CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Mark Chapter 11 — The Triumphal Entry, Cleansing the Temple, and the Power of Faith

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Mark Chapter 11 begins the final week of Jesus' earthly life.

For ten chapters, Jesus has been moving toward Jerusalem.

Now He arrives.

The last six chapters of Mark cover only about one week.

This shows how important the events of that week were.

Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a young donkey.

Crowds spread cloaks and branches on the road.

They shout, **“Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”**

He enters as the promised King.

But He is a humble King, riding on a donkey, not a warhorse.

The next day, Jesus curses a fig tree that has leaves but no fruit.

Then He enters the temple and drives out those who were buying and selling.

“My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

The fig tree and the temple are connected.

Both looked alive on the outside.

But both lacked the fruit God was looking for.

The next morning, the fig tree has withered.

Jesus teaches about faith, prayer, and forgiveness.

Finally, the religious leaders challenge His authority.

Jesus answers with a question they cannot answer.

The chapter moves through five movements:

- The Triumphal Entry (verses 1–11).
- The Fig Tree Cursed (verses 12–14).
- Jesus Cleanses the Temple (verses 15–19).
- The Lesson of the Withered Fig Tree (verses 20–26).
- The Authority of Jesus Questioned (verses 27–33).

The central truth of Mark 11 is:

Jesus is the humble King who comes to His people, looks for true fruit and pure worship, calls His followers to believing prayer and forgiving hearts, and speaks with divine authority that no one can overturn.

I. APPROACHING JERUSALEM

Mark 11:1 — Bethphage and Bethany

“As Jesus and His disciples approached Jerusalem, near Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, He sent two disciples ahead.”

“As Jesus and His disciples approached Jerusalem.”

The long journey was nearly over.

“Near Bethphage and Bethany.”

Two small villages just east of Jerusalem.

Bethany was the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

“At the Mount of Olives.”

A hill overlooking Jerusalem from the east.

Zechariah prophesied that the Lord would stand on the Mount of Olives.

“He sent two disciples ahead.”

Jesus was in charge of every detail.

Cross References

Matthew 21:1

> As Jesus and His followers came near Jerusalem, they stopped at Bethphage on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of His followers ahead.

Luke 19:29

> As He came near Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, He sent out two of His followers.

Zechariah 14:4

> On that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus was in full control as He approached the cross.

Key Truth

Jesus did not drift into Jerusalem; He arrived on purpose.

II. A COLT NO ONE HAS RIDDEN

Mark 11:2 — Go into the Village

"He told them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied there, one that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here."

"You will find a colt tied there."

Jesus knew exactly what they would find.

A **colt** was a young donkey.

"One that no one has ever ridden."

In the Old Testament, animals set apart for holy use had never been used before.

This colt was set apart for the King.

"Untie it and bring it here."

Jesus was fulfilling Zechariah's prophecy.

Cross References

Matthew 21:2

> Go to the town ahead of you. As soon as you enter it, you will find a donkey tied there with her colt. Untie them and bring them to Me.

Luke 19:30

> Go into the town ahead. When you enter it, you will find a colt tied there that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here.

Zechariah 9:9

> Rejoice greatly, people of Jerusalem! Your King is coming to you. He does what is right and brings salvation. He is humble and riding on a donkey, on a young donkey.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knows every detail before it happens.

Key Truth

The King chose a humble colt for His royal entry.

III. THE LORD NEEDS IT

Mark 11:3 — If Anyone Asks

“If anyone asks, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back shortly.’””

“The Lord needs it.”

Simple words with great authority.

Jesus called Himself **the Lord**.

“And will send it back shortly.”

Jesus promised to return it.

He was not taking it unfairly.

Some think the owner already knew Jesus.

Either way, Jesus' word was enough.

Cross References

Matthew 21:3

> If anyone asks why you are taking them, say, “The Master needs them,” and he will send them right away.

Luke 19:31

> If anyone asks why you are untying it, say, “The Lord needs it.”

John 12:14

> Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as the Scriptures say.

Spiritual Principle

Whatever we have belongs to the Lord when He needs it.

Application

What do you have that the Lord might need?

IV. TIED AT A DOORWAY

Mark 11:4 — Just as He Said

“They went and found the colt tied outside in the street at a doorway, and as they untied it,”

They found everything exactly as Jesus said.

The colt was tied outside in the street.

At a doorway.

Jesus' words were perfectly accurate.

His disciples learned again that they could trust Him completely.

Cross References

Matthew 21:6

> The followers went and did what Jesus told them to do.

Luke 19:32

> The two followers went and found everything just as Jesus had told them.

