

Bible Reading Together during this Covid-19 Shutdown

January 3-9: Read Joshua 2 & Gospel of Mark 10 & 11

Joshua 2

With new leadership in Joshua, the Israelites entered the Promised Land of Canaan. In front of them was the well-fortified city of Jericho. Two spies are sent to discern their next move. It's kind of déjà vu from almost 40 years ago...

Further Study & Discussion

- This story of the two spies compare and contrast with the 12 spies sent out in Numbers 13-14. How are they similar and how are they different?
- Rahab's words in vv.9-11 must have felt like the voice of God to them. But Rahab wasn't even part of the "people of God." And she was a prostitute! What does this say about God?
- Rahab and her family were saved from total destruction of the city because she put out the crimson cord at the window. How does that point to Jesus?

Mark 10

Jesus was coming to the end of his three-year ministry. With Passover coming up soon, Jesus departed the region of Galilee and headed down to Judea. He was entering Jerusalem for the final time.

Further Study & Discussion

- Divorce is something we don't talk much about because it's so prevalent in our society and in our churches. What's the point of vv.2-12? And how is Jesus valuing women here?
- We have to stop at the story of the rich man and Jesus (v.17f). For me, the key phrase in this story is this: "Jesus, looking at him, loved him" (v.21). How can divine love demand that he give up everything he owned?
- Healing of the blind Bartimaeus concludes this chapter. Note the ending of this story, "He regained his sight and followed him on the way" (v.52). Bartimaeus followed Jesus into Jerusalem and into suffering. Bartimaeus is lifted up as an ideal follower of Jesus – in need, he came to Jesus and Jesus healed him. Forever changed, he followed Jesus fully – even if it meant suffering. In fact, the whole chapter is about giving up rights as a follower of Jesus. Reflect on that, and ask yourself – what have you given up for Jesus? What are you giving up now?

Mark 11

Jesus entered Jerusalem to shouts of praise. Jesus alone knew that was false praise. The same people will turn their backs on Jesus or join the crowd in calling for his death later.

- Jesus went to the Temple in v.15 and caused a stir. Why do you think he did that?
- The fig tree story begins in v.12 and picks up again in v.20. The fig tree represents Israel (Hosea 9:10) and the lack of fruit causes Jesus to curse it. The lack was two things: faith (v.22) & prayer (v.25). Is your life fruitful? Is it filled with prayer and faith?