

MESSAGE: Palm Sunday
SERIES: Lent: Prep Time
DATE: March 29, 2026
TEXT: Mark 11:1-25

PREACHERS:
McKinley: Paul
Bayview: Jon
East Aurora: Kevin & Becky
South Creek: Trevor
Springville: Keith

BIG IDEA: Being subjects of King Jesus calls for authentic faith.

PREACHERS: GREEN BOLD UNDERLINED ALL THROUGHOUT INDICATES WORDS THAT ARE A PART OF THE KIDS BINGO/HOSANNA ACTIVITY. I ONLY GREEN/BOLDED IT THE 1st TIME IT APPEARED IN SCRIPT. MOST OF THE WORDS APPEAR MORE THAN ONCE. THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO PREACH USING THESE WORDS/TERMS AT LEAST ONCE AND TO NOT OMIT THEM WHEN YOU TAILOR THE SCRIPT TO YOU.

SERVICE FLOW:

- 1 opening Worship Song
- Welcome w/Verbals including recognizing it is a Family Service & making sure kids got a Bingo/Hosanna cardon the way in. Transition to Child Dedications.
- Child Dedications: At end the one leading the dedications introduces student so & so to read Mark 11:1-10.
- Student reads Mark 11:1-10 **(IMAGE)** as Worship Team comes up.

As they [Jesus & His disciples] approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.'" They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,

“Hosanna!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”
“Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!” “Hosanna in the
highest heaven!”
Mark 11:1-10

-When reading is done Worship Leader (over intro of song) invites kids to do what fits best at Campus (McK is having Upper Elementary come onto platform to wave palm branches during song “Praise” (shortened version, 3:58) while Early Childcare kids parade amongst Congregation waving palm branches).

-At end of song, kids return to seats/class while Worship Team does “Holy Forever”

-Turn & Greet

-Bumper

Sermon

Welcome to Palm Sunday, a day where we remember Jesus' entry (**IMAGE**) into Jerusalem. Taking place just less than one week before He will be arrested & killed as the sacrificial lamb for the sins of the world. Only to rise again. & so w/that, today we are going to be looking at that event along with another event that happened right around the same time as documented in Mark 11. But before we dig into that, kids...you have your bingo papers, right? Your job when I am talking is to listen for the words on your board. & when you hear me say them, mark them. And if you get 5 in a row up, down, or diagonal you yell "Hosanna", ok? & everyone who participates will get something on the way out. Sound good, kids? Let me have you start by marking the **free space** in the middle of your paper. GO ahead & do that now

(PREACHERS: you can have kids shout out "Hosanna" when they get it or pick two or three points in the sermon to ask if any kids got "Hosanna" and to shout so then (a maybe less distracting option?). Also you can choose to only give something on the way out to those who get Bingo/Hosanna if you want. This may be a logistical challenge. But do as you may as we have been asked to cover cost of prize out of our CP budget).

Ok, so Jesus had been to Jerusalem before but as we just heard this time it was different. We read of a lot of fanfare & celebration, don't we? The people are shouting **"Hosanna!" (kids...heads up that might be a word on your Bingo/Hosanna board, mark it & keep listening for more words)**. Now Hosanna means "Save us!" And they are also shouting things like "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" and "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!". & they are shouting such all while spreading out & using a sign of the times for victory...maybe like our modern day checkered flag...**palm branches (is that maybe a word for Bingo kids? That is the last hint I am giving you...keep looking & listening)**. & people are seen throwing their **cloaks or coats** on the ground. A sign of the times of submission in the presence of one with royal or divine authority. It's kind of like the red-carpet runway of our day. The Jews were expecting Jesus to over-throw the harsh government & free them & become their earthly King. Yet what is Jesus seen ride in on? It's not a war horse like a king would typically be expected to be seen riding on. But Jesus comes riding in on a *what kids (shout it out)?* A colt. A baby **donkey**. & it's not even His own...it's borrowed...2nd hand. What kind of King is this? I mean kids, imagine for a second a superhero showing up on

