

The Village Church – Rancho Santa Fe
Week #20 – Adult Bible Study – 2025 & 2026

Discovering the Bible

Notes – The Crucifixion

February 24 & 25

Mark 11:1-11, Jesus Enters Jerusalem

Mark 11:15-19, Jesus Cleanses the Temple

Mark 14:12-26, Jesus Shares the Passover Meal

Mark 14:32-42, Jesus Prays in Gethsemane

Mark 14:43-52, Jesus Is Arrested

Mark 14:53-65, Jesus Is Taken before the Sanhedrin

Mark 15:1-15, Jesus Is Taken before Pilate

Mark 15:16-41, Jesus Is Crucified

Mark 15:42-47, Jesus Is Placed in the Tomb

INTRODUCTION

1. The story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem introduces the last part of the Gospel of Mark. Chapters 11 -16 recount Jesus' final days in Jerusalem.
2. In this final section, Jesus' characteristic actions change.
3. The only act of power Jesus performs is a curse, symbolizing the centrality of fear, testing, betrayal, and death.
4. The section opens with Jesus' symbolic ride into Jerusalem and the temple on a colt. A messiah king coming to claim his due from an unrepentant people.
5. For the followers of Jesus Christ, the story of Jesus' final week in Jerusalem, the passion narrative, is the most important part of the Bible.
6. Jesus' death and resurrection illuminate everything that has gone before and everything that follows.
7. The cross is the decisive victory, the one that makes plain who has already won the final victory.

THE SCRIPTURES

Mark 11:1-11, *Jesus Enters Jerusalem*

8. The so-called triumphant procession of Jesus is intentionally incomplete and unconventional. It doesn't end in a decisive victory, the expulsion of the Romans, or the crowning of a new emperor, because the oppressed fight back in unexpected ways.

9. The entrance is a fulfillment of prophecy and depicts the revolutionary side of Jesus and his disciples, who delivered an unconventional jab at the empire.
10. The "anticlimactic" ending in verse 11 (simply looking around and leaving) is seen as a deliberate survey of the Temple system.

Mark 11:15-19, *Jesus Cleanses the Temple*

11. Jesus was not just angry at "business" in a sacred space, but specifically at the **systemic exploitation of the poor**.
12. A major theme in this passage is the restoration of the **Court of the Gentiles**.
13. The passage serves as a warning against "religious gatekeeping" and the use of faith for personal or political gain.

Mark 14:12-26, *Jesus Shares the Passover Meal*

14. Jesus knowingly shares the table with his betrayer, embracing a radical, unconditional love that includes the enemy.
15. The focus shifts from transactional atonement to the ongoing, relational presence of Christ in the community, breaking down walls of division

Mark 14:32-42, *Jesus Prays in Gethsemane*

16. This passage is a primary example of "low Christology," emphasizing Jesus' full participation in the human experience of fear, desperation, and psychological distress. It challenges the image of a stoic, impassive God, suggesting instead that God is intimately present in human agony.
17. Jesus' struggle represents the difficulty of remaining faithful to a mission of love and nonviolence when faced with societally supported violence.
18. The phrase "the flesh is weak" is often reinterpreted not as a condemnation of the body, but as an acknowledgment of human frailty and the systemic pressures that make it difficult to sustain "spiritual vigilance" amid exhaustion and fear.

Mark 14:43-52, *Jesus Is Arrested*

19. The narrative transitions from Jesus' agonizing prayer in Gethsemane to his arrest, characterized by a series of betrayals, a violent outburst, and the total abandonment of Jesus by his followers.
20. His peaceful surrender can be seen as one of supreme confidence in the power of God and in God's plan for not only himself but for the world
21. Scholars utilizing Source Criticism note that Mark's version is likely the earliest and most "raw" account. Scholars often point to "progressive embellishment" in later Gospels (such as John), in which Jesus becomes more divinely authoritative (e.g., soldiers falling to the ground), suggesting that Mark preserves a more human and desperate scene of betrayal.

Mark 14:53-65, *Jesus Is Taken before the Sanhedrin*

22. Throughout Mark, Jesus frequently told people to keep his identity quiet. Here, under oath, he openly proclaims his deity and messianic authority
23. The trial was highly illegal under Jewish law; it was held at night, at a private residence, during a festival (Passover), and without consistent witnesses.
24. Mark creates a "sandwich" narrative, contrasting Jesus' courageous and truthful witness with Peter's nearby failure and denial in the courtyard

Mark 15:16-41, *Jesus Is Crucified*

25. The Gospel account reaches its dramatic climax, detailing the final hours and death of Jesus. This passage focuses on the shame, irony, and divine authority of the Crucifixion
26. Upon Jesus' death, the temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom. This signifies the removal of the barrier between God and humanity, granting direct access to God through Christ's sacrifice.
27. A Gentile Roman centurion, witnessing Jesus's death, declares, "*Truly this man was the Son of God!*" This is the first time a human in Mark's Gospel correctly identifies Jesus' divine identity.
28. Details such as the casting of lots for His clothes and the insults of the crowd directly fulfill Old Testament scriptures, specifically Psalm 22, underscoring that this death was part of God's sovereign plan.
29. While the male disciples are notably absent, Mark identifies several women—including Mary Magdalene—who watched from a distance, highlighting their faithfulness and role as primary witnesses.

Mark 15:42-47, *Jesus Is Placed in the Tomb*

30. The narrative provides crucial evidence that Jesus was physically dead, countering theories that he only swooned or did not die on the cross.
31. Despite the shame of crucifixion, Jesus received a respectful, prompt burial according to Jewish custom (before the Sabbath), honoring him.
32. Joseph of Arimathea (a leader) and the women stand in contrast to the fleeing disciples, demonstrating faithful, quiet action.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does Jesus's entry as a "humble king" challenge your understanding of power and success?
2. How might you be "missing" the real, transformative, and often quiet work of Jesus today?
3. How can you cultivate a more intimate "sacred center" (or "Bethany moment") with God, where it is just you and the Lord, away from the applause of the crowd?

4. Consider a situation in your life where you are resisting God's will. How can you, like Jesus, move from "take this cup from me" to "not what I will, but what you will"?
5. How often do I allow popular opinion, peer pressure, or social norms to guide my decisions rather than the truth?
6. Why did Jesus' silence confound Pilate, and what does this say about His trust in God's plan?
7. Why is it significant that a Roman soldier—rather than the religious leaders—was the one to recognize and declare Jesus as the "Son of God"?
8. Those who mocked Jesus said He "saved others but cannot save Himself." How is this statement actually the central truth of the Gospel?

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