

# Presbyterian Church of Henderson

Worship Service 10:00 AM

April 11, 2021

*Gospel of Mark Series*

## Ringing of the Bell

**Welcome and Announcements** Pastor Eric Hoey

**Prelude** David's Lyre Brass Sextet

### \*Call to Worship Billie Richert

Peace be with you. How good and pleasant it is when we live together in unity.

Receive the Holy Spirit. It is like precious oil on the head, the blessing of the Lord.

### \*Hymn PH 482 "Praise to the Lord, The Almighty"

1 Praise ye the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!  
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation!  
All ye who hear, now to His temple draw near;  
Praise Him in glad adoration!

2 Praise ye the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth,  
Shelters thee under His wings, yea, so gently sustaineth!  
Hast thou not seen how thy desires ever have been  
Granted in what He ordaineth?

3 Praise ye the Lord! O let all that is in me adore Him!  
All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before Him.  
Let the Amen sound from His people again,  
Gladly for aye we adore Him.

### \*Call to Confession Billie Richert

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Trusting in God's mercy, let us confess our sin.

### \*Prayer of Confession (unison)

**You have shown yourself to us, O God, by Word and Spirit, with signs and wonders, in flesh and blood, yet we still struggle to live and believe the good news of Jesus Christ. Have mercy on us; forgive us. Enter into our lives and cast out our fear so that we may come to trust in you and have life in Jesus' name. Amen.**

### \*Assurance of Pardon Billie Richert

We have an advocate with God—Jesus Christ, the righteous one—who offered his life in love to save the world from sin. This is the good news of the gospel: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God.

### \*Gloria Patri (PH 579)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

## **\*Passing the Peace**

Please turn and bow to someone out of respect and love— “The peace of Christ be with you”

## **Prayer for Illumination** Billie Richert

God of all who doubt and believe, by the gift of your Spirit enable us to hear with our ears, to see with our eyes, and to touch with our hands your Word of life—Jesus Christ—our Lord and our God. Amen.

## **First Reading** Acts 4:32-35

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

## **Special Music** “Meditation on Hyfrydol”

## **Second Reading** Mark 11:11-33

Then 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.

On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see whether perhaps he would find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. He said to it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard it.

Then they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves; and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. He was teaching and saying, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers.” And when the chief priests and the scribes heard it, they kept looking for a way to kill him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spellbound by his teaching. And when evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city.

In the morning as they passed by, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. Then Peter remembered and said to him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered.” Jesus answered them, “**Have faith in God.** Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you. So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

“Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.”

## **Children’s Sermon** Pastor Eric

- Want to know something that I have that I bring everywhere with me?

- A key [hold up car key]
- In the same way, I bring a key almost everywhere I go; God is like a key.
- God wants to be taken everywhere you go.
- What would happen if I left my key at church?
- I could not get home?
- In the same way, do not leave God at church, but God goes everywhere you go if you have him in your heart through faith
- There are four words that comes from our text in Mark 11:22 — HAVE FAITH IN GOD
- When you are sad...
- When you are angry...
- When your mom says no....
- When your brother or sister is not nice to you...
- When you are at school...
- When you go for a walk...
- When you eat your favorite food...

## **SERMON** “When We are Spiritually Bankrupt...”

Mark 11:11-33

- After being one of the most important car manufacturers for more than 100 years, and one of the largest companies in the world, General Motors also resulted in one of history’s largest bankruptcies. As GM focused predominantly on profiting from finance, the business neglected to improve the quality of its product, failed to adapt GM to changes in customer needs and did not invest in new technologies. Failure to innovate and blatantly ignoring competition were key to the company’s demise.
- In the same way, when it comes to the spiritual wellbeing of the people of Israel, the religious leaders have led their people for hundreds of years in the same direction.
- One of the things the religious leaders failed to realize was that their religion was spiritually bankrupt.
- When Jesus arrived, he amazed people with his authority and teaching which immediately proposed a threat to their well established religious system.
- Jesus as seen in our text today and for the next several weeks will be warning his disciples about their bankruptcy.
- The saddest reality of the whole Bible is when the religious leaders failed to listen to the words of Jesus and refuse to create a new way for their people.
- In the same way, our spiritual lives can become spiritually bankrupt.
- This is where we go through the **motions** of religiosity without the genuine **faith** that solidifies our connection with God in Jesus Christ.
- This morning I wanted to look at some observations from this text about what happens when we are spiritually bankrupt.

