

I. Introduction

A. Our world

1. What characterizes our cultures atmosphere?
 - a. Anxious about the future
 - b. Distrust in authority
 - c. Want hope but can't find an anchor
 - d. Looking for connection apprehensively
 - e. Believing lies about self and others
 - f. What I do is futile.
2. Fear
 - a. Overly aggressive
 - b. Running or protecting self
 - c. Unable to move or act

B. Take heart

1. Matthew 28:1-6, 16-20
2. Jesus is our peace in the midst of fear and because Christ is in us, we have the hope of glory holding on to us no matter our surroundings (Ephesians 2:14; Colossians 1:27)

II. One week earlier ... (Matthew 21:5/Zechariah 9:9)

A. Triumphant entry (Matthew 21)

1. Set up with donkey
2. Jesus rides in with fanfare

B. Matthew 21:5 and Zechariah 9:9

1. Context of Zechariah: almost 70 years after exile, the Israelites were experiencing the hardships and despair wondering if prophetic promises of a New Jerusalem would ever be fulfilled.
2. Zechariah 9
 - a. God has an eye on mankind and on all the tribes of Israel.
 - b. He is keenly watching those who have brought pain and suffering through conquest or pride.
 - c. God Himself will deal with all those nations that are arrogant and unjust.
3. Zechariah 9:9
 - a. In the midst of fear, they are called to rejoice greatly with shouting.
 - b. Why? Because their king is coming
 - 1) A righteous King (bringing salvation)

2) A humble King (remember this, bookmark in your brain for later)

*This all doesn't sound far off from our experience here and now. What you and I feel is not new.

III. Unpacking fear

A. Fear: not just easily startled, scared, or weak. Fear manifests in ...

1. Fight: competitive, body language/positioning of strength, overly prepared for anticipated conflict, snapping at others (Peter)
2. Flight: excuse to leave, exiting what is creating anxiety, body language/positioning of protection/hiding (Elijah)
3. Freeze: blacking out, clamming up, physically shutting down (Timothy)

B. Common fear

1. Of me (Gideon: I'm the weakest)
2. Of others (Peter: circumcision party)
3. Of the future (who really is confident of that?)

C. Dealing with fear

1. 1 Peter 5:6-7

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time He may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you."

a. Remember Zechariah 9:9?

- 1) The secret foundation to the peace and hope Jesus had was humility before His Father.
- 2) Humility is the foundation peace and hope are built upon. If humility is your base, fear cannot stand.

b. Sounds simple, but it changes everything

- 1) The Words of God and the comfort of the Spirit become much more obvious when we are repentant and humble before God.
 - a) No deals, "If you ..., I will"
 - b) Just simple trust born out of humility

*We trust Him because He is God, not because He is going to immediately remove our anxieties or fear-provoking situation

2) This is exactly what the blood of Zechariah is dealing with.

- a) "Is God's Kingdom coming soon?"
- b) "Will you become people who are ready to participate in God's Kingdom?"

2. Paul says it best, Romans 5:6, "For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly."

- a. Prayer 1: Lord, You are God and King. I am Your servant. I know You owe me nothing. For some reason You have given me everything in Jesus. I trust You. And please give me grace to trust You.

- b. Prayer 2: Father, forgive me for always wanting things my way. By Your mighty hand You have created all things. And by Your mighty hand You have rescued Your people. I want to live under Your mighty hand. Please have mercy.

*When we are specific and confess what's really going on inside, we finally recognize our need of salvation and come to a place of true surrender.

IV. What's next?

- A. Jesus meets you where you are but doesn't allow you to remain there.
 1. Jesus met you at the point of your fear—take heart!
 2. Jesus defeated the consequences of your greatest fears—take heart!
 3. Jesus reminds you that while you will struggle, His Resurrection means peace and hope over fear—take heart!
- B. Consider this in your Resurrection communities.
 1. How does fear typically manifest itself in your life (fight, flight, freeze)?
 2. Where does fear have the strongest foothold right now (fear of me, of others, of circumstances, of the future)?
 3. Identify a fear that seems significant.
 - a. Begin with humility.
 - b. Now ground that fear in the reality of what God's Word says about it.
 - c. Share your fear and what you believe God informs you about that fear. This is practicing humility.
 - d. Let those in your resurrection community speak to you (prophecy).



