

**Conversations on**  
**Mark 11:1–11;**  
**15:1–39**

*Discuss this passage in light of the commentary below.*

*Idea!* Listen together to a recording of “We Could Change the World” by Matt Redman. Discuss: What specific things in your life need to change in order to redefine authority and fulfill Christ’s vision of a new way of life?

**WHAT is important to know?**

Mark was meant to be read to assemblies of believers in Jesus as Messiah and Son of God (Mark 1:1) who needed to understand what it meant to be followers of a Lord who was crucified. In Mark 15, the moment to which the whole Gospel has been leading arrives. God is active even at this moment of crucifixion when Jesus bewails God’s absence (15:34), darkness covers the land, and the temple curtain is torn in two. Jesus’ last words place his death in the context of Psalm 22: the righteous one suffers but will be vindicated. At the moment of his death, the pronouncement of Jesus’ identity as Son of God comes not from a disciple but from a Roman centurion. (*James D. Ernest*)

- ✪ How does this passage differ when you hear it read aloud dramatically rather than reading it to yourself silently?
- ✪ Why is it important to understand Jesus as a “Lord who was crucified”?
- ✪ Psalm 22 tells of suffering that is redeemed. How does Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem fit the context of this psalm?
- ✪ Why is it significant that the pronouncements of Jesus’ death came from a Roman centurion instead of a disciple?

**WHERE is God in these words?**

Christianity is not a religion obsessed with pain. It is a religion of resistance and hope. The point of the cross is not finally suffering and death; it is, rather, that *a relationship holds*. God is not an arbitrary ruler who demands the price of suffering and death, but a God who makes possible all of our loves, as well as our resistance to evil. The meaning of the cross can be understood finally only within the whole of the good news of the promise of God to overcome terror, enfold us in Life, and dwell with us forever. (*Margaret A. Farley*)

- ✪ In what ways is Christianity “a religion of resistance and hope”? How is this reflected in Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem?
- ✪ How does God make possible “all of our loves” through the cross?
- ✪ How does this passage illustrate the endurance of God’s relationship with humans?

**SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?**

One of the central claims of the Christian tradition has been that God is love. Such a claim is not based on any abstract or sentimental notions about love; rather it is connected to the history of God’s love expressed through God’s activities of creation, redemption, and sustenance. That history finds its expression, for Christians, in the doctrine of the Trinity. Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem strangely prepares us to fight our tendency toward the delusion of superficial loves. With Jesus we are given a love that withstands the horror of crucifixion. It is the kind of love that displays how illusive our sense of reality often is. (*Michael Battle*)

- ✪ What does it mean to say that “God is love”?
- ✪ How is God’s love different from other types of love?
- ✪ How does God’s love challenge our view of reality?
- ✪ How does Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem strangely prepare you to fight your “tendency toward the delusion of superficial loves”?

**NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?**

Riding on the colt, Jesus comes not as one who lords his authority over others, but as one who humbly rejects domination. Jesus comes to define King or Messiah, rather than traditional understandings of these titles identifying him. When he enters Jerusalem, Jesus radically redefines political power. Definitions of political power begin with Jesus, and bring with them profound implications for both the nature of the gospel and character of discipleship. (*Charles L. Campbell*)

- ✪ In what ways is Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem a rejection of the traditional views of lordship, power, and authority?
- ✪ How does Jesus challenge your view of political power and authority?
- ✪ What implications does Jesus’ rejection of domination over others have for your view of power and authority?
- ✪ What can you or your congregation learn about the character of discipleship from this passage?

*Thank God for God’s love and for the effect that God’s love has in your life.*