a small scooter instead of a rocket ship. Or someone famous showing up in a rusty minivan instead of a limo or fancy car. It would look humble, maybe even ridiculous or surprising. So why are the people shouting and not laughing or scoffing? Well because this image of Him riding on a colt fulfills **prophecy** of old...some 550 yrs old. & kids & all prophecy is when God tells someone in the Bible a message about what will happen later, and they share it with other people. So before the scene...again about 550 yrs before the scene of **Palm Sunday**...the following was said & some people present know it & are connecting the dots:

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. **Zechariah 9:9**

& so because of this and because of all the miracles Jesus had performed the people shout the words we read. The crowd is certain based on all of this that: **The true King, Jesus has arrived!** & they are correct. But as we continue to journey in Mark 11, we realize that Jesus isn't a King who just wants cheers. But a King looking for certain things. A King who deeply cares about certain things. Things like real love, real devotion, & real obedience as the result of real faith.

So w/that let's hear what happens next, when on the next day, after He and His disciples who had gone outside of the city the night before are now starting to make their way back into Jerusalem. (Student so & so reads).

The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. Then he said to the tree, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard him say it. **Mark 11:12-14**

So...kids, have you ever opened a cereal box that looked amazing on the outside. But inside it was almost empty? That's, like, disappointing, right? With that said this tree that Jesus came upon looked alive, but it had nothing to offer. He walks up to a fig tree full of leaves...bright, green, impressive, yet when He looks closer, there is no fruit at all. & let's be clear this isn't really about the physical fruit of the tree. Though figs are good...in fact kids you should have a fig newton in your bag. Try it now if your

caregiver says you can. But again, the lack of physical fruit, as good as figs are, is not what Jesus is upset about. & He would have known it isn't the season for figs. So, what's going on w/the fig tree here? Well, in the Old Testament fig trees are used as a symbol of the nation of Israel. We see this in many places. Hosea, Jeremiah, 1st Kings...but listen to this one.

What misery is mine! I am like one who gathers summer fruit at the gleaning of the vineyard; there is no cluster of grapes to eat, none of the early figs that I crave. Micah 7:1

Now what's interesting to note here is that though it is clear that it was not the season for figs, fig trees can produce an early crop. It is referred to as the breba crop. It would be these green nodules, small but edible. And they appear alongside the leaves. And thus, they should have likely been present when Jesus looked for them. With it being Passover it was the time of year for that. But they were not found. I only point this out because Jesus is once again proving He is the King. He does so by linking the prophetic symbolism of Micah 7 in real time here. And remember the fig tree represents who in our Bible, kids & all (*shout it out*)? The nation of Israel...the chosen people of God in the Old Testament. W/that, the point that we start to see here is this:

Jesus looks beyond outside appearances and cares about what is found on the inside.

He has the authority, in other words, to look past the leaves. Which means that He saw past the emotionally heightened celebration He rode into Jerusalem on. And He saw past the routines & traditions He found within the nation of Israel. And to bring it forward to our day, and what this means for us, is that per Romans 11 (maybe go read it later) we have today been adopted into the family of God. Meaning that while the Israelites were the people of God in the Old Testament, all believers in Christ are the people, or the family & nation of God, today. So He, the true King, Jesus, likewise looks past our routines, & our church attendance, & our religious words, & our traditions & ceremonies...dare I even say our Child Dedications...and He even looks past the pomp & circumstance of our worship...that sometimes maybe even mirrors that of the 1st Palm Sunday...He looks past that & into our hearts. & He looks for fruit. Things that are the result of a faith that trusts Him. And a heart that forgives. And lives that love others.

The cursing of the fig tree is not Jesus being cranky or hangry; it is the King acting with authority against fruitless religion....false faith. So, the question becomes:

When Jesus looks at you and your life what does He find?