OUR DEFAULT

MATTHEW 21:1-11; ZECHARIAH 9:9

APRIL 14, 2019 | PASTOR MATT WHITEFORD



GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER (USE JUST ONE OR ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS TO CONNECT AS YOU START YOUR CONVERSATION)

- 1 Can you think of something you were once fearful of but aren't now? How did that change happen?
- 2 Describe a "mountaintop" experience you've encountered. Now think about a "valley" experience you've had, one in which your situation seemed hopeless. What were the reasons for your despair? How did your circumstances turn out?

We can all relate to fear in one form or another. It's a primal emotion, instinctive to our human nature just like grief or anger. You don't ever say to yourself, I think I need to be afraid. You don't have to plan it; fear just happens to you. Although you can't keep fear from visiting, you can usher it out and slam the door in its face. And according to God's promises, that's exactly what you're able to do. However, the sad reality is that too many Christians are victims of letting fear drive their decisions. But TAKE HEART. Jesus is our peace in the midst of fear and because Christ is in us, we have the hope of glory holding on to us, no matter our circumstances.

QUICK REVIEW (OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE TO SHARE WHAT MOST STOOD OUT FROM SUNDAY'S MESSAGE)

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, encouraged, challenged, or confused you?

DIG DEEPER (OBSERVATIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURE OR COMPLEMENTARY SCRIPTURES FROM SUNDAY'S MESSAGE)

- 1 Someone read **Ephesians 2:14** and **Colossians 1:27**.

What do these verses say about the hope we have in Jesus, despite our default response of fear when facing difficulties in life?

- 2 Someone read **Zechariah 9:1-9**

Almost 70 years after the exile, the Israelites were experiencing hardships and wondered if prophetic promises of a New Jerusalem would ever be fulfilled. The book of Zechariah answers this question through several dream visions.

What was God promising in Zechariah 9:1-8?

God has an eye on mankind and on all the tribes of Israel. He is keenly watching those who have brought pain and suffering through conquest or pride. God Himself will deal with all those nations that are arrogant and unjust.

In vs. 9, why do the Israelites have reason to hope in the midst of their circumstances?

3 Someone read **Matthew 21:1-11**

In what way did Jesus fulfill the prophecy from Zechariah 9:9 in Matthew 21:5?

The cry “Hosanna” means, “Save us.” Yet at the end of the week, the crowd would be yelling something entirely different. What does this teach us about the default response we develop because of circumstances that bring about fear in us?

4 Someone read **1 Peter 5:6-7**

What role does humility play when we surrender our fears to God and seek repentance?

Jesus meets you where you are but doesn't allow you to remain there. Jesus met you at the point of your fear – TAKE HEART! Jesus defeated the consequences of your greatest fears – TAKE HEART! Jesus reminds you that while you will struggle, His Resurrection means peace and hope over fear – TAKE HEART!

LIVE IT OUT (DISCUSS HOW YOU CAN LIVE OUT THE TRUTHS YOU JUST OBSERVED IN SCRIPTURE)

1 Matt shared that fear often manifests itself in three ways: fight, flight, or freeze. Looking at these three manifestations of fear, how have you seen fear show itself in your life?

2 Where does fear have the strongest foothold right now in your life (fear of yourself, fear of others, fear of circumstances, fear of the future)?

3 Ask everyone in the group to take some alone time for 5-10 minutes. On their own, have them take steps 1 and 2. When they reach step 3, have them pause. When everyone is ready, ask those who are willing to share with the group to go ahead. After each person shares, ask a few people in your group to respond with truth and encouragement, if they believe God is leading them to.

1. Identify a fear that seems significant in your life right now.
2. Ground that fear in the reality of what God's Word says about it.
3. Share your fear with your home group and what you believe God informs you about that fear (this is practicing humility).
4. Let those in your resurrection community speak truth and encouragement to you (prophecy) in response to what you shared with them.

CLOSING PRAYER

Finish your time together praising God and thanking Him for walking with us as we struggle with our fears. Humbly ask God to help us see the truth of who we are (God's child and deeply loved by Him). Celebrate that in the middle of our fears, we can place all of our hope in our perfect, loving and good Father, Who will never leave us and has given us everything we need to live Jesus in this broken world.

NEXT WEEK'S MESSAGE SCRIPTURE

EASTER SUNDAY: MATTHEW 28:1-10

Prepare for next week's message and group discussion by reading through this passage a few times this week and write down any insights or questions you have before meeting with your home group.

PRAISE/PRAYER REQUESTS (TRY TO HAVE ONE OR A FEW PEOPLE PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME)

Use this space or the back of this paper to record down the requests and find a way to share those with the group so you can be praying for each other during the week.

