



CEDAR VALLEY

STUDY TOOLS

Sunday, March 29, 2026

Teaching Title: Want vs. Need

Key Scripture: Mark 10:32–45; 11:1–10

5-DAY READING PLAN WITH QUESTIONS:

Monday: Mark 9:30-50

Tuesday: Mark 10:1-31

Wednesday: Mark 10:32-52

Thursday: Mark 11:1-19

Friday: Mark 11:20-33

1. What does this passage tell you about God?
2. What does this passage tell you about people?
3. If this is God's Word (The Bible), what do I need to do?
4. What's your takeaway?
5. Who would you tell?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 10:45 NLT

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

Introduction:

Palm Sunday is the beginning of Holy Week, when we remember the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Palm Sunday also highlights the tension between what we *want* and what we truly *need*. Jesus was not the kind of King people expected, but exactly the King they needed. As Jesus resolutely journeys toward Jerusalem and clearly predicts His suffering and death, His disciples and the crowds remain focused on their own desires for power, comfort, and political victory. James and John seek positions of honor, while the crowd celebrates Jesus as a conquering king in the line of David, hoping He will overthrow Rome and restore national glory. Yet Jesus redefines kingship entirely: He comes "not to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many." Jesus offers salvation from sin rather than relief from circumstances. The same crowd that praises Him will soon reject Him. It reveals how shallow their devotion was to Jesus in the first place. In the same way, we must examine our own hearts. Are we following the Jesus we want or surrendering to the true King we need? What you want may comfort you, but what you need will transform you.

Questions:

Ice Breaker: Have you ever really wanted something at one point in your life, but later felt grateful you didn't get it? What was it?

1. Read Mark 10:32-45 together as a group. The disciples are described as being filled with awe, while the crowd is filled with fear (Mark 10:32). Why do you think these two groups respond so differently?
2. How does James and John's request in Mark 10:35–37 reveal what they *want* from Jesus? What does this show about their understanding of His kingdom?
3. In Mark 10:42–45, how does Jesus redefine leadership and greatness? How is this different from the world's view of power and authority?

4. Now read Mark 11:1-11 together. How does Jesus riding on a donkey contrast with the kind of king the people were anticipating? (See Digging Deeper)
5. The crowd calls Jesus king but misunderstands the kind of king He is. What clues in the text show the difference between their expectations and Jesus' actual mission? (See Digging Deeper)
6. In what ways are we tempted to follow a version of Jesus who meets our wants (comfort, success, ease) rather than surrendering to the King we truly need?
7. What does it practically look like in your life right now to surrender to Jesus as King—even when He doesn't meet your expectations or leads you in a way you wouldn't choose?

DIGGING DEEPER

Question 4: Why a donkey? And why a donkey that has never been ridden?

Psalm 33 and Zechariah 9:9 help explain:

Psalm 33

16 No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength.

17 A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save.

18 But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love,

19 to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine.

20 We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield.

21 In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name.

22 May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you.

Zechariah 9:9

Look, your king is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious, yet he is humble, riding on a donkey..."

According to New Testament Scholar, Craig Keener, "Animals never before ridden or yoked were often those preferred for dedication to God (Num 19:2, Deut 21:3, 1 Sam 6:7). (IVP Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible)

Question 5: One clue is palm branches

Using palm branches was not an exclusive Jewish tradition. Greece used palms as a symbol of victory and power. But, palm branches had strong national and political symbolism in Jewish culture. In the 2nd century BC, there was a Jewish revolt against Seleucid powers called the Maccabean Revolt (named after Judas Maccabeus meaning "hammer"). There are two books in Jewish literature (also referred to as the Apocrypha) called 1 and 2 Maccabees that talk about this revolt. When they had victory over the Seleucids, they waved palm branches as a symbol of military victory.

1 Maccabees 13:51 – On the twenty-third day of the second month, in the one hundred and seventy-first year, the Jews entered it with praise and palm branches, and with harps and cymbals and stringed instruments, and with hymns and songs, because a great enemy had been crushed and removed from Israel.

2 Maccabees 10:7 – Therefore, carrying ivy-wreathed wands and beautiful branches and also fronds of palm, they offered hymns of thanksgiving to him who had given success to the purifying of his own holy place.

Most likely, palm branches were an allusion to the Maccabean triumphs, showing they see him as more of a revolutionary messiah. Hosanna" means "save now." It was a cry for help people made to their king; a cry of oppressed people in their trouble (Psalm 118:26; 2 Samuel 14:4 2 Kings 6:26). (Expositors Bible Commentary: Matthew, page 437, DA Carson).