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| Zech 9:9-10 Mark11:1-11Mark 11:15-19 | Palm Sunday – Clear Your Hearts | Pinelands – 9am – 24/03/2024 |

**Palm Sunday…**

 A **day of Celebration** expressed with **Joy and Praise.**

 So **IMPORTANT** that it is mentioned in **all 4 Gospels**

 A day when Jerusalem ***‘STOPPED’*** to…

Praise GOD and welcome in his Kingdom.

 A Day that marks the **Beginning** of a **Significant Week…**

 ***HOLY WEEK,*** as we call it.

Did you notice in **Mark 11:11…**

 **Jesus enters Jerusalem,**

with all the Pomp and Ceremony and Singing,

Palm Branches waving in the air

Palm Branches and laying cloaks on the ground…

 Not a red Carpet but a carpet none the less.

 **Jesus** enters **Jerusalem** the goes to the **TEMPLE…**

 Looked around at everything but it was late,

 So went to Bethany with his 12 disciples.

**THE NEXT DAY…** Jesus returns to the City…

 AND… Goes to the ***TEMPLE AGAIN…***

And **Mark** records… ***(Mark 11:15-19)***

***When they arrived in Jerusalem, Jesus went to the Temple and began to drive out all those who were buying and selling. He overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the stools of those who sold pigeons, and he would not let anyone carry anything through the Temple courtyards. He then taught the people: “It is written in the Scriptures that God said, ‘My Temple will be called a house of prayer for the people of all nations.’ But you have turned it into a hideout for thieves!”***

***The chief priests and the teachers of the Law heard of this, so they began looking for some way to kill Jesus. They were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.***

***When evening came, Jesus and his disciples left the city.***

**If you went to Checkers** you would not expect to find people…

Sitting in groups reading the Bible and praying.

**If you went to a Library** you would not expect to find people…

Dressed in a sports kit and playing Rugby.

**If you went to a Restaurant** you would not expect to find people…

Lying on mats and doing Pilates or Gym

***When Jesus went to the temple the day before****,*

***the scene infuriated Him.***

He expected to find people…

*Worshipping God…*

**Instead** all he found was people being conned.
*Praising and praying to God…*

**Instead** there was the sound of profit and commerce
*Glorifying of God…*

**Instead** he found the corruption of the human heart.

**So Jesus LEAVES the City… and returns the next day…**

**John’s** Gospel gives us a more graphic picture…

**Imagine the scene…** ***(Read John 2:13-16)***

***“It was almost time for the Passover Festival, so Jesus went to***

***Jerusalem.***

***There in the Temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and pigeons, and also the moneychangers sitting at their tables.***

***So he made a whip from cords and drove all the animals out of the Temple, both the sheep and the cattle; he overturned the tables of the moneychangers and scattered their coins;***

***and he ordered those who sold the pigeons, "Take them out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!”***

***Expanded version…***

***“It was almost time for the Passover Festival, so Jesus went to***

***Jerusalem.***

 Significant moment in the life of a Jew…

 Thousands and thousands of Jews in Jerusalem

***There in the Temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and pigeons, and also the moneychangers sitting at their tables.***

Chaos in the temple…

 Hive of activity / busy-ness

***So he made a whip from cords***

Took Time… Intentional in what he was doing

*(In Mark’s Gospel he has been thinking about this all night)*

***and drove all the animals out of the Temple, both the sheep and the cattle;***

 Opened pens, untethered animals, opened cages

***he overturned the tables of the moneychangers and scattered their coins;***

created a mess, ***DISRUPTED*** Business

***and he ordered those who sold the pigeons, "Take them out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!”***

 Jesus exerts his authority

**Now remember…** *Irrespective of which Gospel we read*

The Temple was ***CENTRAL*** to the peoples worship

 That is where the High priest met God

 God could be found in the Temple

 God lived in the Temple.

