

**"The Real King"**

**"Easter week" = Passion Week = 'Suffering Week':** "passion" as in "passive verbs", not as in "passionate"  
 What he had repeatedly told them: that he was going to suffer!  
 His disciples did some suffering that week too: they suffered losses.

For the disciples of Jesus, there were some *really really* **bright shining moments**: but each one set them up for another loss!

Sunday morning: **"Palm Sunday" "Bright shining moment" #1** Jesus enters Jerusalem "on parade" in triumph: Here in the public position his most hopeful fans were hoping for. But the bright shining moments kept getting followed up by moments of loss: loss of momentum, loss of opportunity, loss of hope.

**"LOSS" #1** Jesus in the temple: **he just looks around!**

**Mark 11:11** And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve. → loss of an opportunity

Monday morning:

**"LOSS" #2** On the way into the city for the second time. (Monday) Jesus cursing a tree (!)

**Mark 11:14** "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." His disciples heard this: and perhaps wondered about. "it was not the season for figs" Loss of respect/confidence (?)

Then, in the city → **"Bright shining moment" #2** Jesus on offense: clearing the temple: the chief priests and scribes heard this: and plotted his death.

To the disciples, here he is "back on his game" **"Bullwhip Monday!"**

THEN, the Tuesday trip, to the Temple: Peter notices and asks about the tree, and Jesus "explains"

**"LOSS" #3** Loss of confidence (?) Jesus in debate: "Who put you in charge?" **Strangely reticent on the main topic** **Mark 11:33** "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

POTENTIAL FOR **"Bright shining moment #3"**: The religious leaders challenge him, on topic! The Big Opportunity:

**"LOSS" #4** Loss of momentum (?) Jesus the story teller: Cf. **what he could have said!**

**Mark 12:1** And he began to speak to them in parables. "A man planted a vineyard ..."

**"Story-Telling Tuesday"!**

**Three strange days**: Four strange bits to the "Palm Sunday" story (and Monday and Tuesday):

**NOTES:**

1. Times when the Lord acts unexpectedly are times for learning and for trusting.

**Psalm 46:1-3** God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling.

This is our belief, our basic conviction about God.

This confidence is strengthened by plenty of history (or should be!)

**Psalm 46:8-9** Come, behold the works of the Lord, how he has brought desolations on the earth.

He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire.

But if your own personal history doesn't strengthen this confidence, what do you do? **You listen to the word of God!**

**Psalm 46:10-11** "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

This is the challenge that the disciples were faced with: faith: learning to trust

2. The Lord has as much right to be severe as to be merciful.

He is after all the king! **Romans 11:20-22** ... do not become proud, but stand in awe. ... Note then the kindness and the severity of God ... He has the right to judge! In fact, more of a right to judge than to be merciful! To be merciful he was required to suffer. We should be surprised at how rarely he is severe! (He just stands there!)

Both severe and merciful! **Romans 11:33-36** Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

#### **ACTIONS:**

a) Apply for his mercy

**Romans 12:1** I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Can you see Jesus? He's standing here -- in "his temple" --- just looking around.

He hasn't started to set things right: to curse the proud but fruitless fruit tree: still time to be healed of fruitlessness!

**Ask to be healed.** Let's not be "James 4" people, who don't have because we don't ask. **Let's ask.** Let's draw near to the throne of grace to find grace to help in our time of need!

b) Bow to his justice

**Romans 9:18-21** ... he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honored use and another for dishonorable use? The very tough pill to swallow, especially perhaps these days ("Question authority") Play the part of the clay: Don't think you can win an argument with the potter!