

Date : 14 Sept 2025

Topic : Marks of Greatness in the Kingdom of God

Key Passage: Mark 11

Key Verse : Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it. ⁸ And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: “Hosanna! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

Mark 11:7-9

Introduction

Mark 11 marks the first time Jesus openly reveals His true identity as the King, the first major public revelation of His kingship. He fulfils the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9 and signals the beginning of His final week before the cross. Unlike earlier occasions when He concealed His Messianic role, here Jesus openly reveals Himself as the promised King.

Jesus is the Servant King

Jesus is first and foremost **the Sovereign King** *Mark 11:2-3*

- He is the Lord over all creation, the One who commands the colt and its owners, and they obey without question. All authority in heaven and on earth belongs to Him; nothing exists apart from His will. Colossians 1:16-17.
- As the Sovereign King, He rules with absolute power, infinite wisdom, and perfect justice. He is not just a regional ruler or temporary authority—He is the eternal King, to whom every knee will bow and every tongue confess He is Lord and King.
- Though He has all authority as the Sovereign King, He lays it down to serve and to save. His servanthood does not diminish His sovereignty—it defines how His sovereignty is exercised: not in domination, but in sacrificial love.

Jesus is **the Promised King** *Mark 11:7-9*

- He is also the Promised King, fulfilling God’s covenant promises and prophetic hope, proving His faithfulness to His Word. Over 500 years after Zechariah’s prophecy, Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey, fulfilling Zechariah 9:9.
- This act reveals Him as the long-awaited Messiah and shows that God’s redemptive plan has reached its climax.

The Servant King *Mark 11:7-9*

Above all, He chooses to come as the Servant King, redefining greatness in the Kingdom of God. His Kingship is not marked by domination but humility and love. By presenting Himself this way, Jesus reveals that true greatness is not in being served, but in serving; not in seizing power, but in laying it down.

If this is how the King Himself defines greatness, then greatness in God’s kingdom is measured by how we live as His servants. In Mark 11, Jesus reveals three marks of true greatness in a servant.

1. Greatness is marked by Humility *Mark 11:1-10*

True greatness is found in humble obedience, not pride

i) The Servant King, redefines greatness – walk in humility.

- Jesus, the King, enters Jerusalem not on a war horse but on a donkey — a symbol of peace and humility, and a picture of humble obedience.

Not as a worldly conquering king, but as the **Servant King** preparing for the cross.

- The cross is the pinnacle of greatness—Jesus chose the Father’s will over His own, laying down His life in sacrificial service.
- He modelled kingdom greatness through humility, obedience, and God-centred devotion, showing that true greatness is measured by God’s standards, not human recognition.
- Crowds want a king - applause, success, and status — not a servant-king who calls for humility, sacrifice, and bearing fruit.

ii) True greatness is found in serving God faithfully, not seeking status or display *Mark 11:27–33*

- The world measures greatness by **status, control, recognition and self-serving ambition**:
 - The religious leaders, out of pride, refuse to answer Jesus’ questions.
 - They refuse to submit to Jesus’ authority, prioritising reputation over truth.
 - Even within the church, service can be empty when driven by worldly motives – seeking applause, position or influence.
- **True marks of greatness**:
 - Lives humbly and with integrity - choosing truth and obedience over convenience, popularity, or comfort.
 - Serves faithfully and consistently - relying on God’s way even when it requires sacrifice.
 - Honors God above self-interest – seeking His kingdom and glory alone.

2. Greatness is marked by Zeal for His House *Mark 11:15-17*

‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations. But you have made it a den of robbers.’ Mark 11:17

True greatness aligns with God’s purposes, confronting all that defiles His Kingdom.

- The Servant King honors God’s holiness – Confront sin and protect what is sacred
- Jesus clears the temple:
 - Confronted corruption and self-interest in worship.
 - Restored God’s house as a place of prayer and blessing.
- In cleansing the temple, Jesus is confronting those exploiting God’s house for personal profit, demonstrating His devotion to God’s holiness. He intends His house as a place of prayer, - prayer for all nations.
- Just as Jesus clears the temple of corruption, we must remove anything that defiles God’s dwelling in us:

Personal level - Honor God’s house as a house of prayer:

- Guard our hearts from actions that defile His house, e.g., avoiding lust, greed, dishonesty.
- Guard against offering the ‘sacrifice of fools’ *Ecclesiastes 5:1*
 - By reverence for God and the preaching of His Word
 - By refraining from chatting or playing with smart phones
- Offer prayers of worship earnestly.

Church level:

- Serve God by serving His house, not just a passive spectator.
- Treat as a sacred moment – focus on worship, prayer, hearing the Word.
- Examine motives in service — do we serve for God’s glory or personal gain?

3. Greatness is marked by Fruitfulness *Mark 11:12-14, 20-21*

When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves ... In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again *Mark 11:13-14*."

True greatness bears lasting, God-centred fruit, not mere outward appearances.

- **Jesus as Judge – Evaluates by fruit, not appearances**
 - The Servant King is seeking good and abundant fruit.
 - He evaluates our lives not by appearances or activity, but by the fruit we bear
Mark 11:12-14.
- **Fig tree - Hiding behind outward activity**

Outward religious activity can be a mask for a fruitless life.
(*The leaves of the fig tree hide its fruitlessness, like Adam and Eve using fig leaves to hide their shame*). *Mark 11:12–14, 20–21*

 - Activities such as attending church, reading Scripture, giving, or serving are good spiritual habits but God does not want us to lead unproductive lives.
 - Fruit for our labour is the result of faith and prayer.
 - Faith test: Do we live a productive life or just be satisfied with activity?
- **Fruit bearing - The result of abiding in His Word. *John 15:7-8***
 - Fruitfulness is the evidence of living an obedient faith that honors Jesus.
 - **Inward fruit**: Character change to the likeness of Christ – Love, joy, patience, faith, obedience *Galatians 5:22-23*
 - **Outward Fruit**: Spiritual harvest through faithful sowing.
 - Consistency and authenticity matter—faith is lived daily, not just in church.
 - Lasting fruit comes from abiding in Christ
 - Heart check: Am I attending church services but remain unchanged in character?
- **Faith in prayer – Bold, trusting and active *Mark 11:22–26***
 - Greatness in God's Kingdom is measured by bold prayer and generous forgiveness.
 - It reflects the mercy and character of the Servant King.
 - Such faith activates Kingdom authority.

Practical outworking in prayer:

 - Forgiveness is essential for bold prayer:
Jesus warns: "*When you stand praying, forgive...*" *Mark 11:25*.
 - Bold, forgiving faith is the evidence of a living, Kingdom-centred relationship with the Servant King.

Applications

1. How do I take praying in God's house seriously?

- Be on time
- Pray with another person
- Be reverent during preaching and praying time (no talking)
- Others ...

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2. What practical steps can I take to show humility and service, even as Jesus riding on a donkey is a model of humbleness and peace?