Genesis 49:11

> He ties his donkey to a vine and his young donkey to the best branch.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' word always proves true.

Key Truth

When Jesus speaks, it happens just as He says.

V. WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

Mark 11:5 — The Bystanders Ask

“some people standing there asked, “What are you doing, untying the colt?””

People noticed.

Two strangers were untying someone's donkey.

Of course they asked questions.

Jesus had prepared His disciples for this exact moment.

Cross References

Matthew 21:6

> They did as Jesus had told them.

Luke 19:33

> As they were untying the colt, its owners asked, “Why are you untying the colt?”

John 12:16

> His followers did not understand at first. But after Jesus was glorified, they remembered these things.

Spiritual Principle

Obeying Jesus may raise questions, but He prepares us for them.

Key Truth

Jesus never sends His people out unprepared.

VI. THEY LET THEM GO

Mark 11:6 — As Jesus Had Told Them

“They answered as Jesus had told them, and the people let them go.”

The disciples repeated Jesus' words.

And it worked.

The people let them take the colt.

Simple obedience to Jesus' instructions opened the way.

Cross References

Matthew 21:6

> The followers went and did exactly what Jesus told them.

Luke 19:34

> They answered, “The Lord needs it.”

Mark 14:16

> The followers left, went into the city, and found everything just as Jesus had said.

Spiritual Principle

Simple obedience to Jesus opens doors.

Key Truth

We do not need clever words; we need His words.

VII. HE SAT ON IT

Mark 11:7 — Cloaks on the Colt

“They brought the colt to Jesus, threw their cloaks over it, and He sat on it.”

“They brought the colt to Jesus.”

They obeyed.

“Threw their cloaks over it.”

They made a saddle from their own clothes.

This was an act of honor.

“And He sat on it.”

Jesus rode the colt into Jerusalem.

For the first time in Mark, Jesus openly presents Himself as King.

But He came in peace and humility.

Kings riding to war came on horses.

Kings coming in peace rode donkeys.

Cross References

Matthew 21:7

> They brought the donkey and the colt to Jesus and laid their coats on them, and Jesus sat on them.

Luke 19:35

> They brought it to Jesus, threw their coats on the colt, and put Jesus on it.

Zechariah 9:9

> Your King comes to you, humble and riding on a donkey.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus comes as a humble King who brings peace.

Key Truth

The King of kings rode a borrowed donkey.

VIII. CLOAKS AND BRANCHES

Mark 11:8 — Spread on the Road

“Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut from the fields.”

“Many people spread their cloaks on the road.”

This was how people welcomed a king.

When Jehu became king, people spread their cloaks for him.

“While others spread branches they had cut from the fields.”

John tells us they were palm branches.

Palm branches were a symbol of victory and celebration.

The people were giving Jesus a royal welcome.

Cross References

Matthew 21:8

> A very large crowd spread their coats on the road. Others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

John 12:13

> They took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him.

2 Kings 9:13

> The officers quickly took off their coats and spread them on the steps in front of Jehu. Then they blew a trumpet and shouted, “Jehu is king!”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus deserves our honor and our best.

Application

How do you welcome Jesus as King in your life?

IX. HOSANNA!

Mark 11:9 — Blessed Is He

“The crowds went ahead of Him and those who followed shouted, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Hosanna!”

This Hebrew word means **“Save now!”** or **“Please save!”**

Over time it became a shout of praise.

“Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”

They quoted Psalm 118.

Pilgrims sang this psalm on the way to Jerusalem.

But now they sang it to Jesus.

They recognized Him as the One sent by God.

Cross References

Matthew 21:9

> The crowds shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

Psalm 118:26

> Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord.

John 12:13

> They shouted, “Hosanna! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the King of Israel!”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is the One sent by God to save His people.

Key Truth

The crowd cried “Save now!” and Jesus was about to do exactly that.

X. THE KINGDOM OF DAVID

Mark 11:10 — Hosanna in the Highest

“Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!””

“Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!”

The people expected the kingdom of David to be restored.

God had promised David a descendant who would reign forever.

They saw Jesus as that King.

They were right.

But many expected a political kingdom.

Jesus' kingdom would come through the cross.

“Hosanna in the highest!”

Praise to God in the highest heaven.

Cross References

Luke 19:38

> They said, “God bless the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory to God!”

Isaiah 9:7

> His power and peace will keep growing. He will rule on David's throne and over his kingdom forever.

Luke 1:32

> He will be a great man, known as the Son of God Most High. The Lord God will make Him king on the throne that once belonged to David, His ancestor.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is the promised King from David's line who will reign forever.

Key Truth

The crowd was right about who Jesus was, but not about how He would reign.

