GROWTH GROUPS

May 12, 2013

Matthew 21:12-17; 23-27, Isaiah 65:1,2

Conversation Starter: Normally the theme of today's scripture would be reserved for Palm Sunday. But on those days most of the emphasis is on the grand entry into Jerusalem. Most people avoid looking at Jesus entering the temple and clearing it out not with a great sermon but with a whip. Think about the many ways that you picture Jesus in your faith journey. The image of Jesus with a whip clearing out the temple seems to be a disconnect in our understanding; but is it?

Understanding: Matthew chapter 21 presents us with several aspects of Jesus entering into Jerusalem and preparing for Holy Week. In the different narratives and parables we see Jesus claiming and living into authority in ways that speak of a king with power and authority. We find ourselves asking, along with the Pharisees, "who is this man?" We are confronted with questions from Jesus that have us questioning how we live our lives. We acknowledge Jesus as Savior; but do we understand what it means for Jesus to be Lord. The Romans seemed to get it and saw Jesus as Lord as a direct contradiction and challenge against the lordship of Caeser. By the end of the chapter Jesus presents himself as a stumbling block upon which many would stumble and fall in their faith. The modern Church finds great comfort in understanding Jesus as savior, but not so much as Lord and King. Consider the following questions that help us to take a fresh look at what it means to proclaim that Jesus is Lord.

Questions

1. Matthew has built the case for Jesus as King on Kingdom business. Why does Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday raise questions about his claim to authority over Israel and the world?

2. In Matthew Chapter 21, we see Jesus entering the temple and turning over the tables of the money changers. This irritated the religious teachers as well as those who were doing business in the temple. Are there areas of your life that Jesus turns the tables over and upsets things? Has there been a "who is this guy" moment in your life?

3. It is one thing to acknowledge that Jesus is God's Son and is King and it is another thing to then have him take authority over your life. Jesus makes it clear that things have to change if he is to really be Lord in your life. What does it look like for Jesus to have authority in your life and be Lord as well as savior?

And one last question…

4. How does this emphasis on the Lordship of Jesus contradict or go against the grain of how we normally "preach Jesus" or think about who Jesus is in the life of the modern context in Church?

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