# Gospel of Mark Weekly Talk Ideas | Sean McGever

## Mark Chapter 11

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| Scripture suggestion, basic overview, and background:  The best story for a club talk in Mark 11, in my opinion, is when Jesus cleanses the Temple (11:15-19). There are at least two important themes in this story: 1) What Jesus is like, and 2) What the Temple is meant for. Scholars have lots of ideas about the exact nuances of this passage (and how it relates to the surrounding Fig Tree stories), of which I’d love to nerd-out on for those who are interested; however, for the sake of a club talk, I’d keep it focused on Jesus and what was happening in the Temple in Jesus’ day. When we read this story, we must discuss these two things:   1. **Jesus is human**. Humans have **emotions**. Jesus was *angry*. But, why was he *angry*?... 2. **The Temple was meant to be a sacred place of worship**. The religious leaders of Jesus’ day, however, had turned the Temple into a corrupt place for their own promotion and financial gain (as well as a place where both the *buyers* and the *sellers* had strayed from the true worship of God – the issue wasn’t only with the religious leaders, the issues was also with the religious followers in Jesus’ day).   These two essential aspects of the passage lead me to envision a club talk that helps us recognize Jesus’ genuine humanity (like our own, but perfect), as well as God’s desire for us to worship and serve Him purely.  As a brief reminder, in Young Life, in continuity with the historic teaching of the Christian church, we continually emphasize the dual-nature of Jesus Christ as fully God and fully human. Being human means having emotions. Jesus’ **anger** is evident here. Jesus’ anger is divine and human. Jesus’ is anger is human because Jesus is human and, thus, experiences the same emotions we experience: **Being tired** (Mt. 8:24 – asleep in the boat); **Anger** (Mt. 23:33 – harsh words towards the Pharisees) **Sorrow** (Jn. 11:35 – Jesus wept); **Compassion** (Mt. 9:36 – Jesus’ response to seeing harassed and helpless crowds); **Frustration** (Mk. 4:40 – Jesus’ frustration at the disciples’ lack of faith); **Agony** (Lk. 22:42 – Jesus’ painful prayer before he dripped blood in the garden); **Joy** (Heb. 12:2 – for the joy set before him, Jesus endured the cross). |
| Possible main point(s):   * Jesus was 100% human and got angry… especially when people twisted God’s plans and purposes. |
| What this shows us about Jesus:   * Jesus was fully human, his humanity included emotions like anger (but, perfect, righteous anger). * Jesus did not put up with corrupt religion that was used for selfish gain – Jesus had absolutely no patience for twisting and distorting religion (note, Jesus did not hold a debate, instead, he drove people out and flipped over tables). |
| What this has to do with our life:   * Our emotions are part of the way we are all created. While our emotions may not be as righteous as Jesus’, we should not mute our emotions, but channel them for God’s purposes. * We, like Jesus, should be weary of those who use religion as a prop or for self-promotion. |
| Relevant technical details:   * *Jerusalem* (v. 15) = The religious, financial, and political center of the Jewish world. * *Temple* (v.15) = The only place on earth (in Jerusalem) where Jews could formally draw near to God and present their offerings and sacrifices. It is difficult to understate the importance of the Temple for the Jews. * *Drive out* (v.15) = Literally “throw out.” * *Sold and bought / money changers* (vv.15-16) = The presence of buying and selling sacrifices and money changers are not inherently a problem. The problem is *how* and *where* they are doing it. People would come from distance lands to come to the Temple, so it is understandable that they might need to purchase their sacrifices in Jerusalem. Similarly, Ex. 30:13-16 required every Jewish male to pay an annual half-shekel tax to the Temple, and since people came from foreign lands, money changers were necessary. The issue is *how* and *where* they did these transactions. Without going into too much detail, this should have happened outside the Temple courts (not inside) and also in a way that did not bring considerable financial gain to the priests (which it did – they became rich through these transactions). * *House of prayer* (v.17) = Jesus quotes Isa. 56:7 and quietly skips the part about sacrifices in the Temple (likely knowing that He Himself was to be the once-for-all sacrifice for the people). * *Den of robbers* (v.17) = This phrase is a deep insult and condemnation of the religious leaders in Jesus’ day, it implies that they used the Temple as a retreat and hideout from their religious crimes, essentially using a “church” as a façade to hide their own corrupt actions and lives. |
| Possible illustrations:   * *Emoticons*: Put emoticons on the screen and ask the crowd to describe the emotion intended. Then talk about times when you felt each of those emotions. Then ask: “Which of these emotions do you think Jesus felt while on earth?” * *Tables and seats*: You guessed it… flip them over to make a scene to capture Jesus’ frustration. |

*For more details, see ylhelp.com*

Mark 11 (ESV)

**The Triumphal Entry**

**11**Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples **2**and said to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. **3**If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.’ ” **4**And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. **5**And some of those standing there said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” **6**And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. **7**And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. **8**And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. **9**And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! **10**Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!”

**11**And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

**Jesus Curses the Fig Tree**

**12**On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. **13**And seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see if he could find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. **14**And he said to it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard it.

**Jesus Cleanses the Temple**

**15**And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. **16**And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. **17**And he was teaching them and saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers.” **18**And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching. **19**And when evening came they went out of the city.

**The Lesson from the Withered Fig Tree**

**20**As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. **21**And Peter remembered and said to him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered.” **22**And Jesus answered them, “Have faith in God. **23**Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. **24**Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. **25**And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”

**The Authority of Jesus Challenged**

**27**And they came again to Jerusalem. And as he was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him, **28**and they said to him, “By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do them?” **29**Jesus said to them, “I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. **30**Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man? Answer me.” **31**And they discussed it with one another, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ **32**But shall we say, ‘From man’?”—they were afraid of the people, for they all held that John really was a prophet. **33**So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”