

THIS WEEKEND

at The Crossing



Last Days
Something Greater
Shane Philip
March 17, 2024

The Crossing Church
Las Vegas, Nevada

OPENING

This week we are beginning a two-week series called Last Days. We start with Jesus' grand entry into Jerusalem through the Golden Gate, but the expectations of the observers of this event were quite different from the reality. It is the Sunday before Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection and the events of the next week will stun the world. The arrival of Jesus signaled an end to a sacred *place* and the beginning of a sacred *people*.

SCRIPTURE¹

Mark 11:7-11 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 cut 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!" Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

Mark 11:15-18 On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. And 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.'" The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

Matthew 12:6 I tell you that something greater than the temple is here.

Mark 13:1-2 As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!" "Do you see all these great buildings?" replied Jesus. "Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."

1 Corinthians 6:19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;

¹ All scripture is NIV translation unless otherwise indicated.

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

OBSERVATION

On the Sunday before the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, He made a triumphal entry through the Golden Gate into Jerusalem. Many others, kings, governors, Caesars all had triumphal entries, even Pilate, riding in on magnificent horses indicating they were ready for battle – while Jesus rode in on a donkey's colt, which symbolized peace. So much meaning was implicit in this event – it wasn't a political effort to gain power, but instead it was a laying down of Jesus' power and influence.

QUESTION: What does this event teach you about power in humility?

On Monday morning, the temple became the center of attention. It was the place where the people could connect with God – a place to pray and worship and to offer sacrifices and be made right with God. It was a holy place. But the priests had allowed it to become a place to selfishly gain profit and take advantage of the poor. We know what makes Jesus righteously angry, don't we? It is injustice and making it difficult for those who are seeking God. So, on Tuesday He confronted the hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders and powerfully overturned the tables of the money changers.

QUESTION: What makes you righteously angry today?

The history of the temple begins with Solomon building it according to God's dimensions in the 900's B. C. It was destroyed by Babylon in 586 B. C. Seventy years later Zerubbabel was allowed to return to Jerusalem and build a minimal replica of the original. Then King Herod built a magnificent temple in the last century B. C. in order to gain the approval of the Jews. Finally, the Roman general Titus destroyed it in 70 A. D. and the diaspora, or dispersal of the Jews into the world, began. There hasn't been another one since.

QUESTION: Why do you think God allowed His holy temple to be destroyed so many times?

QUESTION: In the Old Testament, where do you think the Jews worshipped God when there was no temple?

The place where people could find the presence of God was gone because it had become more important than the people. It was the centerpiece of a religion – and Jesus was going after it because it built barriers to God - He was intent on tearing it down and reconciling us to His Father by sacrificing Himself as He paid for the barrier sin that separated us from God.

QUESTION: Why do you think Jesus was crucified and resurrected during Passover week?

APPLICATION

The arrival of Jesus signaled an end to a sacred **place** and the beginning of a sacred **people**. He brought an end to religion being about a temple and ushered in a relationship with people. There are two applications for us to consider: **1) We are sacred!** What makes a place sacred is the presence of God, and therefore it is holy. We are now the new temple of God because the Holy Spirit lives within us. The result of that truth is that love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness,

faithfulness, gentleness and self-control have become characteristics of God through our service toward others.

QUESTION: How have you changed since realizing that you have been reconciled to God and Jesus now lives in you?

If the Holy Spirit lives in us, then the question is “How do we honor God with our bodies?” First of all there is sexual purity, but it applies beyond that to the way we take care of them physically. Some hurts, habits and hang-ups prevent us from doing that and honoring God. **2) Every person we come in contact with is sacred, too.** People are more sacred than buildings. We are raising, married to, hiring and working for sacred people. That’s why justice, mercy, dignity and love are Kingdom values and why we hate abortion and racism. This is why we share our faith – every person spends eternity somewhere and needs to meet Jesus in order to make an intelligent choice as to where that will be. So, let’s begin praying for others daily, sharing our stories, inviting them to Easter services, leaning in with commitment to go into all the world with the gospel of truth.

QUESTION: In what ways are you planning to strengthen your commitment to Jesus?

QUESTION: Who do you plan to invite to Easter services?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, this is a time when we turn our thoughts to Jesus’ sacrifice for us when He willingly went to the Cross as the Passover Lamb to die for our sins. The joy of Resurrection Morning is overwhelming when we realize how much You love us and want a unique relationship with us on a daily basis. Thank you for Easter. In His name. Amen.

QUESTIONS

QUESTION: What does this event teach you about power in humility?

QUESTION: What makes you righteously angry today?

QUESTION: Why do you think God allowed His holy temple to be destroyed so many times?

QUESTION: In the Old Testament, where do you think the Jews worshipped God when there was no temple?

QUESTION: Why do you think Jesus was crucified and resurrected during Passover week? What scriptures support your answer?

QUESTION: How have you changed since realizing that you have been reconciled to God and Jesus now lives in you?

QUESTION: In what ways are you planning to strengthen your commitment to Jesus?

QUESTION: Who do you plan to invite to Easter services?