When We are Spiritually Bankrupt:

### **1. God Sees and Knows** (v. 11)

*11 Then 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.*

- Today we are picking up our Gospel of Mark series after Jesus’ Triumphal entry into Jerusalem.
- Since the time between Palm Sunday and Easter covers 5 chapters in the Gospel of Mark, I did not want to skip these important chapters.

- If you remember two Sundays ago, the fanfare Palm Sunday with the anticipated Messiah culminates not into a welcome banquet celebration for the Messiah but into a quiet realization that people were going through the motions of reciting Messianic words in the celebration of Passover.
- Here in this text, Mark marches Jesus into Jerusalem, he enters the temple, and clearly describes that Jesus looked around, and went back to Bethany (less than 2 miles away) because it was late.
- Why do you think Mark told us that Jesus “looked around at everything” in temple?
- Because of the late hour, I am sure Jesus wanted to do something, but why wait?
- As we will see later, Jesus will declare judgment upon the religious system of temple and the nation itself.
- The temple was at the heart of worship and national identity for the people of Israel, but at this point in history, it was spiritually bankrupt.
- For too many years the religious leaders have been misdirecting the religious activities of the nation away from God so that it bore no fruit.
- When Jesus entered the temple, Jesus saw the spiritual condition of the temple
- He probably had planned to address the issue, but he waited until the next day.
- This tells me, when our lives are spiritually bankrupt, we cannot hide from God, and our spiritual state cannot be ignored.
- God looks into the condition of our hearts and knows when we are empty inside.
- Yes, we may be going to church every week, but are we really allowing the spirit of God to come clean house on a regular basis, and connect us to the larger redemptive plan of God?

When We are Spiritually Bankrupt:

1. God Sees and Knows (v. 11)

**2. We are Fruitless** (vv. 12-14)

*12 On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. 13 Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see whether perhaps he would find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. 14 He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard it.*

- This is one of the most difficult stories in the gospels.
- Why? Because it represents a destructive use of supernatural power.
- It suggests that Jesus expected figs at a time which was not the season for figs, and yet blamed the tree anyway.
- Why did Jesus do this?
- As Mark writes this story he is again using a sandwich technique to communicate his overall emphasis.
- This withering fig tree incident begins here and gets picked up later in verse 20 where the middle is about Jesus cleansing the temple.
- According to Mark, he is using this fig tree incident to give his readers a living parable.
- The fig tree was a well-known representation of Israel.
- Listen to this explanation of the nation from—
  - *Jeremiah 8:13 When I wanted to gather them, says the LORD, there are no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree; even the leaves are withered, and what I gave them has passed away from them.*

- So when Jesus approaches the fig tree in front of the disciples, he actually curses it, “may no one ever eat fruit from you again” as a way of offering judgment to the religious system of Israel.
- In a parallel passage, Luke 19:41-42 Jesus is prophesying doom for Jerusalem on the way into the city.
  - *Luke 19:41-42 As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, 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.”*
- John Grassmick in the Bible Knowledge Commentary states, “The promising but unproductive fig tree symbolized Israel’s spiritual barrenness despite divine favor and the impressive outward appearance of their religion”
- Jesus judgment pronounced upon the fig tree is emblematic of the threat of God’s judgment soon to fall upon the city of Jerusalem.
- Spiritual bankruptcy is found when there is no fruit.

When We are Spiritually Bankrupt:

1. God Sees and Knows (v. 11)
2. We are Fruitless (vv. 12-14)
- 3. Old Habits Must Change** (vv. 15-19)

*15 Then they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves;*

- So Mark sandwiches two stories together to have them relate to one another.
- Jesus re-enters the temple and clears the temple of the money changers.
- This account is one of the most famous incidents in the ministry of Jesus and is found in all the gospels
- When you enter into the temple, the first area is called the court of Gentiles.
- This is where non-Jews were allowed to worship and pray.
- Since many Jews from out of town were coming to the temple to offer sacrifices, the high priest allowed stalls to be set up for the selling of ritually acceptable animals for sacrificial use.
- This occurred in the Court of the Gentiles.
- So when the activity of buying and selling was in full motion, Jesus arrives on the scene, and with the full authority of God himself, overturns the tables and severely disrupts the commerce occurring that day.