Is it good fruit? W/that, so far Jesus only verbally cursed the tree, right? Well let's see if His words held any power. (Student so & so reads).

In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. Peter remembered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!" **Mark 11:20-21**

So the disciples walk past the fig tree that Jesus had cursed the day before and they now see that it has withered from the what church? **Roots**. What Jesus said just one day before has happened. Kids, have you maybe ever left play dough out for even a few hours, or a whole day? If so, what happens? (*TAKE RESPONSE FROM SOME KIDS*) It starts to dry up & be unusable, right? Or maybe you've left your marker or pen cap off just a little too long. I sadly do that with mine all the time. It doesn't take long & they're dried out. But remember that just a day earlier, what did this fig tree look like? It was in leaf, right? Green leaf...it looked really alive. And trees don't just wither in a day. Well unless the King that has authority tells it to, right? But here's the point. When the roots of a tree are affected, the whole tree changes. & let's remember Jesus is using this fig tree as a symbol of who & what? Well then, the nation of Israel...the God-followers of that day, whose roots He was discovering were bad resulting in no fruit. & remember, with us being adopted now into the family of God if we believe in Christ, this applies to us. And so, Jesus, in response to Peter's amazement, says this. (Student so & so reads).

"Have faith in God," Jesus answered. "Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

Mark 11:22-25

Now here Jesus uses this moment to teach about three things. Three, I think it is safe to say, major **Roots** of our Christian life that lead to fruit. W/that kids, on the back of your bingo paper is the image of a healthy tree showing three main roots. **Faith, Prayer, & Forgiveness**. (BUILDING SLIDES)

These are three major roots of our Christian life. & real life starts at the roots of the heart. & w/that said the true King, Jesus, who has authority to judge, as we have seen in this account, also has authority to give life & to fill. But He still gives us the freedom of choice to ask Him to, & allow Him to, and for us to go after such things.

Jesus has authority to fill our hearts with Him.

He is the maker of your heart. And what this section of the scripture shows us, is that true fruitfulness flows naturally from our faith-filled dependence on God. Not on religious appearances or traditions or ceremonies. & not on empty acts. And this is such a good time to have this reminder. As we prepare to gather this coming Friday, **Good Friday**, to remember His death. & then this coming Sunday, **Easter**, to celebrate His resurrection. & so, as we do such, we must ask ourselves why we are doing so. And in what ways, or w/what heart & mindset, we are doing so. It is just a good season to examine our hearts and not just our habits. & to truly surrender our hearts to Him and let Him fill them. And adults & kids alike, what this means is that fruitfulness doesn't come from trying harder to like tape fruit onto our branches. But it comes from trusting God deeply. & it comes from praying boldly and forgiving freely. All of which comes from abiding in & w/Him. Living with & in Him.

In fact another place Jesus uses this plant type language & picture to teach, is in **John 15** where He says this:

“Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”
John 15:4-5

So kids in here, let me ask you a real honest question. One that I just want you to think about. Are you taught in lots of places & by lots of people

(*maybe your parents or teachers at school*) to be kind? Or maybe to share really well? Have you tried to do that, but it's so hard? Yeah, me too! Well, that's kind of the point today. We aren't meant to do that alone or apart from Jesus. We are just meant to tend to our roots. & to do things like water or be active in our faith. Along w/ our prayers. And w/our practice of forgiveness.

In closing Jesus is looking for more than leaves...more than appearances. As one Pastor has said it, He is looking for more than fans, but followers. Fruitful followers. Here are a few ideas as to how to tend your roots this week. Faith: Trust God in one area where you've been anxious, Prayer: Pray boldly & specifically instead of passively worrying, Forgiveness: release someone you're holding resentment toward.

Let's Pray before we respond with a [Worship Song](#) followed by our Benediction from the Book of [Colossians](#).

BENEDICTION (Student so & so reads)

Colossians 2:6-7: So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.