



Connect Group questions

Matthew 21:1-17 - The King's Arrival

We will be looking at readings from Matthew 21 - 28 in Term 1. If you have access to technology an excellent outline of the how the Gospel of Matthew is constructed, can be found at 'Read Scripture' on *Youtube* under New Testament and Matthew. It is in two parts 1-13 and 14-28 but it will give your group an insight into how the Gospel works. In fact, it's worth keeping this site in mind for it provides a wonderful summary of every book of the bible.

1. Imagine current and historic political leaders in our world and explore how their form of leadership compares with that of Jesus.
2. The quotation in verse 5 comes from Zechariah 9:9, a chapter that includes a prophecy of judgement on Israel's enemies. How do we bring together the idea of God's judgement and Zechariah prophecy (and the fulfilment in Jesus) of the hope of a humble king.
3. Jesus in no weakling. He is Lord of heaven and earth. Yet he is a king who cares and loves in ways greater than we can imagine. Share together how this truth has impacted your life.
4. Jesus cleansed the temple. Some people see this as an act of bad-tempered violence. How would you answer their accusation?
5. Read Malachi 3:1-3. Do you see this as relevant to our understanding of the temple cleansing?
6. The quotation in v 13 comes from Isaiah 56:7 although Matthew quotes only part of the verse. What important part does Matthew leave out and does he do so for 'racist' reasons? If you think this might be so compare this passage with the story of the Magi (which country did, they come from) and the great commission of 28:19.
7. Matthew often quotes from the Old Testament. What does this tell us about his understanding of who Jesus is?
8. Now spend time reflecting on our church community, including our connect group, exploring whether or not we as a community reflect the character of Jesus or aspire more to the kinds of leadership and community characteristic of our world.
9. Pray for each other. Allow Jesus the judge to expose our human sinfulness and failures while allowing Jesus the king on the donkey, the redeemer to put his merciful arms around us.
10. Pray for our dioceses, that the Jesus of the bible, the Jesus we read about in the Gospels will be honoured and that his life and message of hope will be shared with others.

A second thing you might like to explore this year, again using technology, is an App that you can use at home called Lectio365. This provides a form of prayer and bible reflection that all of us can use and it is one that we can encourage those who come from different style of churches to use as well. You can listen to one of them as a group and then use them in private devotions at home.

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