

Mark 11:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?

Analysis

And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? (Τί ποιεῖτε λύοντες τὸν πῶλον;)—the bystanders' challenge is natural and expected. Taking someone's animal without permission appears to be theft. The present participle *lyontes* (λύοντες, "loosing") emphasizes they were caught in the act. Mark's inclusion of this detail demonstrates the Gospel's honesty—it doesn't sanitize potential embarrassments but reports what happened authentically.

This confrontation creates dramatic tension: will the disciples be accused of theft? Will their explanation be accepted? The account shows that following Jesus sometimes requires actions that appear questionable to outsiders. The disciples' obedience to Jesus' instructions, even when challenged, models faithful discipleship that trusts Christ's word over human opinion. Their calm response (v. 6) reflects confidence in Jesus' authority and prophetic word.

Historical Context

Property rights were taken seriously in first-century Judaism, protected by the eighth commandment (Exodus 20:15). Taking an animal without permission could result in legal consequences or violent confrontation. The bystanders' question was legitimate and protective—they were safeguarding the owner's property. Their challenge also demonstrates that this was not a pre-arranged plan between Jesus and the owner; otherwise, bystanders would have been informed. The disciples'

vulnerable position—caught taking an animal by multiple witnesses—required faith that Jesus' instructions would prove sufficient. This incident parallels other moments when following Jesus brought disciples into awkward or dangerous situations requiring trust: walking on water (Matthew 14:28-29), the temple tax coin (Matthew 17:24-27), finding the upper room (Mark 14:13-15).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does this confrontation illustrate that obedience to Jesus sometimes requires actions that appear questionable to outsiders?
2. What does the disciples' willingness to follow Jesus' instructions, even when challenged, teach about authentic discipleship?
3. In what situations might faithful obedience to Christ conflict with conventional social expectations or propriety?

Interlinear Text

καί	τινες	τῶν	ἐκεῖ	ἐστηκότων	ἔλεγον	αὐτοῖς	Τί
And	certain of them	G3588	there	that stood	said	unto them	What
G2532	G5100		G1563	G2476	G3004	G846	G5101
ποιεῖτε	λύοντες	τὸν	πῶλον				
do ye	loosing	G3588	the colt				
G4160	G3089		G4454				