***There’s a New King in Town***

**Lent 2023 #4, Mark 11:1-25 April 2, 2023**

***Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,  
“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!   
Hosanna in the highest!”***

**Mark 11:9-10, quoting from the *Hallel* in Psalm 118**

**What kind of king are we welcoming?**

*As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, 2 saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. 3 If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ tell him, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.’ ”*

*4 They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, 5 some people standing there asked, “What are you doing, untying that colt?” 6 They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. 7 When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. 8 Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. 9 Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,*

*“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”*

*10 “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!”*

*11 Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.*

Mark 11 (Luke’s gospel adds several important elements in 19:28-44)

1. This scene is carefully constructed to fulfill Scripture (Numbers 19:2; Zechariah 9:9)

2. But Jesus enters as different kind of “Son of David” – of peace not of war

3. The crowds have both spiritual AND political agendas as they approach Jerusalem

4. Jesus did not rebuke the crowds (see Luke 19:39-40) but he does weep over their blindness

5. In the big picture, Jesus’ arrival foretells the judgment of not embracing Messiah’s reign

![Engineering drawing

Description automatically generated with medium confidence]()

**Act 3: How Jesus reveals his kingship**

*12 The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. 13 Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. 14 Then he said to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard him say it.*

*15 On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, 16 and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. 17 And as he taught them, he said, “Is it not written:*

*“ ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’?*

*But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’”*

*18 The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.*

*19 When evening came, they went out of the city.*

Mark 11, Jesus quotes from Isaiah 56:7

1. The fig tree miracle is a picture of God’s judgement on the “barrenness” of Jewish tradition (see Mark 11:20-25 where barrenness is contrasted with faith)

2. Jesus commands Messianic (both King and Priest) authority over the temple, especially to determine its ultimate purpose – for the nations to meet with God and not for “us”

3. Jesus cracks open the door to the heavenly realms (Ephesians 2:6) so we can see the reality of the   
eternal conflict between those who have faith in Jesus and those who fear Jesus

**Are my gates open to the King?**

*7 Lift up your heads, O you gates;*

*be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.*

Psalm 24

1. Jesus reveals whether God or status matters most

*45 Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him. 46 But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. 47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin.*

*“What are we accomplishing?” they asked. “Here is this man performing many miraculous signs. 48 If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”*

the raising of Lazarus in John 11 (the verses that follow are very interesting as well!)

2. While this story points to Jesus’ divinity, his voluntary, public, humble and very human entry   
into Jerusalem points even more to his death

*38 Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. With Pilate’s permission, he came and took the body away. 39 He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. 40 Taking Jesus’ body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. 41 At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. 42 Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.*

John 19

3. To receive the King still requires that we become resurrection followers

*16 At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him.*

*17 Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. 18 Many people, because they had heard that he had given this miraculous sign, went out to meet him. 19 So the Pharisees said to one another, “See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!”*

John 12

*37 When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:*

*38 “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”*

Luke 19:37 (remember Jesus weeping over the crowds in 19:41-44)

**Resources for studying Mark**

The poster for Mark can be found at [*bibleproject.com*](file:///I:\Lent%202023\bibleproject.com)

Redeemer Presbyterian’s Lent devotions are online at [*https://gospelinlife.com/lent-devotional/*](https://gospelinlife.com/lent-devotional/)

There is a wonderful series of sermons by Kim Riddlebarger (though I think he gets the “don’t go into the village” part at least partly wrong) at [*http://kimriddlebarger.squarespace.com/downloadable-sermons-on-mark/*](http://kimriddlebarger.squarespace.com/downloadable-sermons-on-mark/)Kim Riddlebarger has an introductory sermon at [*http://kimriddlebarger.squarespace.com/downloadable-sermons-on-mark/Blessed%20is%20He%20Who%20Comes%20in%20the%20Name%20of%20the%20Lord%20revised%2033.pdf*](http://kimriddlebarger.squarespace.com/downloadable-sermons-on-mark/Blessed%20is%20He%20Who%20Comes%20in%20the%20Name%20of%20the%20Lord%20revised%2033.pdf%20)

J. C. Ryle has an interesting commentary on Mark’s gospel at [*https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/mark11.htm*](https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/mark11.htm)

Doug’s favorite Mark commentaries include   
J.R. Edwards *The Gospel According to Mark* (Eerdmans, 2002)  
France’s NIGTC volume (Eerdmans, 2002)  
Hendricksen’s *Expository Commentary* (Baker, 1975)  
Walter Wessel’s volume on Mark in *Expositors’ Bible Commentary* (Zondervan, 1984)

Note: Again for this passage, I think Hendricksen has the best analysis.