XI. HE LOOKED AROUND AT EVERYTHING

Mark 11:11 — Into the Temple

“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.”

“Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts.”

The King went to the house of God.

“He looked around at everything.”

Jesus inspected the temple.

He saw what was happening there.

This prepared for what He would do the next day.

“Since it was already late, He went out to Bethany.”

Jesus spent the nights that week in Bethany, outside the city.

Cross References

Matthew 21:17

> Then Jesus left and went out of the city to Bethany, where He spent the night.

Luke 19:45

> Jesus went into the temple.

Malachi 3:1

> The Lord you are looking for will suddenly come to His temple.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus sees everything that happens in His house.

Key Truth

The Lord came to His temple and looked carefully.

XII. JESUS WAS HUNGRY

Mark 11:12 — Leaving Bethany

“The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry.”

A simple detail.

Jesus was truly human.

He got hungry.

He knew the needs of the human body.

He shares in our weaknesses.

Cross References

Matthew 21:18

> Early the next morning, as Jesus was going back to the city, He was hungry.

Matthew 4:2

> After Jesus fasted for forty days and nights, He was very hungry.

Hebrews 4:15

> Jesus knows what it is like to be weak. He faced every kind of test we face, and He never sinned.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus fully shared our human experience.

Key Truth

The Lord of all knew what it was to be hungry.

XIII. NOTHING BUT LEAVES

Mark 11:13 — Not the Season for Figs

“Seeing a fig tree in leaf from a distance, He went to find out if it had any fruit. When He reached it, He found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs.”

“Seeing a fig tree in leaf from a distance.”

The tree looked healthy.

“He went to find out if it had any fruit.”

Fig trees often produced small early buds along with their leaves.

Leaves suggested there might be something to eat.

“He found nothing but leaves.”

It looked promising but gave nothing.

“Because it was not the season for figs.”

This puzzles many readers.

Why would Jesus expect fruit out of season?

Jesus was doing an acted parable.

The tree was a picture of Israel's religious life at that time.

It had the leaves of religious activity.

But it lacked the fruit of true faith and obedience.

Cross References

Matthew 21:19

Seeing a fig tree by the road, He went to it, but found nothing on it except leaves.

Luke 13:6

A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard. He came looking for fruit on it but found none.

Jeremiah 8:13

There will be no grapes on the vine and no figs on the fig tree. Even the leaves will dry up.

Spiritual Principle

God looks for real fruit, not just the appearance of life.

Spiritual Warning

Religious leaves without fruit do not satisfy God.

XIV. MAY NO ONE EAT FROM YOU

Mark 11:14 — The Disciples Heard

“Then He said to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And His disciples heard Him say it.”

“Then He said to the tree.”

Jesus spoke to the tree.

“May no one ever eat fruit from you again.”

This was a word of judgment.

It was the only miracle of judgment Jesus performed.

And it was on a tree, not on a person.

“And His disciples heard Him say it.”

This detail matters.

The lesson would come the next morning.

Cross References

Matthew 21:19

> He said to the tree, “You will never produce fruit again!” Right away the fig tree dried up.

Luke 13:7

> So he said to the gardener, “For three years I have looked for fruit on this tree and found none. Cut it down!”

Jude 1:12

> They are like trees in autumn that have no fruit and are pulled up by the roots. They are dead twice.

Spiritual Principle

Fruitlessness brings judgment.

Key Truth

Jesus judged a tree to warn people.

XV. DRIVING OUT THE SELLERS

Mark 11:15 — Overturning the Tables

“When they arrived in Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves,”

“Jesus entered the temple courts.”

This was the large outer court, the Court of the Gentiles.

It was the only place where non-Jews could come to pray.

“And began driving out those who were buying and selling.”

Animals were sold for sacrifices.

It had become a busy marketplace.

“He overturned the tables of the money changers.”

Visitors had to exchange their money for the special temple coins.

Many believe the exchange rates were unfair.

“And the benches of those selling doves.”

Doves were the offering of the poor.

Even the poor were being taken advantage of.

John records a similar cleansing at the start of Jesus' ministry.

Many Bible students believe Jesus cleansed the temple twice.

Cross References

Matthew 21:12

> Jesus went into the temple and threw out all the people who were buying and selling there. He turned over the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves.

Luke 19:45

> Jesus went into the temple and began to throw out the people who were selling things there.

John 2:15

> He made a whip out of cords and drove everyone out of the temple, along with the sheep and cattle. He poured out the coins of the money changers and turned over their tables.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is zealous for the purity of God's house.

Key Truth

The King came to His temple and set it right.

