

Matthew 21:14-16 NLT - 14 The blind and the lame came to him in the Temple, and he healed them. 15 The leading priests and the teachers of religious law saw these wonderful miracles and heard even the children in the Temple shouting, "Praise God for the Son of David." But the leaders were indignant. 16 They asked Jesus, "Do you hear what these children are saying?" "Yes," Jesus replied. "Haven't you ever read the Scriptures? For they say, 'You have taught children and infants to give you praise.'"

Adoration and worship were the crowd's responses to an encounter with Jesus. The priests didn't want him recognized as Messiah, but the people followed him to the temple where they were healed, restored and given hope.

When He was challenged by the leaders Jesus pointed to the scriptures as the authority for the praise He received. They were physically in the crowd that worshiped Jesus, but in their hearts, they said, "Crucify Him".

Knowing the scripture is more than memorizing verses, it means letting God speak to you through His word. Discuss the different ways that God can speak to you through His word. Share anything you have recently discovered in God's Word.

WRAP-UP

People adopt behaviors based on their circle of influence. The crowd on Palm Sunday was influenced to praise. But before Pilate, the priests influenced the crowd to cry out "Crucify Him". When we gather as a community of faith it is to be reformed into Jesus' Kingdom, not to have our agendas met. We gather for reformation in the Kingdom because otherwise we will sound like the mob. Overtly, Crucify. Or, Subversively, Hosanna all the while wanting him to be something he is not.

MEMORY VERSE.

And Jesus said, "I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." Mark 14:62

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life _____

Challenge.- This week as you read your bible, spend time listening for God to speak to you about how to apply it in your life.

“Mob Mentality”

Mark•Grace•Sacrifice•Hope- #6

INTRODUCTION

In the hours leading up to His crucifixion, Jesus stood before different crowds of people. Some were struggling to maintain power, some seeking to escape oppression, and others were simply swept up in the masses. For those who viewed Jesus as a threat, the crowd was a tool that could be manipulated to further their purposes. The same is true today. We too can find ourselves being influenced by those taking advantage of the mob mentality.

Ice Breaker

Have you ever been in or around a highly agitated crowd? Maybe at a sports event, a rally or protest of even a Black Friday Sale? What was it like?

Key Passage

Mark 15:11-13 NLT - 11 But at this point the leading priests stirred up the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas instead of Jesus. 12 Pilate asked them, "Then what should I do with this man you call the king of the Jews?" 13 They shouted back, "Crucify him!"

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Influenced by Religious Leaders

Mark 14:55, 61-62, 64 NLT - 55 Inside, the leading priests and the entire high council were trying to find evidence against Jesus, so they could put him to death. But they couldn't find any. ... 61 But Jesus was silent and made no reply. Then the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" 62 Jesus said, "I AM. And you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God's right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven." ... 64 You have all heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?" "Guilty!" they all cried. "He deserves to die!"

After his arrest, Jesus was taken before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by Caiaphas the High Priest. This clandestine meeting of religious leaders was held at night and had one purpose.

The council was not seeking the truth about Jesus. What were they trying to find during this gathering (v. 55)? Why do you think Caiaphas asked if Jesus was Messiah? What was their conclusion when Jesus said, "I AM"?

The Sanhedrin had influence and power over the people. To keep that power, they had begun to align themselves with Rome. Although Rome was their oppressor and should have been the enemy, this group began to adopt their enemy's practices. They had accepted the Roman method of execution, although crucifixion was considered a curse to the Jews.

How did Jesus being acknowledged as the Messiah threaten the religious leaders' power?

Mark tells us they were seeking to put Jesus to death. Crucifixion was designed by Rome to show people what happened if you got in the way of those who were in charge. The Sanhedrin saw Jesus as a threat and so they sought to get Him crucified. Their next step was to take Him to the Roman governor, Pilate, to carry out their plans.

2. Response of the Crowd

Mark 15:8-15 NLT - 8 The crowd went to Pilate and asked him to release a prisoner as usual. 9 "Would you like me to release to you this 'King of the Jews'?" Pilate asked. 10 (For he realized by now that the leading priests had arrested Jesus out of envy) 11 But at this point the leading priests stirred up the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas instead of Jesus. 12 Pilate asked them, "Then what should I do with this man you call the king of the Jews?" 13 They shouted back, "Crucify him!" 14 "Why?" Pilate demanded. "What crime has he committed?" But the mob roared even louder, "Crucify him!" 15 So to pacify the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He ordered Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip, then turned him over to the Roman soldiers to be crucified.*

* *phthonos* -is the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others; "envy" desires to deprive another of what he has

Between verses 8 and 13 there was a change in what the crowd was seeking. How did it change? How was the request of the crowd reshaped into the desires of the Sanhedrin?

Mark 15:7 NLT - 7 One of the prisoners at that time was Barabbas, a revolutionary who had committed murder in an uprising.

Matthew 3:17 NLT - 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy."

The crowd was stirred up to ask for Barabbas. How is he described? Why would releasing Barabbas appeal to the crowd? What did they want to see happen to the Romans?

The priests had incited the crowd to demand an insurrectionist and murderer's release rather than Jesus. The name Barabbas means "son of the father". In Matt 3:17 as Jesus was baptized a voice from heaven announced that Jesus was indeed God's son. But it was the voice of the religious leaders that this crowd listened to instead of the voice of God himself. And in doing so they accepted a false "son of the father".

It can be difficult to separate the voices that try to exert influence over us, especially when we are part of a crowd. What or who would you say are the most prominent voices in your life:

Political, Influencers/ Entertainment, Spiritual, Intellectual/Academic, Business/Finance...

In what way can these voices influence your response to Jesus, either directly or indirectly?

3. A Different Crowd

Matthew 21:4-5, 8-9 NIV - 4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: 5 "Say to Daughter Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.' " ... 8 A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 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!"

Only two days earlier Jesus faced a different crowd as He entered Jerusalem. These were the regular people who came to celebrate the Passover. As Jesus entered the city they responded as prophesied by Zechariah.

What did the crowd shout on this occasion? What title did they call Jesus? What did the prophet call him? What was the sign to them that Jesus was the one they were waiting for?