

Bible Reading Together during this Covid-19 Shutdown

January 10-16: Read Joshua 6 & Gospel of Mark 12 & 13

Joshua 6

The story of Jericho ends with the crashing down of their doubled walls. Human achievement came crashing down by a simple act of God. But it required faith by the Israelites.

Further Study & Discussion

- The whole story of the fall of Jericho is awkward. If the pastor called on the church members to do what God commanded them to do, would the church do it? Would the pastor ask that of them? And would the members obey? Walk around the wall six days with trumpets blasting. And then on the seventh day, walk around seven times. And after a few days of embarrassing march, there's nothing? Are people dropping out? Are there complaints?
- Why do you think the whole city with all its people were destroyed? It's quite vicious command of God. Why would the loving God command it?

Mark 12

It's the Passover festival in the city of Jerusalem and people from everywhere have gathered. In their midst is Jesus. Confronted and challenged by the Jewish leaders, Jesus is unshakable.

Further Study & Discussion

- The parable of the Wicked Tenants is an attack against the Jewish leaders. Who do the characters represent (owner who planted the vineyard; tenants; slaves; beloved son), and what's the teaching?
- As Christians, we pay our taxes and we bring offering to God (vv.13-17). In those days, the issue was their willingness to pay taxes to the Roman government. They had no problem with bringing offering to God. In our days, I think the issue is turned around. We pay our taxes well, but we may struggle with our offering with God. What's Jesus' response to that?
- The most important commandment is mentioned again in vv.28-34. Among all the commands of God, what is the most important? How is our loving toward God and toward others? The Good Samaritan story comes to mind.

Mark 13

This chapter is difficult to understand because Jesus talks about the coming destruction of Jerusalem (that actually happened between AD 66-70), and he links that with the end times.

- At the beginning of the week, Jesus entered the Temple to cleanse it. This time, he speaks about its destruction. The Temple itself is nothing because the faithful will continue to proclaim the good news to all (v.10), and the world will continue to attack the church (v.9f). What is the Temple then?
- The violent images of suffering and destruction is contrasted with the glorious picture of Jesus returning with great power and glory (vv.26-27). In the end, we win! Compare this with a football game. But the important point in all of this is that God could prevent suffering and destruction, but he doesn't. It's the sifting of the grain, purifying our faith. How is your faith during this time of shutdown?