

(Towards the Cross)**Chat with the Children**

- What's wrong with the picture?
 - out of focus...
- Is this better?
 - better, but not right.... wrong thing in focus
- And finally...
 - in focus
- Illustrations of how focusing works
 - the lens at the right distance from the viewer means the object can be seen clearly
- We want to see clearly what God says, not blurry...
 - Lord, help us to see!

What did he just say?

- Reflect on the claim Jesus made as he came into Jerusalem: "I am the Messiah"
 - God's chosen Saviour, sent one to rescue his people once and for all...
- Note all the instances where people are wondering what Jesus' claim means, its implications:
 - Peter and the fig-tree... (11:20-21)
 - the disciples as a whole, reflecting on what it means to be friends with the Messiah (11:22-26)
 - the chief priests, teachers of the law and elders (11:27-33) "By what authority..."
 - and actually the whole crowd, as it stands behind the parable Jesus told in his public teaching (12:1-12)
- *Its the "talk of the steamie..."*
- *What does he mean? Is it clear, in focus what he is claiming?*

The Parable as Lens

- The story of the parable provides the lens through which Jesus' identity, and all the other events of Holy Week, need to be interpreted, provided by Jesus himself:
 - exegete the story - who the characters are, and how the narrative events of the parable match God's dealings with humanity over the centuries
 - tenants - God's people, entrusted with the news of God's dealings, the fruit of the vineyard...
 - failing to remain loyal and giving to the owner (God) what he is due - in worship, in sharing the fruit of the vineyard...
 - so he sends servants - prophets of the Old Testament
 - who are rejected and sometimes mistreated...
 - finally owner/God sends his Son - Jesus...
 - son is killed by those who should have welcomed him, but the owner vindicates him
- It brings some things (not everything) into focus
- This is the lens Jesus provides for understanding his own identity and actions:
 - he is the son, the heir
 - he is to die
 - and even as he does so, he is victorious
- Story focuses on those who reject Jesus as Messiah, who refuse to accept the salvation offered through his death, who deny he is the only way to God:
 - but implication is that an alternative response is possible

- to accept and welcome the son...
- to be one of the "others" to whom the vineyard is given
- **Lens** through which Triumphal Entry (last week) needs to be seen
 - **lens** through which Jesus' dealing with his disciples needs to be seen
 - **lens** through which Jesus' arrest, rejection, trial, and sufferings on the Cross need to be seen...

Whatever you ask...

- Come back to 11:22-26
 - **big promises!**
 - **big warnings!**
- To put the lens thing another way: **Text without context is pretext**
 - come to these in the context of the lens of the parable
 - Jesus is describing the relationship made possible with God the Father through his sacrifice - his death, the Son of God
 - if he is Messiah, and the disciples are Messiah's friends, then they are in the place to ask as sons of the father, to ask for that which would please the father, to ask in the context of those who have been forgiven and are working out that forgiveness in their every relationship...

Put your glasses on!!

- Jesus is God Son, sent from heaven to rescue those who are ready to accept his salvation
 - Jesus came to die, to win the "vineyard" of salvation for those who will trust him
 - not to set a fine example...
- **Are you seeing clearly?**
 - if, what difference does it make?
 - **to our relationship with Jesus?**
 - **to the way we pray?**