Archibald Alexander has an interesting analysis at [*https://www.monergism.com/one-thing-you-lack*](https://www.monergism.com/one-thing-you-lack)

Spurgeon and Ryle have several sermons on Mark at [*https://www.biblebb.com/brefindex/mar.htm*](https://www.biblebb.com/brefindex/mar.htm)

I appreciate Ray Stedman’s work on this text at [*https://www.raystedman.org/new-testament/mark/the-child-in-our-midst*](https://www.raystedman.org/new-testament/mark/the-child-in-our-midst)

Bob Deffinbaugh has a helpful sermon on the parallel text in Luke’s gospel at [*https://bible.org/seriespage/untriumphal-entry-luke-1928-44*](https://bible.org/seriespage/untriumphal-entry-luke-1928-44)

[J.C. Ryle](http://www.gracegems.org/23/ryle_sermons.htm)  
at [*https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/mark11.htm*](https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/mark11.htm)

[**Mark 11:1-11**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mark%2011.1-11)

 Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples  and said to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it.  If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.’”  And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it.  And some of those standing there said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?”  And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go.  And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it.  And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields.  And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!  Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!”  And 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. [Mark 11:1-11](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mark%2011.1-11)

The event described in these verses, is a singular exception in the history of our Lord's earthly ministry. Generally speaking, we see Jesus withdrawing Himself from public notice — often passing His time in the remote parts of Galilee — not infrequently abiding in the wilderness — and so fulfilling the prophecy, that He should "not cry, nor strive, nor let His voice be heard in the streets." Here, and here only, our Lord appears to drop His private character, and of His own choice to call public attention to Himself. He deliberately makes a public entry into Jerusalem, at the head of His disciples. He voluntarily rides into the holy city, surrounded by a vast multitude, crying, Hosanna, like king David returning to his palace in triumph. ([2 Sam. 19:40](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2%20Sam.%2019.40).) All this too was done at a time when myriads of Jews were gathered out of every land to Jerusalem, to keep the Passover. We may well believe that the holy city rang with the tidings of our Lord's arrival. It is probable there was not a house in Jerusalem in which the entry of the prophet of Nazareth was not known and talked of that night.

These things should always be remembered in reading this portion of our Lord's history. It is not for nothing that this entry into Jerusalem is four times related in the New Testament. It is evident that it is a scene in the earthly life of Jesus, which Christians are intended to study with special attention. Let us study it in that spirit, and see what practical lessons we may learn from the passage for our own souls.

Let us observe, in the first place, ***how public our Lord purposely made the last act of His life.***He came to Jerusalem to die, and He desired that all Jerusalem should know it. When He taught the deep things of the Spirit, He often spoke to none but His apostles. When He delivered His parables, He often addressed none but a multitude of poor and ignorant Galileans. When He worked His miracles, He was generally at Capernaum, or in the land of Zebulon and Naphtali. But when the time came that He should die, He made a public entry into Jerusalem. He drew the attention of rulers, and priests, and elders, and Scribes, and Greeks, and Romans to Himself. He knew that the most wonderful event that ever happened in this world was about to take place. The eternal Son of God was about to suffer in the stead of sinful men — the great sacrifice for sin about to be offered up — the great Passover Lamb about to be slain — the great atonement for a world's sin about to be made. He therefore ordered it so that His death was eminently a public death. He over-ruled things in such a way that the eyes of all Jerusalem were fixed upon Him, and when He died, He died before many witnesses.

Let us see here one more proof of the unspeakable importance of the death of Christ. Let us treasure up His gracious sayings. Let us strive to walk in the steps of His holy life. Let us prize His intercession. Let us long for His second coming. But never let us forget that the crowning fact in all we know of Jesus Christ, is His death upon the cross. From that death flow all our hopes. Without that death we would have nothing solid beneath our feet. May we prize that death more and more every year we live; and in all our thoughts about Christ, rejoice in nothing so much as the great fact that He died for us!

