

## Session 9: Mark 11:1–13:37

## SESSION GOALS

Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

**Main Idea:** The world's view of power differs drastically from Jesus's example of the king coming to sacrifice and serve.

**Head Change:** To understand that Jesus's view of power flips the world's view on its head.

**Heart Change:** To feel peace in the midst of persecution, knowing Jesus is with us.

**Life Change:** To shape our day-to-day lives to always be prepared for Jesus's return.

**OPEN**

Defying expectations can be exhilarating or intimidating. **Have you ever walked into a situation knowing that you were going to bring something other than what was expected? How did you feel? What was the reaction?**

This session looks at Jesus as he enters Jerusalem on his purposeful mission to the cross. The crowd has expectations, and the Pharisees are planning confrontations. The disciples are hoping for a coronation.

## READ

Read Mark 11:1–13:37. (This is a fairly long section. If you don't have the time to read

[illegible]

through all of it before watching the video, at least read Mark 11:1–33.)

## WATCH

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Francis's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions:

## What were the people expecting when they welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem?

## How did Jesus confront the religious leaders when he got to Jerusalem?

## What did Jesus say was the destiny of his followers?

Show Session 9: Mark 11:1–13:37 (9 minutes)

## DISCUSS

Francis explained the gravity of what faced Jesus's followers after his crucifixion. In the days preceding his death, Jesus taught them to expect hardship, rejection, and persecution because of their devotion to him.

## How does Francis describe Jesus's last messages to his disciples?

**How often do you hear preaching that reflects this message of surrender and suffering as opposed to the message that God wants you to be healthy and wealthy?**

Read Mark 11:1–11.

It's finally Jesus's time to enter Jerusalem. He rides in on a donkey to cheers of adulation from the

crowd. They expect a conquering king. **Do you think there was anything wrong with the people hoping for a king that would come deliver them? If you were there, how do you think you would have reacted?**

Even today, if we are honest, many of us wish that Jesus would return and right all that's wrong in the world—that he would drive out evil rulers and condemn people who cause harm and fix all the injustice in the world. **Why do you think he's waiting to return?**

*[Note: For further study on the significance of the donkey, see Go Deeper Section 1 at the end of the session.]*

The tension thickens as Jesus enters the city and goes to look in the temple. But it's late, so he retreats back to Bethany and returns the next morning.

Read Mark 11:12–26. This is a passage that seems hard to understand, but the fig tree stands as a metaphor for Israel and us. It looked alive but didn't have the fruit that Jesus expected and desired.

Mark is inviting us to question ourselves. **Are we truly following Jesus, or are we only “fair weather” Christians? What evidence is there of healthy fruit in your life?**

In Mark 11:25 Jesus brings up forgiveness, and the importance of forgiving others. **How does forgiving others align with bearing healthy fruit as a follower of Jesus?**

Read Mark 11:27–33. **Who's in power here?**  
**What does Jesus do to disarm them?**

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**In what ways did that situation impact your view of Jesus and the cost of following him? Is it still worth it? Was your faith shaken, or did it strengthen?**

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Read Mark 12:38–40. **Whom does he warn against? What aspect of them is he condemning?**

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Now read verses 41–44. We see a living example of Jesus’s teaching in the preceding verses. **How does Jesus’s response to the widow’s miniscule offering reflect his perspective on power?**

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*[Note: For further study on the widow’s “mite,” see Go Deeper Section 2 at the end of the session.]*

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In Mark 13:1–3, we witness a conversation between Jesus and his apostles that foreshadows future events regarding the destruction of the temple. Then the two pairs of brothers, James and John, Peter and Andrew, privately ask Jesus when those violent events will happen.

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Read Mark 13:3–13. You’ll see that Jesus doesn’t really answer his disciples’ questions. Rather, he focuses on how they can remain faithful to him during their future suffering and trials.

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**What are their responsibilities when facing persecution?**

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**What hope does he give them for those critical moments when they must defend themselves to the authorities?**

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**Describe a time you have needed the right words to defend your faith. What happened?**

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Read Mark 13:24–37. Remember that Peter (whose story Mark is transcribing throughout this book), James, and John were with Jesus when he was transfigured. Now, Jesus promises that one day he will return in that same radiance but with an army of angels at his back. In Mark 13:32–33, Jesus challenges the disciples to live every day in light of his return.

Most of us live in relative comfort, and our routines can lull us into a sense of stability—that everything will be the same until the day we grow old. So, here's the question: **Are you ready for Jesus's return? Are you living like he could return tomorrow? If not, why?**

## LAST WORD

The path of discipleship will not be our “best life now.” Jesus gave us fair warning that following him would require sacrifice, involve suffering, and change our hearts completely. Jesus wants us to shape our lives to look like his—giving of ourselves every day in sacrificial love. That takes intentional thought every minute of the day.

We serve a servant-king. Jesus came not to lord his power over us but to serve us with every scrap of his life. He asks that we follow him and do the same, always prepared to receive him when he returns.

So take a few minutes and think about how you'd respond if Jesus showed up on your doorstep today.

## How has following Jesus looked different than you first expected?

**What circumstances tempted you to give up on him? What helped firm up your faith**

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Though we see the donkey as a lowly animal, in the Middle East it was considered a noble creature. Judges rode on donkeys (Judges 10:4, 2 Sam. 17:23) as well as royalty (2 Sam. 19:26). The donkey also denoted a king approaching in peace (whereas, a king riding a horse was declaring war).

So Jesus, by riding into Jerusalem on a never-before-ridden donkey, declared himself the Messiah—a savior coming in peace, not to overcome the Romans. He dramatically re-enacted the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

The people—including the disciples—failed to recognize that he was coming not as a warrior but as the Prince of Peace. Their joyful adulation, while rightly directed at their savior, anticipated the wrong kind of salvation.

## What ideas about Jesus did you have previously that you've since learned were untrue or mistaken?

The people saw in Jesus what they were hoping for, not what he truly was. **In what ways have you expected God to do things or be a certain way based on your circumstances rather than his Word?**

## 2. Background: What exactly was a widow's "mite"?

Jesus observed a poor widow quietly putting her donation into the temple coffers, praising her



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