

## SERMON NOTES ON MARK 11:1-11 24/3/24

Mark 11 records the beginning of the historical final week of Jesus' life on earth with his arrival in Jerusalem. This week is traditionally referred to as the Passion Week.

The Jewish hierarchy had always wanted to kill Jesus. Why? About three years prior, Jesus went to their temple (John 2:13-17) and discredited their phoney system of worship. And for the next three years, he discredited their theology by undermining their misinterpretation of Scriptures. Consequently, Jesus did not allow any publicity of his identity as the expected Messiah, lest his death came before God's appointed time.

So, in this last week, He knew the time has come for him to die according to God's time table.

So what has the gospel of Mark got to tell us in the first eleven verses of chapter eleven? We have three lessons from: (1) **The donkey**, (2) **The hailing crowd** and (3) **Jesus the Christ**.

**1. THE DONKEY:** As they approached Jerusalem... Jesus sent two of his disciples saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no-one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, "Why are you doing this? Tell him "The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly." (Verses 1-3). This instruction looks as though Jesus wanted the disciples to steal a donkey. But they had learnt that Jesus the Righteous One, never does any wrong. So, if he told them to jump, their response would be 'how high?' They went as instructed and were encouraged when they tried to get the donkey and the owner asked what they were doing and they responded that "The LORD had need of it and straightaway, he let the donkey go.

What a great day for this donkey! He was called among all the donkeys in the world. You can starve the donkey, mock the donkey, call the donkey names, but the world is at his feet by virtue of his carrying Jesus the King, the Creator of the universe. Why the foolish donkey? The answer is in verse 3 "**The Lord needs it**". God who made the Universe has a need of a lowly donkey like me because, He accomplishes his task on earth by cooperating with his creation. (read 1 Corinth.1:27-29)

Do you consider yourself as a foolish nobody, dumb like a donkey? God has need of you. And if you cooperate with Him, you will share in his glory. The donkey did not make a fuss. Of all the donkeys in the world, this was the one donkey that was called – like me. Jesus is calling you too. He calls us from our wild restless sea, saying "Follow ME". The donkey does not draw any attention to itself. It does not complain that its work is not noticed. **It is just satisfied to be the Lord's beast of burden to accomplish His task. Like John the Baptist, will my desire be that "Jesus increases while I decrease?"**.

### THE HAILING CROWD. (verse 8 ff)

The people gave Jesus a wonderful welcome, some throwing their coats on the street, others spreading branches. They shouted "*Hosanna! (which translates to Save us now). Blessed is he who comes in God's name! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our Father David*". When Jesus came into Jerusalem, people were expecting the Son of David to usher in a political kingdom. What a small expectation. Jesus came to rule the universe, not just a little country in the Middle East. He came to occupy the human heart, not just a capital city. He didn't come to establish a temporal empire to rival Rome. He came to establish an everlasting kingdom that would be built from the inside out! Because they missed this, they were missing God. They were missing God because they had small expectations and many people are doing the same today.

Hosanna, save us now, is a reference to Psalm 118:25-26 "*O Lord save us; O Lord grant us success. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord*" Jesus is unlike any other king. Though He is the King they needed, but not on their own terms. No wonder their hysteria died down within a few days. Their Hosanna turned to "*Crucify Him*". Sinful hearts can be

very religious, showing great interest in Jesus, until Jesus attacks their false religion, which is SIN, with I at the centre.

### **JESUS THE CHRIST**

What kind of Saviour and King is Jesus? Is he like our political leaders like George Galloway, Michael Farage, Kier Stammer, Rishi Sunak or...The Jews expected Jesus to fix their political problem NOW. After all, He had the pedigree. He commanded the winds and they obeyed him, raised people from the dead, healed the blind and had countless miracles to his name. Beyond that, He contended with the Jewish authorities whom they relied upon to save them, but could not deliver the goods. They thought their time had come but how wrong they were!

No politician or religious leader could provide what they needed and the same is true for us. We need a leader who can do heart transplants on all of us. Malachi 3:1 and Zechariah 9:9 tell us why He is qualified. *"See, I will send my messenger who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple, the messenger of the Covenant, whom you desire will come,"* says the Lord Almighty. And Zechariah says: *Rejoice greatly, Shout... See your king comes to you **righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey...*** Jesus fulfilled these prophecies which were written over 500 years before his time. And if you are keen on Daniel's prophecy, the exact date when Jesus entered Jerusalem was spoken of by Daniel in Daniel 9:25-27.

This is the kind of King the Jews needed. That is the King we also need.

**HE IS RIGHTEOUS. HE IS THE LORD GOD IN THE FLESH.** Not another politician who plays to the gallery with half-truths. He is **humble** and prepared to take the fall for you and me. We witnessed the Coronation of King Charles almost a year ago. We saw what majesty was. Can you compare Jesus' triumphal entry to Jerusalem with that? Yet He is the creator of the world. Christ exercises his work as prophet, priest, and king, not in exultation, but first in humility.

### **HUMILITY CHARACTERIZED HIS MINISTRY:**

Christ was born in a lowly manger; reared by a carpenter and his wife and grew up in a place called Nazareth, which was a despised place. He had no place to lay His head. Christ was humble in His choice of leaders—they were fisherman, untrained and unlearned and given to weakness of the flesh. Christ was humble as He died on a cross for you. Yet, this humility is a bridge over which we who are humbled by our own sins and unworthiness may walk.

He knew that he would be rejected very soon but what did he do? He wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44). He is not only humble but **compassionate**, He saw evil and depravity in people and he **wept**. The problem in the world is not those people, but you and I. We are all enmeshed in our foolish ways, turned away from God. And God in his mercy has laid our sins on Jesus. The acronym of GRACE is God's Riches At Christ's Expense. That is why we need a king who can give us a new heart. He is the perfect LAMB of God who takes away our sin, not cover over it, as the old Testament practice was.

He works with God's timepiece which is exact. Jesus came at the right time fulfilling every detail of prophecy about Him. Why is it that we get so worried and flustered about so many things, then look up to heaven as if saying "God, you're late? You are not watching". If God can move heaven and earth and weave history together to make Jesus to come to Jerusalem, on the exact day that was predicted over 500 years ago, He can take care of whatever stuff you are currently going through.

Verse 11 is an anti-climax! Jesus entered the temple and because it was already dark, he returned to Bethany. That is not how a coronation should end. Palm Sunday is no coronation. The coronation of Jesus took place when he ascended into heaven and took his seat at God's right hand (Acts 1; Philippians 2). The second coronation is in Revelation 19 and 20 where Jesus returns to the earth in glory.

The One who came still comes. The One who spoke still speaks. If the mission of the church is to carry Christ to the world, then each of us is called to be like a donkey. There's no particular glory in being a donkey. There are only long trails, steep roads, heavy loads, and little or no recognition for a completed job.

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