Let us observe, in the second place, in this passage, ***the voluntary poverty which our Lord underwent, when He was upon earth*.** How did He enter Jerusalem when He came to it on this remarkable occasion? Did He come in a royal chariot, with horses, soldiers, and a retinue around Him, like the kings of this world? We are told nothing of the kind. We read that He borrowed the colt of a donkey for the occasion, and sat upon the garments of His disciples for lack of a saddle. This was in perfect keeping with all the tenor of His ministry. He never had any of the riches of this world. When He crossed the sea of Galilee, it was in a borrowed boat. When He rode into the holy city, it was on a borrowed beast. When He was buried, it was in a borrowed tomb.

We have in this simple fact, an instance of that marvelous union of weakness and power, riches and poverty, the godhead and the manhood, which may be so often traced in the history of our blessed Lord. Who that reads the Gospels carefully can fail to observe, that He who could feed thousands with a few loaves, was Himself sometimes hungry — and He who could heal the sick and infirm, was Himself sometimes weary — that He who could cast out devils with a word, was Himself tempted — and He who could raise the dead, could Himself submit to die?

We see the very same thing in the passage before us. We see the power of our Lord in His bending the wills of a vast multitude to conduct Him into Jerusalem in triumph. We see the poverty of our Lord in His borrowing a donkey to carry Him when He made His triumphal entry. It is all wonderful, but there is a fitness in it all. It is appropriate and right that we should never forget the union of the divine and human natures in our Lord's person. If we saw His divine acts only, we might forget that He was man. If we saw His seasons of poverty and weakness only, we might forget that He was God. But we are intended to see in Jesus divine strength and human weakness united in one person. We cannot explain the mystery; but we may take comfort in the thought, "this is our Savior, this is our Christ — one able to sympathize, because He is man, but one Almighty to save, because He is God."

Finally, let us see in the simple fact, that our Lord rode on a borrowed donkey, one more proof that ***poverty is in itself no sin.*** The causes which occasion much of the poverty there is around us, are undoubtedly very sinful. Drunkenness, extravagance, profligacy, dishonesty, idleness, which produce so much of the destitution in the world, are unquestionably wrong in the sight of God. But to be born a poor man, and to inherit nothing from our parents — to work with our own hands for our bread, and to have no land of our own — all this is not sinful at all. The honest poor man is as honorable in the sight of God as the richest king. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself was poor. Silver and gold He had none. He had often nowhere to lay His head. Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor. To be like Him in circumstances, cannot be in itself wrong. Let us do our duty in that state of life to which God has called us, and if He thinks fit to keep us poor let us not be ashamed. The Savior of sinners cares for us as well as for others. The Savior of sinners knows what it is to be poor.

[**Mark 11:12-21**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mark%2011.12-21)

 On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry.  And seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see if he could find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs.  And he said to it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard it.  And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.  And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple.  And he was teaching them and saying to them, “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 the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching.  And when evening came they went out of the city.  As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots.  And Peter remembered and said to him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered.” [Mark 11:12-21](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mark%2011.12-21)

We see in the beginning of this passage, ***one of the many proofs that our Lord Jesus Christ was really man*.** We read that "He was hungry." He had a nature and bodily constitution, like our own in all things, sin only excepted. He could weep, and rejoice, and suffer pain. He could be weary and need rest. He could be thirsty, and need drink. He could be hungry, and need food.

Expressions like this should teach us the condescension of Christ. How wonderful they are when we reflect upon them! He who is the eternal God — He who made the world and all that it contains — He from whose hand the fruits of the earth, the fish of the sea, the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, all had their beginning — He, even He was pleased to suffer hunger, when He came into the world to save sinners. This is a great mystery. Kindness and love like this pass man's understanding. No wonder that Paul speaks of the "unsearchable riches of Christ." ([Ephes. 3:8](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Eph.%203.8).)

Expressions like this should teach us Christ's power to sympathize with His believing people on earth. He knows their sorrows by experience. He can be touched with the feeling of their infirmities. He has had experience of a body and its daily needs. He has allowed Himself the severe sufferings that the body of man is liable to. He has tasted pain, and weakness, and weariness, and hunger, and thirst. When we tell Him of these things in our prayers, He knows what we mean, and is no stranger to our troubles. Surely this is just the Savior and Friend that poor aching, groaning, human nature requires!

We learn, in the second place, from these verses, ***the great danger of unfruitfulness and formality in religion*.** This is a lesson which our Lord teaches in a remarkable typical action. We are told that coming to a fig tree in search of fruit, and finding "on it nothing but leaves," He pronounced on it the solemn sentence, "may no one eat fruit from you again." And we are told that the next day the fig tree was found "dried up from the roots." We cannot doubt for a moment that this whole transaction was an emblem of spiritual things. It was a parable in deeds, as full of meaning as any of our Lord's parables in words.

