

Chapter 11

Bible Concept: Holy Week

Holy Week is the name we give to the week which includes the special worship services called: Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter. It is the last week of the season of Lent. This week is so sacred to Christians because of Jesus' death and resurrection, which are ultimately God's acts of grace which save us. Because Jesus was obedient to God, even to death, the sins of all humanity have been forgiven for all of time.

In Mark chapter 11, we begin to hear about the week of events which lead to Jesus' death and resurrection. Notice you do not find the names, "Palm Sunday", "Maundy Thursday", "Good Friday", or even "Easter" in the Gospel text. Over the centuries of Christian worship, these days have taken on their special names and this week is considered the holiest week of the entire year for Christians.

Holy Week centers on the events of Jesus' death and resurrection. The reason Jesus and his disciples came to Jerusalem was to celebrate a very holy festival called Passover. When the Jewish people celebrate Passover, they remember how God set them free from slavery in Egypt through a series of plagues. Specifically Passover refers to the final plague in Egypt when God's angel of death passed over the houses of the Israelites because lamb's blood was put on their door frames. You can read more about Passover in Exodus.

Jesus is called the Lamb of God, whose blood sets us free from sin. When we celebrate communion, we receive the body and blood of Jesus in the bread and wine or juice. This reminds us that Jesus died that we may be free from sin. God doesn't set us free because of our human actions. God sets us free because of what Jesus did. This is why Holy Week is so very important. Jesus died so we may be forgiven.

Chapter 11 Verses 9-10 read:

He [Jesus] was in the center of the procession, and the crowds all around him were shouting, "Praise God! Bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Bless the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Praise God in highest heaven!"

New Living Translation (NLT)

Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven."

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

Reflect on that statement for a moment.

How do you expect people to treat Jesus based on them praising him in this story?

Definition

The Hebrew word Hosanna, which is shouted by the crowds as Jesus enters Jerusalem, literally means, "Save us, we pray."

Hosanna and the rest of this quote in the memory verse is from Psalm 118 and it was read often during the liturgy on the days during the festival of Tabernacles, which is the Jewish festival which includes Passover.

Memory Verse

Focus Story: Jesus and the fig tree, 11:12-14 and 11:20-25

What is your favorite food item?

How do you feel when the grocery store is completely out of this favorite food?

All Jesus wanted was a fig, he was hungry, but this tree had no figs on it. What do you think about Jesus' reaction to the tree?

Jesus used this story for two purposes, one to stress the importance of faith and second to talk about forgiveness.

What is the lesson Jesus teaches us about faith? (see verses 20-25 for help)

Do you have a daily prayer time set aside for your talking with God?

One idea for helping your prayer life is to have a journal in which you write what you pray about, and then you can go back and mark when you have received the answer to your prayers.

What is the lesson Jesus teaches us about forgiveness? (see verses 20-25 for help)

Have you ever been so mad at someone you said unkind words, maybe even swore at them? When we are really mad at someone and we treat them unfairly, our relationship is damaged, like the fig tree that withered. But Jesus wants us to have good relationships. How does prayer help us to forgive others?

*praying
together*



Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen

Praying together as a family is a special time. Light a candle to remember God is present in your midst as you pray. Stretch your hands upward toward heaven as you pray. Reach as high as you can.

Pray together:

Fully Divine and Fully Human Lord, you teach forgiveness and love, even as you approached your own death. Help us to know that forgiveness and love in our own life and help us to tell others about your love and forgiveness. Amen

Talk about something that was good about your week. How do you see God in the midst of the good? Talk also about something that was bad about your week. How do you see God in the midst of the bad? Thank God for the good times, and ask for God's help for the bad times.

Conclude your time by saying the Lord's Prayer.