XVI. NO MERCHANDISE THROUGH THE TEMPLE

Mark 11:16 — Not a Shortcut

“and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts.”

Only Mark records this detail.

People were using the temple courts as a shortcut.

They carried their goods through the holy place.

It had become a busy street instead of a house of prayer.

Jesus stopped it.

God's house deserves reverence.

Cross References

Zechariah 14:21

> On that day there will no longer be any traders in the house of the Lord who rules over all.

Matthew 21:12

> Jesus threw out everyone who was buying and selling in the temple.

John 2:16

> He told those selling doves, “Get these out of here! Stop turning My Father's house into a market!”

Spiritual Principle

God's house should be treated with reverence, not as a place of business.

Application

Do you treat worship with reverence?

XVII. A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL NATIONS

Mark 11:17 — A Den of Thieves

“He taught them, saying, “Is it not written: ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it a den of thieves.””

“Is it not written.”

Jesus pointed to Scripture.

“My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

He quoted Isaiah 56.

Only Mark includes **“for all nations.”**

The court where this market stood was the place where Gentiles came to pray.

The noise and business kept them from worshiping.

“But you have made it a den of thieves.”

He quoted Jeremiah 7.

A **den** was where robbers hid.

The temple had become a hiding place for people who cheated others while appearing religious.

This warning applies to religious people in every age, including churches today.

Cross References

Isaiah 56:7

> I will bring them to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer. My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.

Jeremiah 7:11

> Has this house, which is called by My name, become a hideout for robbers to you?

Matthew 21:13

> He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house will be called a house of prayer.’ But you are making it a hideout for robbers.”

Spiritual Principle

God's house is meant to be a place of prayer for people of every nation.

Spiritual Warning

Religion can become a hiding place for greed if hearts are not right.

XVIII. LOOKING FOR A WAY TO KILL HIM

Mark 11:18 — They Feared Him

“The chief priests and 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.”

“The chief priests and teachers of the law heard this.”

The leaders in charge of the temple were offended.

Jesus had challenged their authority and their profits.

“And began looking for a way to kill Him.”

Their plan to kill Jesus grew stronger.

“For they feared Him.”

They were afraid of His influence.

“Because the whole crowd was amazed at His teaching.”

The people loved to hear Him.

This made the leaders even more nervous.

Cross References

Matthew 21:46

> They wanted to arrest Him, but they were afraid of the crowds, because the people thought He was a prophet.

Luke 19:47

> Jesus taught in the temple every day. The leading priests, teachers of the law, and leaders of the people wanted to kill Him.

John 11:53

> From that day on, they planned how to kill Him.

Spiritual Principle

Exposing sin often brings opposition from those who profit from it.

Key Truth

The leaders were more afraid of losing power than of opposing God.

XIX. OUT OF THE CITY

Mark 11:19 — When Evening Came

“When evening came, Jesus and His disciples went out of the city.”

Each evening that week, Jesus left Jerusalem.

He went back to Bethany or the Mount of Olives.

The city was not safe for Him at night.

His time had not yet come.

Cross References

Matthew 21:17

> He left them and went out of the city to Bethany and spent the night there.

Luke 21:37

> Each day Jesus taught in the temple, and each night He went out and stayed on the Mount of Olives.

John 8:1

> Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus followed the Father's timing, not the plans of His enemies.

Key Truth

No one could take Jesus' life before the Father's appointed hour.

XX. WITHERED FROM THE ROOTS

Mark 11:20 — The Next Morning

“The next morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots.”

“The next morning, as they went along.”

The disciples passed the same tree.

“They saw the fig tree withered from the roots.”

Not just a few dried leaves.

The whole tree was dead, from the roots up.

This was the picture of judgment on fruitless religion.

The fig tree story wraps around the temple story.

Mark does this on purpose.

Each story helps explain the other.

Cross References

Matthew 21:20

> When the followers saw this, they were amazed. They asked, “How did the fig tree dry up so quickly?”

Hosea 9:16

> Israel is like a plant whose roots have dried up. They will produce no fruit.

Jude 1:12

> They are like trees without fruit at harvest time, pulled up by the roots and completely dead.

Spiritual Principle

Religion without real fruit will wither from the roots.

Key Truth

What looks alive on the outside can be dead on the inside.

XXI. LOOK! IT HAS WITHERED!

Mark 11:21 — Peter Remembered

“Peter remembered and said, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree You cursed has withered!””

Peter remembered Jesus' words.

He was amazed.

What Jesus said had come true.

Peter may have been the one who told Mark this story.

Cross References

Matthew 21:20

> The followers were amazed and asked, “How did the fig tree dry up so fast?”

