CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
OCTOBER042025

Scripture Story: Matthew 21:1-19, 23-46; Mark 11:1-21, 27-33; 12:1-12; Luke 19:29-48; 20:1-19; John 12:12-19.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 63-65.

keeping it real!



Photo by Colleen Cahill

flashlight

"In every age there is given to men their day of light and privilege, a probationary time in which they may become reconciled to God. But there is a limit to this grace. Mercy may plead for years and be slighted and rejected; but there comes a time when mercy makes her last plea. The heart becomes so hardened that it ceases to respond to the Spirit of God. Then the sweet, winning voice entreats the sinner no longer, and reproofs and warnings cease" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 587).

keytext

"As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, 'If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes.' "

(Luke 19:41, 42, NIV)

what do you think?

Would you rather:

____ Make all your social network posts public?
____ Let the world know what you think of Jesus?
____ Spend two years in jail for a crime you didn't commit?
____ Make people think you are a Christian, even if you don't really believe?
____ Share your faith in Jesus in the most authentic ways, lovingly, with sensitivity toward others, and with the openness to be led by the Holy Spirit?

did you know?

The fig tree is peculiar because the fruit appears before the leaves do. When Jesus was hiking toward Jerusalem, He grew hungry. He saw a fig tree with lots of leaves on it. It wasn't the season for figs, but lots of fig leaves was supposed to mean lots of figs. Jesus found that there were no figs on the tree at all, and He cursed it. Later the disciples found that the tree had died. Was Jesus mad at the tree? No. The figless tree served as a warning to people who try to look holy and pretend to bear good fruit in their actions, but are just putting on a show for others. God wants us to keep it real and keep it right!

INTO THE STORY

"They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

"'Hosanna to the Son of David!'

"'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'

"'Hosanna in the highest heaven!'"

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

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

"So the Pharisees said to one another, 'See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!' "

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

"Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. 'It is written,' he said to them, '"My house will be called a house of prayer," but you are making it a "den of robbers."'

"The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' they were indignant.

"'Do you hear what these children are saying?' they asked him.

"'Yes,' replied Jesus, 'have you never read, "From the lips of children and infants you, Lord, have called forth your praise?"' . . .

"Early in the morning, as Jesus was on his way back to the city, he was hungry. Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, 'May you never bear fruit again!' Immediately

the tree withered."

(Matthew 21:7-9; Luke 19:39, 40; John 12:19; Luke 19:41-44; Matthew 21:12-19, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Why do you think the Pharisees were offended by what the people were doing?

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What did Jesus say would happen to Jerusalem?

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From whom does the Bible say God ordained praise? How can you praise God this week?

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The same people who praised Jesus on Sunday yelled for Him to be crucified on Friday. How could this happen?

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What was Jesus' reaction to the fig tree? Why?

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What character in the story do you most identify with? Why?

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What does this passage teach us about God?

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How can we use this information in our lives today?

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punch lines

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" **(2 Peter 3:9, KJV).**

"Say to them: 'The Lord God says: As surely as I live, I do not want any who are wicked to die. I want them to stop doing evil and live. Stop! Stop your wicked ways! You don't want to die, do you, people of Israel?'" **(Ezekiel 33:11, NCV).**

"Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight" **(1 Peter 3:3, 4, NIV).**

"I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other!" **(Revelation 3:15, NIV).**

"For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?" **(1 Peter 4:17, NIV).**

further insight

"Many persons are by their own endeavors hewn, polished, and beautified; but they cannot become 'living stones,' because they are not connected with Christ. Without this connection, no man can be saved."

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 599

Sabbath

Read Isaiah 29:13.

In the *What Do You Think?* section you had to answer some pretty difficult questions. The last one deals with whether we are going to be real in our relationship with God. God is looking for wholehearted service and love, not just a show for our parents or church family.

Isaiah 29:13 says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught" (NIV). Jerusalem *appeared* to follow God, but her heart was far from Him. What about you? Is your relationship with God real, or does it only appear so for everybody else?

Sunday

Read 1 Peter 3:3, 4.

Read the *Into the Story* section and then answer the questions in the *Out of the Story* section of your lesson. It includes a story about a fig tree. Jesus curses it because it was not bearing fruit. Although it wasn't time for fruit, it was covered with leaves, and that signified that it should have been covered with fruit too. This tree was a hypocrite—appearing to be one thing while being something else.

This is an easy trap to fall into—appearing to be holy or Christian but not really being changed on the inside. To God, not serving Him but telling everyone you are is worse than not serving Him at all! He wants your service, and He wants *all* of it! What are some areas of your life that you need to invite God to take over *fully*?

Monday

Read Luke 19:41, 42.

Consider this week's *Key Text*. In the story of Jesus' great march to Jerusalem, He stopped on the side of the road. Can you imagine the surprise of everyone in Jesus' grand processional when in the midst of their celebration He started crying? Those around Christ thought they were doing Him a favor, but Jesus was able to look past the outward festivities and see their inward falsities. Why do you think Jesus reacted this way?

Their sin broke God's heart. Sin should break our hearts too. Say a prayer today asking God to help you view sin the way He does.

Tuesday

Read Ezekiel 33:11.

In this week's *Flashlight* Ellen White talks about the mercy God gives us as sinners. People often call God "the God of second chances," but the record shows He gives a lot more than two chances. By the time Christ came, humanity had almost 2,000 years of chances. Jesus' coming to earth as a last-ditch effort to save humanity was mercy at its best—but even that was rejected.

What would you do if people continued to reject your help and promise of deliverance? How do you think the story of Jerusalem is similar to our story? What does this reveal about how God will respond to sin in these last days?

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Wednesday

Read 2 Peter 3:9.

Have you ever wondered, "If God is so loving, how can He destroy people?" In Isaiah 28:21 the Bible characterizes the punishment for sin as a "strange work" for our merciful God (NIV). He does not delight in it, but judgment and consequences are both necessary to save humanity from complete destruction.

Read this week's *Punch Lines* section. In the lines below, write out what these texts reveal about God.

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Thursday

Read Revelation 3:15.

People often use the phrase "Keep it real." This is not a new concept. God has been calling for this since the beginning of time. God presents choices and desperately desires for us to choose Him. He continually calls us to relationship and service with Him. Whatever choice we make, however, God wants us to be honest about it. God is calling for us to keep it real!

If things are not right between you and God, today is a great day to change that! God offers mercy and forgiveness for our sins and mistakes. Pray a prayer confessing your sins to God and ask for His power to keep you from falling.

Friday

Read 1 Peter 4:17.

God is calling us to have a *real* relationship with Him. God is also calling us to have a *right* relationship with Him. Take some time to evaluate your spiritual walk with Christ. Is it authentic? Is your service based on love for God or the desire to please other people? What can you do this week to "keep it real" with Christ and have a more authentic relationship with Him?

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this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages or (*Humble Hero*), chapters 63-65.

*A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, entitled *Humble Hero*, has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.