

a) *Why did the people want Barabbas instead of Jesus?*

b) Because they were rejecting *Jesus' ways* and choosing *Barabbas' ways*.

iii. Bringing it home

D. If we are going to be a church that bears witness to the Gospel of Christ's kingdom faithfully, we must be becoming a praying church for that is an essential means of change.



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LIVE THE STORY

The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- Compare *and* contrast Jesus and Barabbas. How is the choice between them really a choice about ways of seeing the kingdom come?
- Can you think of ways in history that the "Church" has followed the ways of Barabbas and rejected the ways of Jesus?
- Discuss ways today that the church (both generically and specifically) might follow the ways of Barabbas and reject those of Jesus.
- In what way is Mark 11:22-25 a challenge from Jesus to His followers as much as a promise? How does it speak to the way our king calls us to strive to seek the kingdom come? How do those verses call us to both patience and peace?
- Describe ways in which the choice between Jesus as King and Barabbas as king plays out in our homes, neighborhoods, workplaces, and stores we go to.
- How is Jesus' response to John the Baptist in Mark 11:4-6 instructive for the church today as we seek to spread the kingdom message?

Becoming a Praying Church: *The Insurrectionists Lair or the House of Prayer*

Jerry Cisar — March 24, 2024 (Palm Sunday)

Text: Mark 11:1-25; 15:1-15

Introduction: Do You Truly Want Jesus as King?

I. Jesus: the True King (Mark 11:1-25)

- A. Obtaining the donkey colt
 - i. Who can demand the use of someone else's mule?
 - ii. This whole scene points to Jesus as King, but a different kind of king (Zech. 9:9-10).
- B. Mark way of telling us that *this* tells us about *that*!
 - i. Cloaks and Branches
 - ii. Did Jesus have an anger problem?
 - iii. Jesus looks for fruit at the temple and finds none.

II. Barabbas: the False King (Mark 15:1-15)

- A. At the beginning of the week, the people had hope that Jesus as Messiah would restore their national dignity.
 - i. Jesus was killed in nationalistic fervor (John 11:45-53)

- B. Barabbas was not a mere robber; he is an insurrectionist (15:7).

- i. By the end of the week, the people were ready to trade Jesus ways of doing good, healing others, forgiving sins, calling us to prayer for someone willing to murder. That is how they will save their nation!

- ii. Matt. 11:4-6

"Give us Barabbas" is a cry for a savior who saves by taking the lives of others rather than laying down his life. It is a rejection of the patient, prayerful, peaceful ways of Jesus.

III. How Does the Kingdom Come? (Mark 11:22-25)

- A. Jesus' promise about prayer is a **challenge** that intends to change how we think about prayer.
 - i. *"This mountain"*
 - a) This isn't necessarily about moving whatever mountains stand in your way, but about *how* we believe the transformative work of Christ in the world is to take place.
 - b) Whatever *isms* excite or infuriate you, those human constructs tempt us to trust in something other than Christ's patient, prayerful, and peaceful ways of changing the world OR to fear something other than God.
 - ii. The challenge: We must believe that the mountains will move *before* they move.

- iii. "Whatever you ask for in prayer" in context (Mark 10:35-40)

- iv. Not only are we to be a praying people, we are to be a peaceful people.

- B. *The type of king we want is anchored in what we believe will bring about change in the world.*

- i. Jesus and Barabbas represent two different paths to change; two different things to put our hope in.

➤ Psalm 20:7

Idolatry is ultimately an entrusting of our lives, our security, our safety, our prosperity to a force other than the Living God. Or, fearing a force other than the Living God.

- ii. The idolatry which the crucifixion reveals is the same idolatry the prophets railed against.

- C. House of Prayer or Insurrectionists' Lair?

- i. Insurrection is a major theme during the week from Jesus' inauguration to his trial and crucifixion.
 - ii. Today the Barabbas story is often read religiously. Jesus is God's Son. How foolish to choose Barabbas, a common criminal, over the Son of God.