Luke 13:6

> A man had a fig tree in his vineyard, but when he looked for fruit, he found none.

Habakkuk 3:17

> Even though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, I will still rejoice in the Lord.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' words always come to pass.

Key Truth

What Jesus says, happens.

XXII. HAVE FAITH IN GOD

Mark 11:22 — The Answer

“Jesus answered, “Have faith in God.”

Jesus did not explain the tree.

He turned to a lesson about faith.

“Have faith in God.”

Not faith in faith.

Not faith in ourselves.

Faith in God.

The temple system had failed.

But God had not.

His people could trust Him directly.

Cross References

Matthew 21:21

> Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt.”

Hebrews 11:6

> Without trust, there is no way to please God. Anyone who draws near to Him must believe that He is there and that He is good to those who look for Him.

Mark 9:23

> Everything is possible for the one who believes.

Spiritual Principle

The object of our faith is God Himself.

Key Truth

Faith is only as strong as the One we trust.

XXIII. THIS MOUNTAIN

Mark 11:23 — Thrown into the Sea

“Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes what he says will happen, it will be done for him.”

“If anyone says to this mountain.”

They may have been standing on the Mount of Olives.

Moving mountains was a common way to describe doing something impossible.

“Be lifted up and thrown into the sea.”

Jesus used a dramatic picture.

“And does not doubt in his heart but believes.”

Faith that trusts God fully.

“It will be done for him.”

God can do what seems impossible.

Jesus is not teaching that we can control God by our words.

He is teaching that no obstacle is too great for God when we trust Him and seek His will.

Cross References

Matthew 21:21

> If you have faith and do not doubt, you can tell this mountain, “Go and fall into the sea,” and it will happen.

Matthew 17:20

> If your faith is as small as a mustard seed, you can tell this mountain to move, and it will move.

1 Corinthians 13:2

> Even if my faith could shove mountains out of the way, without love I would be worth nothing.

Spiritual Principle

No obstacle is too great for God when we trust Him.

Key Truth

Faith in God can face mountains.

XXIV. BELIEVE THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED IT

Mark 11:24 — Whatever You Ask

“Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”

“Whatever you ask for in prayer.”

A bold promise about prayer.

“Believe that you have received it.”

Pray with confident trust.

“And it will be yours.”

God answers believing prayer.

This promise must be read with the rest of Scripture.

Jesus Himself prayed, **“Not what I will, but what You will.”**

John teaches that God hears what we ask according to His will.

This is not a blank check for selfish wishes.

It is an invitation to trust God boldly as we pray for what pleases Him.

Cross References

Matthew 21:22

> If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.

Matthew 7:7

> Keep asking, and you will be given what you need. Keep looking, and you will find. Keep knocking, and the door will be opened.

John 14:13

> Whatever you ask for in My name, I will do, so that the Son can bring honor to the Father.

Spiritual Principle

God invites us to pray with bold faith for what pleases Him.

Application

Do you pray with confident trust in God?

XXV. FORGIVE THEM

Mark 11:25 — When You Stand Praying

“And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may also forgive your sins.”

“And when you stand praying.”

Standing was a common posture for prayer.

“If you hold anything against anyone.”

Unforgiveness blocks our prayers.

“Forgive them.”

Let it go.

Release the debt.

“So that your Father in heaven may also forgive your sins.”

A forgiven heart becomes a forgiving heart.

Faith that moves mountains must be joined with love that forgives.

Cross References

Matthew 6:14

> When you let go of the wrongs others have done to you, your heavenly Father will let go of yours.

Ephesians 4:32

> Treat one another with kindness and a tender heart. Forgive one another, the same way God forgave you because of Christ.

Matthew 18:21

> Peter came and asked Jesus, “Lord, how many times should I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Seven times?”

Spiritual Principle

Prayer and forgiveness go together.

Application

Is there anyone you need to forgive before you pray?

XXVI. IF YOU DO NOT FORGIVE

Mark 11:26 — A Serious Warning

“But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your sins.””

This verse is not found in some of the oldest copies of Mark.

But Jesus teaches the same truth clearly in Matthew 6.

A person who refuses to forgive shows they have not truly understood God's forgiveness.

Those who have been forgiven much will forgive others.

Forgiveness does not mean pretending wrong did not happen.

It does not mean trusting someone who is still dangerous.

It means releasing the desire for revenge and leaving justice to God.

Cross References

Matthew 6:15

> But if you refuse to forgive people, your Father will not forgive your wrongs.

Matthew 18:35

> My Father in heaven will do the same to you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.

James 2:13

> People who show no mercy will be judged without mercy. But mercy is stronger than judgment.