How to Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create a healthy environment for Gospel community, growing in friendship, and living like Jesus together. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, please review the guide before your group meets to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content during your group discussion or to hit on all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help your grow in Gospel community.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead. We are praying for you too!

Visit cpmodesto.org/groupleaders to download the sermon discussion guide every week. Not in a Home Group, but want to be in one? Visit cpmodesto.org/homegroups and use the Home Group Finder!

COMMENTARY

MATTHEW 21:1-11

21:1-3. "Bethphage" meant "house of unripe figs." This village was located somewhere between Bethany and Jerusalem on the long ridge known as the Mount of Olives. Jesus now drew upon His divine omniscience to prepare for His proper entrance into the city. He sent two disciples into the village, foretelling their discovery of a donkey and her colt. He instructed them to untie them and bring them to Him and to be prepared for any objections from observers. The Lord had already prepared the hearts of the animals' owner, so that, at the mention of "the Lord needs them", the owner would send the disciples promptly on their way with his animals.

21:4-5. Here Matthew added a parenthetical comment to show Jesus' fulfillment of another messianic prophecy - this one from Zechariah 9:9 (about 500 B.C.).

21:6-8. Matthew stated that the two disciples obeyed Jesus, and the two animals were brought to Jesus. The disciples laid their coats (their cloaks or outer garments) on the donkey and the colt, providing a crude saddle. Jesus sat on the colt, riding a humble animal as a king did in times of peace. Most of the people in the crowd took their cue from the disciples' example. They laid their coats across Jesus' path in the road, as though to give Him the "red carpet treatment." Others cut branches from nearby trees to extend the "carpet" into the city. John 12:13 tells us the branches were "palm branches," thus our celebration of "Palm Sunday" five days before Good Friday and seven days before Resurrection Sunday, or "Easter."

21:9. The term "shouting" is an imperfect tense which implied that they shouted repeatedly. The quote comes from Ps. 118:26–27. It was part of the Passover liturgy known as the Hallel Psalms (cf. Ps. 113–118). These were used every year to welcome the pilgrims to the Feast of Passover but this year there was unique expectation in the person of Jesus. These verses applied uniquely to Him! He was their fulfillment

The term "hosanna" may have been an Aramaic idiom meaning "royal power to." Literally, this term in Hebrew was "Hosanna" (cf. Ps. 118:26), which came to be used as a regular greeting. Originally it meant "Save us now." The first usage referred to Jesus and the second to God the Father, praising Him for sending the Messiah. "Son of David" was a messianic title (cf. Matt. 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30, 31; 22:42). This was an allusion to 2 Sam. 7, which predicted that there would always be a descendant of the Davidic line on the throne. This was the necessary fulfillment of the Messiah being from the tribe of Judah (cf. Gen. 49:10; Ps. 60:7; 108:8). The parallel in Luke adds "He that is king," and this was the explicit implication.

21:10. It is true that many people had heard about the mighty works of Jesus and attributed to Him the title of prophet. But it needed to be clearly revealed that He was not only a prophet, but the predicted Messiah. The events that follow will clearly reveal this to anyone who had spiritual eyes to see. The Gospel writers had the ability under inspiration to select, adapt, arrange, and summarize Jesus' words and teachings. The Gospels are not a western chronological history, but a theological tract to win the lost and teach the saved.

21:11. The recognition of Jesus' divine inspiration and power relates to the Messianic prophecy of Deut. 18:15–19. The people freely admitted that Jesus was a prophet of God (cf. Luke 7:16; 24:19; Jn. 4:19; 6:14; 7:40; 9:17). This context also asserted His Messiahship.

ZECHARIAH 9:9

This campaign over Israel's enemies would culminate in the triumphal entry of its king to Jerusalem. The people are summoned to acclaim their coming king. He is described as "righteous," like the ideal ruler of Psalm 72. He will ensure God's blessing on His people, thereby bringing about their "salvation." He is also humble (cf. Deut. 17:18–20), hinting that this king is still obedient to the King of kings, and he comes riding on a donkey, the mount of one who comes to bring peace, not on the standard military mount, a horse. This prophecy famously finds its counterpart in Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, when Jesus clearly signals His messianic identity. This verse is directly quoted at Matt. 21:5 and John 12:15, but both evangelists abbreviate the quotation. "righteous and having salvation is He" As Jesus enters Jerusalem, this work is still to be accomplished.