



CONNECT GROUPS

APRIL 5, 2020

TIME TO PIVOT (MARK 11:1-11)

INTRODUCTION

- Think of a time when you went from a place of little hope to renewed hope in God. How did this transition take place?
- How does a right view of Jesus and praise of Him impact our turning from hopelessness to hope?

While we find ourselves in an ongoing context of fear and anxiety, God calls us to pivot from a focus on the things of the world to focus on the truth about Him. As we lay down our pride, fear, and doubt before Him, He is faithful to do more than we ever expected. As we move toward Easter, let's seek to pivot from worry into a place of trust and praise in Christ who is more than able to save.

DISCUSSION

> *Read Mark 11:1-11.*

- Do you think these unnamed disciples considered Jesus' instructions odd? Why or why not?
- Do you think these disciples doubted anything that Jesus told them to expect? How would you have responded?
- Take a minute to read Zechariah 9:9. In what way did Jesus fulfill this Old Testament prophecy in today's passage?
- How did this entry compare with those of conquering military heroes? How did these military heroes achieve their victories? How would Jesus achieve His?
- Why do you think the people spread palm branches on the road?
- What does the phrase "Hosanna" mean? What did it communicate about the crowd's expectations of Jesus?
- What were the people expecting Jesus to do when He reached Jerusalem (see Luke 19:11 and Zech. 9:9)?
- How were the people's expectations of the Messiah different from Jesus' true intentions?

GOING DEEPER

- When have your expectations about God been different from the way He has revealed Himself to you?
- What does praise look like in your day-to-day life? In what ways might you reject Jesus, even unintentionally?
- Read Mark 15:12-15. In these verses, the crowds were no longer praising Jesus but calling for His execution. What are some ways we have turned on Jesus when He doesn't respond as we desire?

APPLICATION

- What do you find most difficult about pivoting from a focus on the world to a focus on Christ and praise of Him?
- This week we discussed the things God might be calling us to lay down as we pivot to focus on Easter. What is God calling you to lay down before Jesus (pride, fear, or doubt)?

COMMENTARY

Mark 11

Jesus entered Jerusalem as one coming in the name, that is, the authority, of the Lord with a God-given mission of salvation ("Hosanna" means save now). By riding a colt, Jesus laid claim to His own brand of messiahship—not conquering hero but humble servant (see Zech. 9:9).

The cursing of the fig tree was a prophetic act meant to illustrate God's judgment upon the temple, which had proved unfruitful by not realizing its mission as a place of prayer for all people. What is necessary for experiencing God is not the temple (see 13:1-2) but "faith in God." Indeed, faith makes the temple obsolete. The one who believes can cast the temple mount into the sea (contrast 1 Kgs. 8:29-30). Forgiveness of sins is not experienced in temple sacrifice but in sharing God's willingness to forgive. The "forgiveness requirement" warns believers not to turn their prayer time into a robbers' retreat.

Understandably, the religious leaders questioned Jesus' authority because cleansing the temple was the responsibility of the Messiah or the end-time prophet (Mal. 3:1-5; Zech. 14:20-21). Leaders had earlier questioned Jesus' authority to announce God's forgiveness (2:1-12), celebrate God's new work (2:18-22), and do good on the Sabbath (3:1-6). Jesus' question suggests that His authority was God given.