes them back to the greatest confession of the Jews - the Shema

- [Deuteronomy 6.4-5](#) - "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD [is] one! "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

- the second is linked to the first, and is summed up in the word "love"

- some see in this a command to love ourselves, but I believe that is not what is being said here

- Jon Courson says it well, "Just as you already love yourself, care for yourself, and think about yourself, you are to love your neighbor in the same way."

- the entire Old Testament can be summed up in these statements

- the bottom line = love God, love people

(12:35-37) JESUS TURNS THE TABLES AND ASKS HIS OWN QUESTION

- Before they could think of another question to test Him, Jesus asked them a question.

- the question that Jesus asks is really directed to get the Pharisees to make a decision on who He really is

- similar to what He asked the disciples in [Matthew 16.15](#) - He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"
- What about you - have you made your decision?

- here Jesus quotes from [Psalm 110.1](#), which Peter also quoted in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost in [Acts 2.34](#)

- the reality that Jesus is Lord!
- the guys who studied the Bible were stumped

3. LESSONS FROM THE DAY

(12:38-40) WARNING ABOUT THOSE WHO DON'T PRACTICE WHAT THEY PREACH

(12:41-44) WATCHING THOSE WHO GAVE