

INTRODUCTION: IT'S NOT WHAT IT SEEMS... OR IS IT? IT'S ALL ABOUT PERSPECTIVE.

- The entire story of Jesus reveals God's perspective to mankind!
- We tend to look at the story already knowing the outcome (the end backwards) rather than the way the disciples saw it—not knowing what was going to happen next nor the eventual outcome.
- The whole story of Jesus reveals a contrast between our perspectives and His.
 - o Jesus wants to feed 1,000's, and the disciples are focused on how.
 - o The little children are around and the disciples want to drive them off, but Jesus wants them there.
 - o The disciples and the boat—Jesus sleeps while they worry and panic.
 - o The Pharisees are mad that tax collectors and sinners are around but Jesus is happy to be with them.

JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH:

Matthew 16:21-26 ²¹From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. ²²Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" ²³Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns." ²⁴Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.

IT'S NOT WHAT IT SEEMS...

- This past week emphasizes this!
- Remember the Passion story and how the disciples saw things?

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

Luke 19:28-47 ²⁸After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, ³⁰"Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' say, 'The Lord needs it.'"

³²Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. ³³As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?"

³⁴They replied, "The Lord needs it."

³⁵They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. ³⁶As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

³⁷When 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!"

³⁹Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!"

⁴⁰"I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."

⁴¹As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it ⁴²and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. ⁴³The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side.

⁴⁴They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."

⁴⁵When Jesus entered the temple courts, he began to drive out those who were selling. ⁴⁶"It is written," he said to them, 'My house will be a house of prayer'; but you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"

⁴⁷Every day he was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him.

- Jesus takes a donkey: we know, and they knew, it was a prophecy fulfilled. (See Zechariah 9:9)
- Jesus wept, but the disciples celebrated. (v.41)
- Jesus goes into the temple attacking rather than going to the Tower of Antonia, and the disciples were confused by Jesus' intensity. (Luke 19:45-47))
- The Romans and taxes. (Luke 20:20-26)

JESUS PREDICTS PETER'S DENIAL // THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE // JESUS' ARREST

- Jesus predicts Peter's denial, but Peter says he will die before he betrays Jesus, no matter the circumstances. Jesus knew what was ahead; Peter did not. (Matthew 26:31-35)
- Jesus asks them to pray for what is to come; He is overwhelmed, but the disciples fall asleep. (Matthew 26:36-46)
- Peter tries to fight for Jesus in the garden as he is arrested. Jesus tells him to stop and is willing to submit Himself. (John 18:10-12)
- Pilate and Jesus—power to do what? (John 19:8-11)

HOW WOULD THE DISCIPLES HAVE ACTED DIFFERENTLY IF THEY'D KNOWN THE END FROM THE BEGINNING?

- They would endure the middle: fear, anger, fighting, lack of faith...
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APPLICATION FOR PRESENT-DAY:

- God is the same, and He is still working.
- What does this tell us about how we should live when we have a relationship with the One who knows the end from the beginning?

1 Peter 4:12–16 ¹²Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. ¹⁶However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.

- We are not surprised that fiery trials come—it's a war.
- We focus on the One we know. He cares for us. He knows the end from the beginning.
- We seek His will (His Word, His people, the Holy Spirit's voice) rather than give in to the world's perspective.
- We know the mission we are on; we know God's general will for us and this planet.
- We take the next right step in faith.

QUESTIONS TO REFLECT AND DISCUSS:

Passages to consider: Matthew 21, Mark 11, Luke 19, John 12

- Share something from the sermon that was a good reminder or insight for you.
1. This week, has anything made you think, "It's not what it seems"? Share your experience.
 2. Read Matthew 21:1-17. What do you notice about Jesus and the people around him?
 3. In what ways does Jesus challenge peoples' expectations or assumptions? A) What do you notice about the perspective Jesus brings?
 4. What expectations or assumptions have you had challenged this week? A) How has that felt, and how has that impacted your attitude and actions?
 5. What is helping you seek out God's perspective at this time? A) What have you discovered? What is challenging?
 6. What about Jesus brings you comfort and courage? A) How can you share what Jesus has given you with your family, neighbors, friends, and community at this unique time?

Passages to prepare for next week, Easter: It's not what it seems!

This week, read Luke 22–24. Take a chapter a day.

As you read, ask yourself these questions:

- a) What is the passage saying about Jesus?
- b) What do I learn about myself from this passage?
- c) What adjustment does this require of me in my thinking, believing, and doing?
- d) What changes will I make as I obey what God is showing me?
- e) What area most needs to be impacted by this? Think of your Home, Church, and World (where you work, live, and play).
- f) Who will I tell what God is showing me?