

## **5 Days to Calvary: Holy Week Devotions**

### **Monday**

#### **What Are You Carrying?**

Most of us know the feeling of being weighed down because we are carrying too many things at once. But what if carrying too much was what you were known for? If it was, then your name might be Rocco Mercurio.

Mercurio holds more than 25 entries in the Guinness Book of World records and a few of them have to do with holding things. He is the world leader in holding mugs (25 at one time), billiard balls (17) and tennis balls (he held 8 with his palm facing down). He stacked and balanced a record 255 poker chips on one finger and 1,700 (you read that right) cups on his forehead.<sup>1</sup>

Rocco is a world record holding carrier of things most of us rarely even think about. But there's a chance that a lot of us are more like Rocco than we care to admit. But instead of holding mugs or stacking cups, we carry baggage from our past, empty religious practices and promises without pay-offs.

Jesus understands.

Jesus knows how to help professional carriers.

After Jesus triumphantly enters Jerusalem, we see the Lord coming to the Temple, but due to the late hour He and the disciples leave without any activities being recorded. It was the following day that would create a stir and teach us about Jesus' views of freedom and truth.

The following morning Jesus was hungry, and he saw "a fig tree in leaf" (Mk 11:13). As He got closer, He saw there were no figs (in fairness it wasn't fig season) and Jesus cursed the tree saying that no one would ever eat from it again. Immediately after this Mark locates Jesus at the Temple, turning over tables and passionately seeking to ensure this House was able to carry out its intended purpose.

In this passage Mark's Gospel makes a statement that is easily overlooked, but powerful in helping us clarify Jesus' actions at both the tree and the Temple.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.guinnessworldrecords.com](http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com)

“And He would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple.” - Mark 11:16

This statement literally speaks of Jesus’ refusal to allow the money changers, merchants, or buyers of animals to keep holding what they were carrying. He would not allow a place devoted and dedicated to honoring and seeking the Presence of God to become a “den of robbers.” But the question worth asking is: what was being stolen?

Perhaps the answer is found in looking at both scenes, the tree and the Temple.

The fig tree was carrying leaves without fruit. The Temple was carrying religious practice without Presence. In both situations the missing part was the best part, the fruit on the tree and the Father in the house. And Jesus refused to allow either the tree or the Temple to carry the announcement of something without the authenticity of it.

In our lives it’s the same as it was in the Temple and at the tree: Jesus is ferocious in calling out what is fruitless and flipping over what is counterfeit. He does not intend to let His people work so hard to carry things that only provide false hope or broken promises. No, Jesus wants us to have fruit in a fruitless world and His presence in places where it’s promised. Why else would He have invited us to carry what He had already verified as valuable? Jesus sees what we’ve been carrying, and He offers us something far less bulky and cumbersome. He offers us His own understanding of what the Father desires for us (Matt. 11:25-27). The miracle of what Jesus asks us to carry is in the way it doesn’t weigh us down, but instead it gives us rest: “Take My yoke upon you...you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:29-30)?

Unless your name is Rocco Mercurio, you weren’t created to carry things that don’t bring you life, love, rest and hope. Don’t be afraid to let the Lord turn over some tables in your life. He’s doing it so you and I can stop carrying things that have no lasting value.