*16 and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple.*

- Why would Jesus do that?
  1. He had disrupted the animal sales for the day and halted all sacrifices; Jesus literally brought the sacrificial system to a halt!
  2. Jesus was forbidding people from walking through temple using the Court of Gentiles as a shortcut possibly between the city of Jerusalem and Mount Olives.
- The sacred place was being used purely for a secular purpose.
- The place intended for Gentiles or all nations to pray, was being misused by the Jews for trade, profit, and convenience.

*17 He was **teaching** and saying, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers.”*

- Notice Jesus justified his actions by teaching those around him.
- Jesus quotes Jeremiah 7:11 accusing the religious leaders that they have turned the temple into a den of robbers.

- Jeremiah the prophet pronounced God’s judgment upon the people of Israel hundreds of years earlier.
  - Listen to the sharp words of Jeremiah’s rebuke: *Jer. 7:9-11 'Will you steal and murder, commit adultery and perjury, burn incense to Baal and follow other gods you have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house, which bears my Name, and say, "We are safe"—safe to do all these detestable things? Has this house, which bears my Name, become a den of robbers to you? But I have been watching! declares the LORD.*
  - Jesus quotes the same text about the behavior of the religious leaders.
  - So the religious leaders had an important decision that day, either listen to truth of what the prophets foretold about them and believe the truth of what Jesus was saying about them, or deny it.
  - What do you think they did?
- 18 And when the chief priests and the scribes heard it, they kept looking for a way to kill him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spellbound by his teaching. 19 And when evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city.*
- With full authority, Jesus declares judgement upon the misdirected worship of Israel.
  - Jesus recognized that those whose livelihood and dominance depended on the sacrificial system had become barren despite the veneer of piety and holiness.
  - The religious leaders are seen in this text looking for a way to find a way to destroy Jesus.
  - FRIENDS, old habits must change
  - What is sad here is the religious leaders were given to the opportunity to notice their mistakes, and make a course correction, but they chose not to believe it.
  - Ultimately, Jesus needed to clear a way for a new approach to faith and the religious life that was not centered around certain people one place.
  - Jesus evoked change in a dramatic way.

When We are Spiritually Bankrupt:

#### **4. Faith Must Give Rise to Prayer** (vv. 20-24)

*20 In the morning as they passed by, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots.*

*21 Then Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered." 22 Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God.*

- Peter’s sees the withered fig tree, and asks Jesus about it.
- Jesus does not address Peter’s question, but replies as if he were continuing a lesson that had begun the day before.
- Now remember the context.
- The fig tree incident occurred on the way up to the temple mount.
- In the same way, the fig-less tree could not satisfy Jesus’ appetite, looking up to the temple mount, so the religious system could not satisfy the spiritual hunger of the people.
- This is why Jesus brings up the idea of having faith in God.
- The way to God is not through the corrupt systems of the temple worship, but goes back into something more basic, FAITH in God.
- When faith is present, prayer becomes a natural expression of that faith.

*23 Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you.*

- They are walking back up to the temple mount.

- The fig tree incident takes place with the obvious backdrop of the temple mount.
  - So when Jesus says “if you say to this mountain” guess what he was referring to? THE TEMPLE MOUNT.
  - Jesus is not teaching the disciples how to rearrange the landscape, but is inferring how to change a whole religious system that has become corrupt over hundreds of years in its existence.
  - Through prayer, some of the greatest obstacles that stand in the way of keeping people experiencing the kingdom of God can be removed “and thrown into the sea”
  - Jesus expect us to believe that our prayers can overcome great difficulties.
- 24 So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.*
- Verse 24, is not a blank check to fulfill our desires, but it is an instruction on how the disciples and us are to confront the centers of power that oppose the kingdom of God.