Spiritual Principle

A heart that refuses to forgive cannot fully enjoy God's forgiveness.

Spiritual Warning

Unforgiveness is too costly to keep.

XXVII. BACK TO THE TEMPLE

Mark 11:27 — The Leaders Come

“They returned once again to Jerusalem, and while Jesus was walking in the temple courts, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him.”

“While Jesus was walking in the temple courts.”

Jesus returned to the very place He had cleansed.

“The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him.”

These three groups made up the Sanhedrin, the ruling council.

The top religious authorities came to confront Him.

Cross References

Matthew 21:23

> Jesus went into the temple. While He was teaching, the leading priests and older leaders came to Him.

Luke 20:1

> One day Jesus was teaching the people in the temple and telling them the good news. The leading priests, teachers of the law, and older leaders came up to Him.

Acts 4:7

> They had Peter and John stand before them and asked, “By what power or by whose name did you do this?”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus did not hide from those who opposed Him.

Key Truth

The King returned boldly to His Father's house.

XXVIII. BY WHAT AUTHORITY?

Mark 11:28 — Who Gave You This Authority?

“They asked, “By what authority are You doing these things? Who gave You this authority?””

“By what authority are You doing these things?”

These things meant the cleansing of the temple and His teaching.

“Who gave You this authority?”

They were in charge of the temple.

They had not given Him permission.

They wanted to trap Him.

If He claimed God's authority, they could accuse Him of blasphemy.

Cross References

Matthew 21:23

> They asked, “What authority do You have to do these things? Who gave You this authority?”

Luke 20:2

> Tell us what authority You have to do these things. Who gave You this authority?

John 2:18

> The Jewish leaders asked, “What miracle can You show us to prove You have the right to do this?”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' authority comes from God, not from human institutions.

Key Truth

The question of Jesus' authority is the question of who He is.

XXIX. ONE QUESTION

Mark 11:29 — Answer Me

“Jesus replied, “I will ask you one question. Answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.”

Jesus answered with a question.

This was a common way for rabbis to debate.

But it was more than clever.

His question went right to the heart of the matter.

Cross References

Matthew 21:24

> Jesus answered, “I will ask you one question too. If you answer it, I will tell you what authority I have to do these things.”

Luke 20:3

Jesus answered, “I will also ask you a question. Tell Me.”

Mark 12:34

After that, no one dared to ask Jesus any more questions.

Spiritual Principle

Wise questions can reveal the true condition of the heart.

Key Truth

Jesus' question was really an invitation to honesty.

XXX. FROM HEAVEN OR FROM MEN?

Mark 11:30 — John's Baptism

“John's baptism—was it from heaven, or from men? Answer Me!””

“John's baptism.”

John had prepared the way for Jesus.

John had pointed to Jesus as the One coming after him.

“Was it from heaven, or from men?”

Was John sent by God or not?

If John was from God, then his testimony about Jesus was true.

And Jesus' authority came from the same source.

“Answer Me!”

Jesus demanded an honest answer.

Cross References

Matthew 21:25

Tell Me, was John's baptism from God or from people?

Luke 20:4

> Was the baptism of John from heaven or from people?

Luke 7:30

> But the Pharisees and experts in the law refused God's plan for themselves by not being baptized by John.

Spiritual Principle

How we respond to God's messengers reveals how we respond to God.

Key Truth

John's ministry and Jesus' authority came from the same source.

XXXI. IF WE SAY FROM HEAVEN

Mark 11:31 — Their Dilemma

“They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will ask, ‘Why didn't you believe him?’”

The leaders were trapped.

They did not discuss what was true.

They discussed what was safe to say.

“If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will ask, ‘Why didn't you believe him?’”

They had not believed John.

Admitting John was from God would expose their unbelief.

Cross References

Matthew 21:25

> They argued among themselves, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say, ‘Then why didn't you believe him?’”

Luke 20:5

> They discussed it and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will ask, ‘Why didn't you believe him?’”

John 5:35

> John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you were happy to enjoy his light for a while.

Spiritual Principle

Those who seek safety instead of truth are trapped by their own choices.

Spiritual Warning

Asking “What is safe?” instead of “What is true?” leads to spiritual blindness.

XXXII. IF WE SAY FROM MEN

Mark 11:32 — They Feared the People

“But if we say, ‘From men’…” they feared the people, for everyone held that John truly was a prophet.”

“But if we say, ‘From men.’”

They could not finish the sentence.

“They feared the people.”

The crowds believed John was a prophet.

Saying otherwise would make the people angry.

“For everyone held that John truly was a prophet.”

The ordinary people saw what the leaders refused to see.

