

October 29th, 2023 – Red Letters: Gospel of Mark (part 38)

This guide is designed to give helpful hints in preparing for your group discussion.

Quick Review

Look back from your sermon notes – Was there anything that particularly challenged you from this sermon? Anything you didn't understand, agree with or connect with?

Introduction

Have you ever been in a setting or situation where you had to “fake” or “pretend” you were something that you weren't? Maybe it's happened at work, at school, etc. Explain the situation and the reasoning behind it.

Digging In

Question 1: Read Mark 11:12-14. This beginning of this passage talks about Jesus cursing a fig tree. At first the meaning and purpose of this story seems very strange. The story focuses on this tree appearing to have fruit, but in truth it was fruitless. This was a warning to Israel. **Read Hosea 9:10.**

The nation of Israel was appearing on the outside to be fruitful, but they were fruitless. Pastor Jeff said the phrase, “Christians are called not to be fake, but fruitful.”

Read Matthew 7:15-20, John 15:5-8, Galatians 5:22-23.

How do you evaluate the spiritual fruit produced in your own life? In what ways do you have a community of people in your life that help you assess this? Do you have people that know you well enough to tell you if you're growing?

Question 2: Read Mark 11:15-17. Jesus reaches Jerusalem and enters the temple to see the place of worship turned into worldly endeavors. There was buying and selling happening instead of worship and prayer. Pastor Jeff said the phrase, “Christians are called not to be worldly, but worshippers.”

What are common things in our culture that Christians have fallen into worldly practices? Maybe some of those things aren't necessarily bad, but they are blocking you from true worship. How do you identify that possibly happening in your own life? What could those things be?

Question 3: Read Mark 11:15-19. Pastor Jeff talked about the temple being polluted and being used for the wrong reasons. He said, Christians are called not to be polluted, but pure.” **Read James 1:19-21.** The idea of this passage gives the picture of getting rid of filth and wickedness. One juxtaposing idea is the anger Jesus shows in the Mark 11 passage and the “anger of man” in the James 1 passage. Can you relate to that to that? What are the differences between Jesus' anger which produces the righteousness of God, and the anger of man which does not produce the righteousness of God.

What are the idea of putting away all “filth and wickedness”? The imagery here is taking off dirty clothing and receiving the “implanted word” of God. Write down areas of your life you know need “cleaned up.”

Praise / Prayer Requests

Pray for your group with these things in mind:

Adoration – How can I praise God for what this teaches me?

Confession – What sin can I confess because of what this teaches me?

Thanksgiving – How can I thank God for what Jesus has done?

Supplication – What do I need to ask of God in order to grow in light of this?