But who were they to whom this withered fig tree was intended to speak? It was a sermon of three-fold application, a sermon that ought to speak loudly to the consciences of all professing Christians. Though withered and dried up, that fig tree yet speaks. There was a voice in it for the JEWISH CHURCH. Rich in the leaves of a formal religion, but barren of all fruits of the Spirit, that Church was in fearful danger, at the very time when this withering took place. Well would it have been for the Jewish Church if it had had eyes to see its peril!

There was a voice in the fig tree for all the branches of Christ's VISIBLE CHURCH in every age, and every part of the world. There was a warning against an empty profession of Christianity unaccompanied by sound doctrine and holy living, which some of those branches would have done well to lay to heart.

But above all there was a voice in that withered fig tree for all CARNAL, HYPOCRITICAL, AND FALSE-HEARTED CHRISTIANS. Well would it be for all who are content with a name to live while in reality they are dead, if they would only see their own faces in the looking-glass of this passage.

Let us take care that we each individually learn the lesson that this fig tree conveys. Let us always remember, that baptism, and church-membership, and reception of the Lord's Supper, and a diligent use of the outward forms of Christianity, are not sufficient to save our souls. They are leaves, nothing but leaves, and without fruit will add to our condemnation. Like the fig leaves of which Adam and Eve made themselves garments, they will not hide the nakedness of our souls from the eye of an all-seeing God, or give us boldness when we stand before Him at the last day. No! we must bear fruit, or be lost forever. There must be fruit in our hearts and fruit in our lives, the fruit of repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and true holiness in our conversation. Without such fruits as these a profession of Christianity will only sink us lower into hell.

We learn, in the last place, from this passage, ***how reverently we ought to use places which are set apart for public worship*.** This is a truth which is taught us in a striking manner by our Lord Jesus Christ's conduct, when He went into the temple. We are told that "He cast out those who sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of those who sold doves." And we are told that He enforced this action by warrant of Scripture, saying, "Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations? but you have made it a den of thieves."

We need not doubt that there was a deep meaning in this action of our Lord on this occasion. Like the cursing of the fig tree, the whole transaction was eminently typical. But in saying this, we must not allow ourselves to lose sight of one simple and obvious lesson which lies on the surface of the passage. That lesson is the sinfulness of careless and irreverent behavior in the use of buildings set apart for the public service of God. It was not so much as the house of sacrifice, but as the "house of prayer," that our Lord purified the temple. His action clearly indicates the feeling with which every "house of prayer" should be regarded. A Christian place of worship no doubt is in no sense so sacred as the Jewish tabernacle, or temple. Its arrangements have no typical meaning. It is not built after a divine model, and intended to serve as an example of heavenly things. But it does not follow because these things are so, that a Christian place of worship is to be used with no more reverence than a private dwelling, or a shop, or an inn. There is surely a decent reverence, which is due to a place where Christ and His people regularly meet together and public prayer is offered up — a reverence which it is foolish and unwise to brand as superstitious, and confound with Popery. There is a certain feeling of sanctity and solemnity which ought to belong to all places where Christ is preached, and souls are born again, a feeling which does not depend on any consecration of man, and ought to be encouraged rather than checked. At all events the mind of the Lord Jesus in this passage seems very plain. He takes notice of men's behavior in places of worship, and all irreverence or profanity is an offence in His sight.

Let us remember these verses whenever we go to the house of God, and take heed that we go in a serious frame, and do not offer the sacrifice of fools. Let us call to mind where we are — what we are doing — what business we are about — and in whose presence we are engaged. Let us beware of giving God a mere formal service, while our hearts are full of the world. Let us leave our business and money at home, and not carry them with us to church. Let us beware of allowing any buying and selling in our hearts, in the midst of our religious assemblies. The Lord still lives, who cast out buyers and sellers from the temple, and when He sees such conduct He is much displeased.