The leaders feared people more than they feared God.

Cross References

Matthew 21:26

> But if we say, “From people,” we are afraid of the crowd, because they all think John was a prophet.

Luke 20:6

> If we say, “From people,” the people will stone us, because they are sure John was a prophet.

Matthew 14:5

> Herod wanted to kill John but was afraid of the people, because they considered him a prophet.

Spiritual Principle

The fear of people keeps many from following the truth.

Spiritual Warning

Fearing people more than God leads to spiritual cowardice.

XXXIII. WE DO NOT KNOW

Mark 11:33 — Neither Will I Tell You

“So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” Jesus replied, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.””

“We do not know.”

This was not honest.

They did not want to know.

They refused to answer.

“Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

Jesus would not give more truth to those who rejected the truth they already had.

But His authority was already plain.

Anyone with an open heart could see where it came from.

In the next chapter, Jesus would answer them through a parable.

Cross References

Matthew 21:27

> So they answered Jesus, “We don't know.” Jesus said, “Then I won't tell you by what authority I do these things.”

Luke 20:8

Jesus said, “Then I won't tell you what authority I have to do these things.”

John 2:18

They asked Him, “What sign can You show us to prove You have authority to do this?”

Spiritual Principle

Those who reject the light they have will not be given more.

Key Truth

Jesus' authority is clear to anyone willing to see it.

XXXIV. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM MARK 11

1. Jesus Is the True King

“Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Principle:

The Triumphal Entry fulfills prophecy and declares Christ's authority.

2. Faith Is Powerful

“Have faith in God.”

Principle:

The withered fig tree reminds us that God honors believing prayer.

3. Forgiveness Is Essential

“If you hold anything against anyone, forgive them.”

Principle:

Prayer is tied to forgiving others, as God has forgiven us.

4. God's House Is Holy

“My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

Principle:

Worship should be pure, not corrupted by greed or self-interest.

5. Jesus' Authority Is Divine

“By what authority are You doing these things?”

Principle:

His wisdom silenced His enemies and revealed His power.

XXXV. THE HUMBLE KING

The Triumphal Entry shows what kind of King Jesus is.

The World Expected

- A warrior on a horse.
- A king who would overthrow Rome.
- Political power.

Jesus Came

- Riding a humble donkey.
- Bringing peace, not war.
- On His way to a cross.

What the Crowd Got Right

- He is the Son of David.
- He comes in the name of the Lord.
- He brings salvation.

What the Crowd Missed

- His kingdom would come through suffering.
- His victory would be over sin and death.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Welcome Jesus as King on His terms, not yours.

XXXVI. THE FIG TREE AND THE TEMPLE

Mark wraps the temple story inside the fig tree story.

The Fig Tree

- Looked alive with leaves.
- Had no fruit.
- Was judged and withered.

The Temple

- Looked alive with activity.
- Lacked true prayer and worship.
- Was cleansed by Jesus, and would later be destroyed.

The Lesson for Us

- God looks for fruit, not just leaves.
- Religious activity is not the same as true faith.
- A church or a life can look busy and still be fruitless.

Key Truth

Jesus looks past the leaves for the fruit.

XXXVII. FAITH, PRAYER, AND FORGIVENESS

Verses 22–26 give three keys for prayer.

1. Faith in God

“Have faith in God.”

Trust the One who can move mountains.

2. Believing Prayer

“Believe that you have received it.”

Pray with confidence for what pleases Him.

3. A Forgiving Heart

“Forgive them.”

Do not let unforgiveness block your prayers.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Mountain-moving faith must be joined with a forgiving heart.

XXXVIII. WHAT MARK 11 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

He Knows Every Detail

“You will find a colt tied there.”

He Is the Lord

“The Lord needs it.”

He Is the Humble King

“He sat on it.”

He Is the Son of David

“Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!”

He Is Truly Human

“Jesus was hungry.”

He Judges Fruitlessness

“May no one ever eat fruit from you again.”

He Is Zealous for God's House

“My house shall be called a house of prayer.”

His Authority Is from God

“By what authority are You doing these things?”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus is the humble King who has every right to rule His Father's house.

XXXIX. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why did Jesus ride into Jerusalem on a colt?

To fulfill Zechariah's prophecy and show He was a humble King who came in peace.

Question 2

What does “Hosanna” mean?

“Save now!” It became a shout of praise.

Question 3

What did the crowd expect from Jesus?

Many expected a political king who would restore David's kingdom.

Question 4

Why did Jesus curse the fig tree?

It was an acted parable about religion that has leaves but no fruit.

Question 5

Why did Jesus drive out the sellers from the temple?

