



## Jesus Enters Jerusalem/Disruption

14th Confirmation Class Lesson

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**Supplies Needed:** Notebooks; Handout; 1 spoon per person; a table that can seat the class, but small enough that everyone can still reach to the middle of it (if this is not possible, then split the class and use two tables); if you have more than 5 students, two full decks (or more) of playing cards mixed shuffled into one stack/deck; easel with paper & markers or whiteboard

### Opening Activity – Spoons

- The game works like this:
  - One person starts with the deck of cards
  - That person deals out four cards to everyone
  - Then that person picks up the top card of the deck, looks at it, and either replaces a card in their hand with that card or passes the card on to their left.
  - The person to the dealer's left looks at the card that's been passed to him/her. And either picks it up to replace one of the cards in his/her hand or simply passes it on to the person on his/her left.
  - This keeps happening around the circle.
  - You should always have 4 cards in your hand
  - The goal of the game is to hold four of a kind in your hand (four 8s or four kings, etc) – once you have four of a kind, then you take a spoon.
  - If someone gets 4 of a kind before you and takes a spoon, then you must grab for one of the remaining spoons.
  - There will be one less spoon than there are people.
  - If you don't get a spoon after a person gets four of a kind, then you get a letter. First S, then P, until you spell SPOON
  - First person to spell SPOON loses. (most likely, we'll stop there or start over)
  - *Variation:* Instead of putting all the spoons on the table, just put one spoon on the table and the other spoons at a neutral spot across the room, so that when the person who gets 4 of a kind grabs the one spoon, then everyone else runs across the room to get one of the other spoons.
  - *NOTE:* This is a great game for trickery. Feel free to sometimes keep a spoon hidden up your sleeve and then get caught. Or, keep smack the table next to the spoons to make everyone think you are grabbing for a spoon.

### DO Opening Activity

### OPENING PRAYER

### CHALLENGE OF THE WEEK REVIEW

We were to...

- Find a time where you are by yourself.
- Notice how you are feeling: Tired? Worried? Relaxed? Distracted?
- Set a timer for at least 7 minutes.
- Then listen to your breathing.
- Maybe even form the sounds of Yah-hey and Va-hey as you breathe in and out.
- After your timer goes off, notice how you are feeling.
- Do you feel any different? How?
  - How'd this go for you?
  - If you didn't do it, why did you choose to not do it?

## REVIEW

- Concepts we've talked about recently in class:
  - Transfiguration – when we follow Jesus, we see the divide removed between the “every day” and the divine. You may have heard the phrase “All hell broke loose?” Well, in this story all *heaven* breaks loose.
  - Christ means “anointed.” To be anointed is a way the Israelites signified someone being made ready to be king (sort of like how the British “knight” folks with the sword being tapped on each shoulder). Being anointed though was a symbol that came from oiling sheep's ears so that ticks couldn't climb in and kill them by eating their brains.
  - We talked about forgiveness in the story of the woman who anointed Jesus' feet with ointment because she was so thankful. Forgiveness works in tandem with repentance, and when we ask for and receive it, it frees us from the feelings of guilt and shame that come from living separate from God.
  - Last class, we talked about the parable of the Sower and how, if we thought of the Word of God like a seed and thought of ourselves as soil, then we'd want to be aware of now to prepare our soil to receive the seed, which leads us to our Challenge of the Week Review which is one practice of preparing the soil...

## TELL

We're transitioning now from Jesus' ministry to the conclusion of Jesus' ministry. During the next number of weeks, we'll be paying attention to the last week of Jesus' ministry – the week that ends with his crucifixion. It starts with what we traditionally call the “Palm Sunday” story.

## READ

**Luke 19:29** When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, <sup>30</sup>saying, ‘Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>31</sup>If anyone asks you, “Why are you untying it?” just say this: “The Lord needs it.”’ <sup>32</sup>So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. <sup>33</sup>As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, ‘Why are you untying the colt?’ <sup>34</sup>They said, ‘The Lord needs it.’ <sup>35</sup>Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. <sup>36</sup>As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. <sup>37</sup>As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to

praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, <sup>38</sup>saying,

‘Blessed is the king  
who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Peace in heaven,  
and glory in the highest heaven!’

<sup>39</sup>Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, ‘Teacher, order your disciples to stop.’ <sup>40</sup>He answered, ‘I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.’

### **Jesus Weeps over Jerusalem**

41 As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, <sup>42</sup>saying, ‘If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. <sup>43</sup>Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. <sup>44</sup>They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God.’

### **Jesus Cleanses the Temple**

45 Then Jesus entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling things there; <sup>46</sup>and he said, ‘It is written,

“My house shall be a house of prayer”;  
but you have made it a den of robbers.’