When We are Spiritually Bankrupt:

### **5. Forgiveness Enhances Prayer (v. 25)**

*25 “Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.”*

- It is interesting that Jesus bring up forgiveness in his teaching about prayer
- Even though Mark does not write about the Lord’s Prayer, he may have been thinking about it—
- Presbyterian say: “Forgive us our debt, as we forgive our debtors”
- Catholics say: “Forgive us of our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.”
- Regardless, the idea of forgiveness is found within the context of prayer.
- Because God has forgiven us, we must forgive others.
- The principle is especially given to the disciples because they had follow Jesus until his death, and suffer the future consequences of being a follower of Christ.
- Forgiveness was absolutely necessary for them to continue the ministry of Christ
- But also know that prayers of faith are not necessarily prayers for revenge.
- Forgiveness establishes a framework in which prayers about opposition to the gospel are offered.
- Forgiveness actually enhances our prayers.
- EX: Five years ago, when I worked for the denomination, I was fired by an attorney because he was angry I did not accept his terms of my dismissal. That was wrong on so many accounts. I could have harbored resentment, but I had to let that go, forgive the man, the system, the situation, and move on my life. God brought me here to Henderson so that I can pray and serve with a clear conscience.

When We are Spiritually Bankrupt:

1. God Sees and Knows (v. 11)
2. We are Fruitless (vv. 12-14)
3. Old Habits Must Change (vv. 15-19)
4. Faith Must Give Rise to Prayer (vv. 20-24)
5. Forgiveness Enhances Prayer (v. 25)

## **Offering**

Remember the first believers—who shared one heart and soul, held their possessions in common, and distributed them to all in need. In that same spirit, let us present our offerings at the feet of the risen Lord.

**\*Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessing flow.  
Praise Him all creatures here below.  
Praise him above the heavenly host.  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

**\*Prayer of Dedication**

Holy God, we give you thanks and praise for light and life and love, and—above all—the presence of the living Lord among us. By your Spirit who breathes within us, strengthen our faith, use our gifts, and work in our lives to bear witness to the resurrection of Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.

**\*Affirmation of Faith** (Apostle's Creed)

*Minister:*

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, what do you believe?

*All:*

I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

**Prayers of the People**

Living God, giver of life, hear us as we pray, saying, Pour out your blessing, O Lord; **send us your Spirit of peace.**

We pray for the church.... Let your church be a living sign of the woundedness and healing of Christ, sharing the gift of forgiveness and the gospel of reconciliation. Pour out your blessing, O Lord; **send us your Spirit of peace.**

We pray for all nations.... Show us how good and pleasant it is when people live together in unity, and anoint us with your wisdom so that we may seek the ways of life. Pour out your blessing, O Lord; **send us your Spirit of peace.**

We pray for this community.... Give us a vision of the common good: not clinging to our own possessions but seeking the fullness of life for all as a testimony to Christ's resurrection. Pour out your blessing, O Lord; **send us your Spirit of peace.**

We pray for loved ones.... Be near to those who walk in darkness and lead us all into Christ's light so that our fellowship may be true and our joy may be complete. Pour out your blessing, O Lord; **send us your Spirit of peace.**

By the blessing of your Spirit, help us to live as we pray so that the world may come to know the gift of life in Christ our Lord, and now, with confidence as children of God, let us pray:

**Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever.  
Amen.

**\*Hymn** PH 447 "Lead On, O King Eternal"

1 Lead on, O King eternal,  
The day of march has come;  
Henceforth in fields of conquest  
Thy tents shall be our home:  
Through days of preparation  
Thy grace has made us strong,  
And now, O King eternal,  
We lift our battle song.

2 Lead on, O King eternal,  
Till sin's fierce war shall cease,  
And holiness shall whisper  
The sweet amen of peace;  
For not with swords' loud clashing,  
Nor roll of stirring drums;  
With deeds of love and mercy  
The heavenly kingdom comes.

3 Lead on, O King eternal:  
We follow, not with fears,  
For gladness breaks like morning  
Where'er Thy face appears;  
Thy cross is lifted over us;  
We journey in its light:  
The crown awaits the conquest;  
Lead on, O God of might.

**\*Benediction**

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace both now and evermore.

**Postlude** "Promises"  
(please be seated for the postlude)