They had turned the house of prayer into a marketplace and kept others from worshiping.

Question 6

Why is “for all nations” important?

The market was in the court where Gentiles came to pray; God's house was meant for everyone.

Question 7

How did the religious leaders respond?

They looked for a way to kill Him.

Question 8

What did Jesus teach about faith?

To have faith in God, who can do what seems impossible.

Question 9

Does verse 24 mean God will give us anything we want?

No. It invites bold faith in prayer for what pleases God, in line with His will.

Question 10

Why did Jesus connect prayer with forgiveness?

Because an unforgiving heart blocks our relationship with God.

Question 11

Why did Jesus ask about John's baptism?

Because John was sent by God, and John pointed to Jesus; the leaders' answer would reveal their hearts.

Question 12

What should Mark 11 change about the way Christians live today?

Mark 11 should cause believers to live:

- Welcoming Jesus as King.
- Giving Him what He needs.
- Bearing real fruit, not just leaves.
- Keeping worship pure.
- Making room for all nations to pray.
- Praying with faith in God.
- Forgiving others from the heart.
- Answering truthfully about who Jesus is.

XL. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Mark 11 asks several important questions.

Have I Welcomed Jesus as King?

On His terms or mine?

Is There Anything the Lord Needs from Me?

Am I willing to give it?

Is My Life Bearing Fruit?

Or only leaves?

Is My Worship Pure?

Or has it been mixed with selfish motives?

Am I Keeping Others from Worship?

Is my church welcoming to all nations?

Do I Pray with Faith in God?

Or do I doubt Him?

Is There Someone I Need to Forgive?

Am I holding anything against anyone?

Am I Honest About Who Jesus Is?

Or do I avoid the question?

XLI. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Leaves Without Fruit”

From a distance, the fig tree looked great.

It had green leaves.

It looked healthy.

It looked like it would satisfy a hungry traveler.

But when Jesus came close, He found nothing.

Only leaves.

The temple was the same.

It was busy.

It was crowded.

It looked like the center of religious life.

But when Jesus came close, He found a marketplace instead of a house of prayer.

This creates a powerful principle.

It is possible to look spiritually alive and still be fruitless.

Busy religion is not the same as true faith.

Jesus is not impressed by leaves.

He is looking for fruit.

Principle:

Jesus looks past the appearance of religion for the fruit of a changed life.

XLII. FINAL APPLICATION

Mark Chapter 11 begins the final week of Jesus' life.

He enters Jerusalem as the humble King.

He curses a fruitless fig tree.

He cleanses the temple.

He teaches about faith, prayer, and forgiveness.

He silences those who question His authority.

Mark 11 therefore reminds us:

Never forget that Jesus is King.

Never be content with leaves without fruit.

Never turn worship into business.

Never pray with an unforgiving heart.

Never avoid the question of who Jesus is.

The church does not need people who only look busy.

It needs:

Believers who welcome Jesus as King.

Lives that bear real fruit.

Worship that is pure and open to all.

And hearts that pray with faith and forgive freely.

The same Jesus still calls:

Tell people that Jesus is the humble King.

Tell people that God's house is a house of prayer for all nations.

Tell people to have faith in God.

Tell people that forgiveness is found in Jesus.

And as you live:

Welcome the King.

Bear fruit.

Pray with faith.

Forgive.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Jesus, the humble King who came riding on a donkey.

Thank You that He came in Your name to save us.

Thank You that He knows every detail of our lives.

Thank You that He cares about the purity of Your house.

Thank You that Your house is a house of prayer for all nations.

Thank You that we can have faith in You, who can move mountains.

Thank You for forgiving us so freely.

Forgive us when we have wanted Jesus on our terms instead of His.

Forgive us when our lives have had leaves but no fruit.

Forgive us when our worship has been mixed with selfish motives.

Forgive us when we have held grudges against others.

Help us welcome Jesus as King of our lives.

Make our lives fruitful for Your glory.

Keep our worship pure and our churches open to all.

Teach us to pray with faith.

And give us forgiving hearts, as You have forgiven us.

“Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“He taught them, saying, “Is it not written: ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it a den of thieves.”” — Mark 11:17

Central Truth

Jesus is the humble King who comes to His people, looks for true fruit and pure worship, calls His followers to believing prayer and forgiving hearts, and speaks with divine authority that no one can overturn.

Mark 11 in One Sentence

Jesus enters Jerusalem as the humble King to shouts of “Hosanna,” curses a fruitless fig tree, cleanses the temple so it can be a house of prayer for all nations, teaches His disciples about faith, prayer, and forgiveness, and silences the leaders who question His authority.