[**Mark 11:22-25**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mark%2011.22-25)

 And Jesus answered them, “Have faith in God.  Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him.  Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.  And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.” [Mark 11:22-25](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mark%2011.22-25)

Let us learn from these words of our Lord Jesus Christ, ***the immense importance of faith.***

This is a lesson which our Lord teaches first by a proverbial saying. Faith shall enable a man to accomplish works, and overcome difficulties, as great and formidable as the "removing of a mountain, and casting it into the sea." Afterwards the lesson is impressed upon us still further, by a general exhortation to exercise faith when we pray. "Whatever things you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them." This promise must of course be taken with a reasonable qualification. It assumes that a believer will ask things which are not sinful, and which are in accordance with the will of God. When He asks such things, he may confidently believe that his prayer will be answered. To use the words of James, "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." ([James 1:6](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/James%201.6).)

The faith here commended must be distinguished from that faith which is essential to justification. In principle undoubtedly all true faith is one and the same. It is always trust or belief. But in the object and operations of faith, there are diversities, which it is useful to understand. Justifying faith is that act of the soul by which a man lays hold on Christ, and has peace with God. Its special object is the atonement for sin which Jesus made on the cross. The faith spoken of in the passage now before us is a grace of more general signification, the fruit and companion of justifying faith, but still not to be confounded with it. It is rather a general confidence in God's power, wisdom, and goodwill towards believers. And its special objects are the promises, the word, and the character of God in Christ.

Confidence in God's power and will to help every believer in Christ, and in the truth of every word that God has spoken, is the grand secret of success and prosperity in our religion. In fact, it is the very root of saving Christianity. "By it the elders obtained a good report." "He that comes unto God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." To know the full worth of it in the sight of God, we should often study the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Do we desire to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ? Do we wish to make progress in our religion, and become strong Christians, and not mere babes in spiritual things? Then let us pray daily for more faith, and watch our faith with most jealous watchfulness. Here is the corner-stone of our religion. A flaw or weakness here will affect the whole condition of our inner man. According to our faith will be the degree of our peace, our hope, our joy, our decision in Christ's service, our boldness in confession, our strength in work, our patience in trial, our resignation in trouble, our sensible comfort in prayer. All, all will hinge on the proportion of our faith. Happy are they who know how to rest their whole weight continually on a covenant God, and to walk by faith, not by sight. "He that believes shall not make haste." ([Isaiah. 28:16](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Isa.%2028.16).)

Let us learn, for another thing, from these verses, ***the absolute necessity of a forgiving spirit towards others*.** This lesson is here taught us in a striking way. There is no immediate connection between the importance of faith, of which our Lord had just been speaking, and the subject of forgiving injuries. But the connecting link is prayer. First we are told that faith is essential to the success of our prayers. But then it is added, no prayers can be heard which do not come from a forgiving heart. "When you stand praying, forgive, if you have ought against any, that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

The value of our prayers, we can all understand, depends exceedingly on the state of mind in which we offer them. But the point before us is one which receives far less attention than it deserves. Our prayers must not only be earnest, fervent, and sincere, and in the name of Christ. They must contain one more ingredient besides. They must come from a forgiving heart. We have no right to look for mercy, if we are not ready to extend mercy to our brethren. We cannot really feel the sinfulness of the sins we ask to have pardoned if we cherish malice towards our fellow men. We must have the heart of a brother toward our neighbor on earth, if we wish God to be our Father in heaven. We must not flatter ourselves that we have the Spirit of adoption if we cannot bear and forbear.

This is a heart-searching subject. The quantity of malice, bitterness, and party spirit among Christians is fearfully great. No wonder that so many prayers seem to be thrown away and unheard. It is a subject which ought to come home to all classes of Christians. All have not equal gifts of knowledge and utterance in their approaches to God. But all can forgive their fellow-men. It is a subject which our Lord Jesus Christ has taken special pains to impress on our minds. He has given it a prominent place in that pattern of prayers, the Lord's prayer. We are all familiar from our infancy with the words, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." Well would it be for many, if they would consider what those words mean!

Let us leave the passage with serious self-inquiry. Do we know what it is to be of a forgiving spirit? Can we forgive the injuries that we receive from time to time in this evil world? Can we pass over a transgression and pardon an offence? if not, where is our Christianity? If not, why should we wonder that our souls do not prosper? Let us resolve to amend our ways in this matter. Let us determine by God's grace to forgive, even as we hope to be forgiven. This is the nearest approach we can make to the mind of Christ Jesus. This is the character which is most suitable to a poor sinful child of Adam. God's free forgiveness of sins is our highest privilege in this world. God's free forgiveness will be our only title to eternal life in the world to come. Then let us be forgiving during the few years that we are here upon earth.