

Beyond the Lord's Triumphal Entry

Mark 11-13

Main Point

The last week of our Lord's pre-crucifixion life was a busy one. Jesus based Himself at the nearby home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, and entered Jerusalem often.

The event of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey's colt gets all the attention on Palm Sunday...this is unfortunate.

While our Lord's ride into Jerusalem was a symbolic portent of Him one day entering Jerusalem as the Kings of kings, the rest of our Lord's impactful activities that week get little exposure in sermons and studies. Our Lord spoke publicly and privately on many occasions that week and the content of those messages deserves attention like that of one who is listening intently to a Last Will and Testament. Jesus does not mince words in these messages, and from one of them we address the question...what belongs to God?

A More Complete Recap of Our Lord's Last Week - Mark 11-12

1. The misguided response of the crowd to Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. What was the real triumph?
2. The meaning of the cursed fig tree.
3. Jesus confounds His enemies and dodges premature death.
4. The sermon that enraged the Elders of Israel, which precipitated the crucifixion, Mark 12:1-12
5. The sermon on rendering to Caesar vs. God. Christians are not adversaries to those in the community around us. We all were drowning in the sea of sin. Those who are rescued must turn to those still in the sea and save them! There is nothing we can do for those who would despise those in the boat and reject them for a different boat. But we are not permitted to take up an indignant sword against them. That is the Lord's area, not ours. We are to passively be a light to our culture and actively influence it with love and truth to God.

(Edited excerpt from a previous sermon dated Nov. 2019)

Jesus Defines the Line Between Church and State

The Pharisees and Herodians despised the rule of Caesar over them. When they addressed Jesus, they stated a false assumption about Him. They said, "We know you." What they thought they knew was that the status of a ruler like Caesar means nothing to Jesus; He only regards God, not men. But Jesus knew they were stating a truth for devious purposes. They wanted to get Jesus to condemn the secular state and leadership to have grounds for condemning Him to Pilate. But Jesus knew their motives, and turned them back on themselves.

By His response, Jesus made the statement that when the state issues laws for the civility and good of society, all citizens, Christian or not, are expected by God to obey. This is rendering unto Caesar. The creation of currency for the commerce of goods and prosperity of both state and citizen is a prerogative of the state. Jesus indicated this ownership and authority of the state.

But Jesus also indicated there is a domain over which God rules; it is the spiritual domain. The things that belong to God are the talents, gifts, and abilities of man, as well as his obedience and service. All these are given by God and ought to be returned to God for His pleasure and joy.

Have We Defined the Line?

We try to exercise our vote for those who align with God. But this info on candidates is often vague or difficult to obtain. Do we inform ourselves of the views of politicians, the laws of our legislators, and the rulings of our judges, so that we can decide when to render unto Caesar and when to render unto God?

Perhaps even more difficult, what is our response to organizations and businesses whose owners or CEO's do not separate their personal, secular, anti-Christian agenda from their company's agenda. What is our response when the profit they get from our patronage is used to subsidize God-opposed actions?

This problem has escalated much in recent years and is compelling to Christians. We must not render to Caesar what does not belong to him...our devotion to the values of God and to Biblically-based convictions and prohibitions. If Caesar should make conflicting demands of us, we must remain vigilant to render unto God what is God's, no matter the result!

6. Sermon on Life after Death. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still alive! God is God of the Living!
7. Sermon on the Great Commandment. Many in the world are not far from the kingdom of God!
8. Sermon on the Messiah not being under, but above, David.
9. Sermon of the Widow's offering and how God sees our heart.

Conclusion

Jesus concludes His final public words and speaks privately to His Disciples of the end of people worshipping God from a dead Temple that has been corrupted to a living Temple inside people. He also reveals what will happen in the world just prior to His return, and warns all His followers to be busy for God and ready until that day comes.