

August 16

Luke 19:1-10

These verses tell the story of Jesus encountering a tax collector names Zacchaeus.

Question to Consider:

Jesus believed Zacchaeus was sincere with his change of heart. Be honest, would you have been as willing to accept Zacchaeus's new attitude, or would you have been skeptical and in need of some proof?

Prayer:

Gracious God, I pray that I am sincere when I turn to you – that I give myself to you completely. You know me better than I know myself, and you know when I am holding something back from you. Help me to see myself as you see me, and to change the things I need to change.

August 17

Mark 11:1-10

This passage tells of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on what we know of today as Palm Sunday.

Question to Consider:

The crowd witnessing Jesus' entry was no doubt made up of a mixture of people – some believed in him, some didn't, and some were curious. It is much the same today. Think of the people in your life. Are they believers? Skeptical? Curious? Is there someone who *you* might be able to help come to know Jesus Christ?

Prayer:

Almighty God, I encounter all kinds of people. Like the crowd on that Palm Sunday, some of them believe in Jesus and some of them don't. Some may be curious. Give me the courage to share my faith with someone who may, someday, join with those say "Hosanna!" In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

August 18

Matthew 21:10-17

In the passage, Jesus clears the temple court of those who were transacting business.

Question to Consider:

Doves were needed for sacrifice and foreign currencies needed to be exchanged, yet Jesus was angry with what he saw. Why do you think he was angry? Is there anything going on at your church that might anger Jesus in the same way?

Prayer:

Merciful God, people around the temple had lost sight of why the temple existed. Help me to make sure that my church does not make the same mistake. I pray that when Jesus enters the church where I worship, he will be pleased with what he sees. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

August 19

Mark 11:27-33

This passage tells of a verbal challenge to Jesus' authority.

Question to Consider:

Jesus did not give the religious leaders a direct answer to their question. Why do you suppose he responded in the way that he did?

Prayer:

Father God, sometimes I read one of the teachings of Jesus and I resist it, saying something like "well, that doesn't really apply to me and my life." Help me to remember that his authority comes from you and that the words he speaks are your words. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

August 20

Matthew 21:28-32

In these verses, Jesus tells a parable about two sons.

Question to Consider:

Jesus teaches that heavenly rewards are available to all – how they lived before turning to God is immaterial. What matters is their turn toward God. Is that fair? Even if they turn toward God late in life?

Prayer:

Forgiving God, your grace is so much greater than mine. Help me to rejoice whenever someone turns to you, and I pray that I will *stay* turned toward you. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.