<sup>47</sup>Every day he was teaching in the temple. The chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people kept looking for a way to kill him; <sup>48</sup>but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were spellbound by what they heard.

## **ASK/TELL**

- In verses 29-38, how are the disciples and crowd responding/reacting to Jesus? (Making him the center of their attention; doing what he tells them to do without question)
- In verse 39, how do the Pharisees respond differently to Jesus? (they tell HIM what to do. This is in stark contrast with the preceding verses)
- Jesus is aware that in choosing to go to Jerusalem, he will be killed. With that in mind, are you surprised that he cries for the city in verse 41? Do you feel badly for the people that hurt you?
- Why does he cry for Jerusalem? (because they keep not paying attention to God and therefore are missing their chance for peace – verse 42 – 44)
- After this show of grief, what does he then do? (cleans out the temple)
  - Note: Scholars believe that the Temple accounted for **80 to 90%** of the economy in 1<sup>st</sup> century Jerusalem (due to currency exchange and the buying and selling of animals for sacrifice)! The Temple, though, was not to be the *economic* center of Jerusalem. It was supposed to be the *spiritual* center of Jerusalem and Israel.
  - Second Note: The Den of Robbers comment is about the oppression on the people that comes from the Temple operating as an economic center. The selling of animals for sacrifices and the money changers who change Roman currency to Israelite currency

for exorbitant fees economically punished the Israelites who would travel to the Temple. This is one way our opening activity fits in: The frenzy of competition leaves little room for anything else, doesn't it? We *were* pretty cutthroat...SOME of us were even caught *cheating*!

- Third Note: A *Den* of robbers is significant because that's where robbers *hang out*...in their den. The temple had become the hang out place for the robbers, where they felt safe and at home.
- In verse 47, what does Jesus do after he cleans the Temple out? (he occupies it – this is important. The Temple isn't supposed to be an economic center NOR is it to be empty)
- What is the response of the Pharisees to Jesus? (they are plotting to kill him!)
- What is the response of the crowd? (they are spellbound!)

## SNACK

### ASK/TELL

- Using the handout that we used for the Transfiguration story and using our memories, let's brainstorm the ideas, understandings, and experiences that we've been exposed to during our "following" of Jesus through the stories that we've read so far during this Confirmation year. (use easel/whiteboard to write down what the class comes up with)
- There are a lot of good things up here, don't you think? I mean, if more people were offering and living out these ways of being, don't you think the world would be a better place?
- So *why* would a group of people *want* to kill Jesus? What has Jesus done wrong? And you can't just say, "Nothing." Or that the Pharisees are evil. Understanding why the Pharisees resisted Jesus is very important in helping us understand why *we* often resist living the way Jesus lived.
  - Hint: From the list we just made, pick the reasons why, if you were a political and/or religious leader, that would make you think "I want that Jesus guy dead."
    - Think like a robber – why would an outlaw want a law enforcement officer dead?
    - See verse 39 and compare it to the previous verses to get a feel for the Pharisees fearing their loss of authority over the people)
- We've mostly talked about Jesus stories where he's doing something that can hardly be conceived as even slightly disruptive (except for the healing of the Gerasthene man). But both the entry to Jerusalem and Jesus clearing out the Temple is incredibly disruptive. The Temple story is especially so.
- As far as the Temple goes, there are vested interests in making sure things stay the same. The economy, for one. The power of the Pharisees for two. And three, to admit that Jesus is right is to admit that the Pharisees and the system that the Temple has become is and has been wrong for a long time. This would be admitting that tradition and lives have been wasted in building up and paying attention to the wrong things. To repent/turn around from such a storied path would be incredibly difficult. And, the shame and feeling of wasted time and effort would be immense. This is why forgiveness needs to be and goes hand-in-hand with repentance.
- In some ways, this is equivalent to the spoons game, where we're just chugging along, passing cards by, getting in a rhythm, when suddenly someone makes a grab for a spoon and bam! Everything changes!

- Paying attention to Jesus *will* change your life. Choosing to follow Jesus *will* disrupt the life you are currently living.
- And when this happens, it isn't easy. Change and the conflict that goes with it, be it internal or external, is not easy.
- But God's Way, the way of life that Jesus so clearly demonstrates, is better than the crowd's way or the Pharisees' ways. I think we would agree that the stories that we've seen about Jesus so far show that.

## **CHALLENGE OF THE WEEK**

Think about and list the things about Jesus/God that worry you or concern you or make you uncomfortable.

**CLOSING PRAYER** – ask for prayer requests and give time during prayer for students to pray.