**The Temple** is the place **where people should be able to…**

***come close to God.***

**The priests** were **supposed to be helping the people…**

 ***To come close to God…***

 **BUT…** the Priests were alienating the people

***In truth and honesty…***

 **BUT…** the Priests had replaced this with…

 ***Greed and Corruption.***

**The Temple** was supposed to be **a place of Prayer…**

 **BUT…** it had been turned into a hideout for theives.

 ***(see Mark 11:17)***

**At the Temple** **Jesus was Disturbing and Disrupting…**

*a very settled and solid institution.*

**It had become something other than what God intended it to be.**

***Jesus Disrupts the Temple and what is happening there.***

**In the Old Testament…**

**the Temple** was the *dwelling place of the Spirit of God*

**In the New Testament…**

**the Temple of God moves…**

**1Cor 3:16**… ***“Surely you know that you are God's temple***

***and that God's Spirit lives in you!”***

**WE ARE GOD’S TEMPLE…**

**AND…**  **Jesus** is always the One who ***Disrupts and Disturbs***

 our lives and asks us **to follow Him.**

**Jesus,** **boldly confronts us to examine…**

*How we worship,*

*How we trust in Him.*

**And…** *How we live.*

**Jesus,** Comes to ***CLEAR*** what is **not of God** in our Lives.

**What in our lives is…** **NOT…** **what God intended it to be?**

**Where…** ***Is our Worship lacking?***

***Are our lives not measuring up?***

**Just as Jesus cleansed the Temple then…**

 ***He needs to cleanse His Temple today.***

As we head into **Holy Week…**

 May we let Jesus… **CLEAR our Lives**

 **CLEAR his Temple**

 ***AND…***  **Prepare us for…**

 **GOOD FRIDAY and RESURRECTION SUNDAY**

Let me lead you in a prayer of Temple Clearing *(confession)*

Let us pray.

**Holy and merciful God,**

**we confess to you,**

**and to one another,**

**in communion with all the saints,**

**that we have sinned through our own fault**

**in thought, and word, and deed;**

**in what we have done**

**And in what we have failed to do.**

We have not loved you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.

We have not loved one another as Christ has loved us.
We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.

We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

Lord, in your mercy, clear and cleanse our hearts.

**Christ, have mercy.**

We confess to you, O God, all our past unfaithfulness:

The pride, hypocrisy and impatience of our lives,

our self-indulgence and our exploitation of other people.

Lord, in your mercy, clear and cleanse our hearts.

**Christ, have mercy**

We confess our preoccupation with worldly goods and comforts,

And our envy of others.

Lord, in your mercy, clear and cleanse our hearts.

**Christ, have mercy**

We confess our blindness to human need and suffering,

our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

our misuse and pollution of creation,

and our lack of concern for the generations to come.

Lord, in your mercy, clear and cleanse our hearts.

**Christ, have mercy**

We confess our negligence in prayer and worship,

and our failure to commend the faith that is in us.

Lord, in your mercy, clear and cleanse our hearts.

**Christ, have mercy**

Thank you Lord, for Your Mercy, Your Grace, Your Cleansing and the Clearing of Your Temple, our lives.

**All glory be to God and may He have His way in us.**

**In the all-powerful name of Jesus Christ we Pray.**

**Amen**

**Zechariah 9:9-10 The Future King**

Rejoice, rejoice, people of Zion!

 Shout for joy, you people of Jerusalem!

 Look, your king is coming to you!

He comes triumphant and victorious,

 but humble and riding on a donkey—

 on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

The Lord says,

“I will remove the war chariots from Israel

 and take the horses from Jerusalem;

 the bows used in battle will be destroyed.

Your king will make peace among the nations;

 he will rule from sea to sea,

 from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth.”

**Mark 11:1-11 The Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem**

As they approached Jerusalem, near the towns of Bethphage and Bethany, they came to the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of his disciples on ahead with these instructions: “Go to the village there ahead of you. As soon as you get there, you will find a colt tied up that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. And if someone asks you why you are doing that, say that the Master needs it and will send it back at once.”

So they went and found a colt out in the street, tied to the door of a house. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders asked them, “What are you doing, untying that colt?”

They answered just as Jesus had told them, and the crowd let them go. They brought the colt to Jesus, threw their cloaks over the animal, and Jesus got on. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches in the field and spread them on the road. The people who were in front and those who followed behind began to shout, “Praise God! God bless him who comes in the name of the Lord! God bless the coming kingdom of King David, our father! Praise be to God!”

Jesus entered Jerusalem, went into the Temple, and looked around at everything. But since it was already late in the day, he went out to Bethany with the twelve disciples.