

"UNEXPECTED QUESTIONS, UNEXPECTED ANSWERS"

Tuesday Meditation

***Scriptures for Tuesday of Holy Week:**

- Jesus Teaches His Followers a Lesson about the Fig Tree (Matthew 21:20-22; Mark 11:20-26)
- Jesus Teaches and Engages in Controversies in the Temple (Matthew 21:23-23:39; Mark 11:27-12:44; Luke 20:1-21:4)
- Jesus Predicts the Future (Matthew 24-25; Mark 13:1-37; Luke 21:5-36)

Jesus begins his Tuesday by making the trek once again from their "safe house" in Bethany back to the city of Jerusalem. Jesus has quite the day in front of Him once again. But on the way, Jesus and His disciples come across the same fig tree that Jesus had cursed the day before because it had not born any fruit. Only now it is dried up and "withered to its roots" (Mark 11:20). In 24 hours, a tree that had born no fruit, now will *never* bear fruit because it is dead. Yet, Jesus uses this as an opportunity to provide an **answer** to His disciples at the beginning of a long day of **questions** - "Have *faith* in God" (Mark 11:22). Why would Jesus use the example of a dead fig tree to communicate the necessity of the disciples to have *faith*? Unexpected. But this was indeed going to be a long day of unexpected questions and unexpected answers.

As Jesus continued on into Jerusalem, He went straight back to the temple, where he had left off the day before when he had caused quite the stir by flipping over the tables and driving out the people from the temple. But He's back again. Jesus begins to teach and EVERYBODY has lots of questions for Jesus on this day. The disciples had already asked Jesus the first question of the day when they were by the fig tree (assuming Peter and John didn't had any questions over their eggs and bacon that morning). But the chief priests and the elders had waited all night to question Jesus with this doozy - "By what authority are you doing these things?" (Matt. 21:23), referring to His teaching, driving out people the day before, and I'm sure His Triumphant Entry two days prior. But this question was just the beginning. Take a look on the next page at all the questions Jesus faces on Tuesday. It had to be an exhausting day:

Questions to Jesus:

- How did the fig tree wither at once? (Matt. 21:20)
- By what authority are you doing these things? (Matt. 21:23; Mark 11:28; Luke 20:2)
- And who gave you this authority? (Matt. 21:23; Mark 11:28; Luke 20:2)
- Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? (Matt. 22:17; Mark 12:14; Luke 20:22)
- Should we pay them, or should we not? (Mark 12:14)
- In the resurrection, therefore, of the seven, whose wife will she be? (Matt. 22:28; Mark 12:23; Luke 20:33)
- Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law? (Matt. 22:36; Mark 12:28)
- Tell us, when will these things be? (Mark 24:3; Mark 13:4; Luke 21:7)
- And what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age? (Matt. 24:3; Mark 13:4; Luke 21:7)

But here's the thing about Jesus' Tuesday... He wasn't bothered by the questions. Rather He was the one who ended up asking the most questions on this day... 21 to be exact. If Monday was "Maniac Monday" for Jesus (flipping over tables & cursing trees), then Tuesday was "Turn-the-Tables Tuesday", when Jesus took every question and controversy stirred up by the Pharisees and Sadducees as an opportunity to unexpectedly turn it back on them with a question of His own that no one could answer. Jesus is the master of defying conventual norms, and turning the natural spiritual assumptions of people upside-down and on their head. Look at the list below of all the questions Jesus asked others (usually in response) on Tuesday:

Questions from Jesus:

- The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man? (Matt. 21:25; Mark 11:30; Luke 20:4)
- What do you think? (Matt. 21:28)
- Which of the two did the will of his father? (Matt. 21:31)
- When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants? (Matt. 21:40; Luke 20:15)
- What then is this that is written...? (Luke 20:17)
- Have you never read in the Scriptures...? (Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10-11)
- Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? (Matt. 22:18; Mark 12:15)
- Whose likeness and inscription is this?" (Matt. 22:20; Luke 20:24)
- ...have you not read what was said to you by God...? (Matt. 22:31)
- What do you think about the Christ? (Matt. 22:42)
- Whose son is he? (Matt. 22:42)
- How is it then that David...? (Matt. 22:43; Mark 12:35; Luke 20:41)
- If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son? (Matt. 22:45; Mark 12:27; Luke 20:44)
- ...which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? (Matt. 23:17)
- ...which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? (Matt. 23:19)
- ...how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? (Matt. 23:33)
- Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God? (Mark 12:24)
- ...have you not read in the book of Moses...? (Mark 12:26)
- You see all these, do you not? (Matt. 24:2)
- Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? (Matt. 24:45)
- Do you see these great buildings? (Mark 13:2)

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by: Pastor Steven

*"And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions." **Matthew 22:46; Mark 12:34; Luke 20:40***

Can you blame them for not wanting to ask anymore questions? By this point, most everybody had heard enough. Two camps had been clearly formed by this point. Jesus, using parables, clever questions, and speaking direct truth to power with ferocity (see Matthew 23!), has set Himself apart on this day as either God's chosen One with power and teaching and authority never before seen, or as the most imminent threat to the Jewish order and, hence, even the Roman Empire.

But Jesus does one more thing on this Tuesday. In the evening, He and his disciples leave Jerusalem and begin the 2-mile trek back to Bethany. On the way out, the disciples make a comment to Him about the temple buildings in Jerusalem - maybe emphasizing their grandeur or just their centrality to Jewish life. We're not sure what the disciples were noticing exactly, but Jesus responded by saying, basically, that the whole complex will be completely toppled over one day (Matthew 24:1-2). As the group stops for a rest at the Mount of Olives, the disciples couldn't let it go and insist on Jesus explaining more about what He meant and asked what the signs of the "the end of the age" will be. They connected the temple destruction with the end of the age dots, but wanted more clarity. Was Jesus the temple? (see *John 2:18-22*). What follows is the famous "Olivet Discourse" (Matthew 24-25), providing **unexpected answers** to a topic still confounding all people to this day — the future.

Many of the things Jesus mentions in that 2-chapter discourse are things we see around us today - "wars and rumors of wars", "famines and earthquakes", etc. We all get alarmed and afraid today by what is happening around us. But Jesus knew the answers 2,000 years ago and communicated them on this Holy Tuesday. He said,

*"From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates." **Matthew 24:32-33***

Jesus makes it plain that He will come again and the ones who will be found faithful at that time will be the ones who are "so doing" (24:46) when He returns. To those Jesus will say, "Well done good and faithful servant, You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'" (25:51, 53)

Tuesday is about questions & answers. Jesus is the holder of both for all times.

In Christ,
Pastor Steven

WHAT ARE YOUR QUESTIONS FOR JESUS ON THIS HOLY TUESDAY?

WHAT ARE QUESTIONS JESUS IS ASKING YOU TODAY?

WHAT ASSURANCE DOES IT GIVE YOU DURING THIS TIME (AND ALL TIME) THAT JESUS IS THE KEEPER OF ALL QUESTIONS & ANSWERS?

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE FOR YOU TO "HAVE FAITH IN GOD" TODAY?

WHAT "UNEXPECTED ANSWER" MIGHT JESUS HAVE FOR THIS "TIME OF THE CORONAVIRUS"?



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