

#68 Palm Sunday

Mark 11:1-11

Good News: The King is Coming

11 When Jesus and his followers approached Jerusalem, they came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives. Jesus gave two disciples a task, ² saying to them, “Go into the village over there. As soon as you enter it, you will find tied up there a colt that no one has ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³ If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘Its master needs it, and he will send it back right away.’”

⁴ They went and found a colt tied to a gate outside on the street, and they untied it. ⁵ Some people standing around said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” ⁶ They told them just what Jesus said, and they left them alone. ⁷ They brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes upon it, and he sat on it. ⁸ Many people spread out their clothes on the road while others spread branches cut from the fields. ⁹ Those in front of him and those following were shouting, “*Hosanna! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord!*”^[a] ¹⁰ Blessings on the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest!” ¹¹ Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. After he looked around at everything, because it was already late in the evening, he returned to Bethany with the Twelve.

What is the biggest festival in Fairland? If I am right, it would be a fish fry and parade. I think this is the only time when people are out of their homes, it is the only time when you can meet all your neighbors and hear applauses to all those who marched through the parade. It is a wonderful time to see that town is alive.

What was the biggest festival for the Jews? It was a Passover week. In that time there were hundreds of thousands of Jews from all over the world who have come to Jerusalem for the Passover. As they would fill the streets, a victory parade would start to form at the edge of the city—a two-mile parade that will go into the heart of Jerusalem.

When Jesus and his followers approached Jerusalem, they came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives. Jesus gave two disciples a task. We do not know their names but we know what exactly Jesus told them to do: **“Go into the village over there. As soon as you enter it, you will find tied up there a colt that no one has ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³ If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘Its master needs it, and he will send it back right away.’”**

The only words we hear from Jesus through these 11 verses is his instruction how to get a colt for him. Just imagine for a minute. If you were these two disciples... You get a weirdest task. But it does not matter how weird it sounded disciples obeyed and went to the village. It happened just the way Jesus told it. **They went and found a colt tied to a gate outside on the street, and they untied it.** ⁵ Some people standing around said to them, **“What are you doing, untying the colt?”**. So I still can understand, imagine the disciples. But it is amazing to read what these other people did when the disciples were untying the donkey.

Let's put the picture in our modern day. Imagine you got a brand new car. That's what it was for these people. It was a young colt, meaning, that nobody had ever ridden on it before. So here is your new car. Somebody comes and says: I need this car to go to the Chicago. I will bring it back to you after I do my business. What you say? WHAT? Of course NOT. Did you lose your mind? Who are you? I am going to call a police on you! Right?!

Why these people who were standing around gave this young donkey to these two disciples? Did the answer was so convincing that all they could do is say "yes"? **'Its master needs it, and he will send it back right away.'** Some commentaries said, that Jesus had prepared all this already, in advance. It was already planned by Jesus. Maybe, I do not know. Some say, that we can see how God's divine power works to accomplish his plans. Could be... I read the one that said, that the owner of the donkey was with Jesus, so when disciples said their master, their owner needs them, they had no problem to give them to the disciples. Again, I do not know. But what I know and what I read, these people said: "yes". What I find important in these verses is this: Disciples said: It's master needs it, Lord needs it... how can it be that the Lord needs it? Isn't it a little bit of oxymoron? It all belongs to Jesus. Isn't it? How can it be that he needs? He has it all. God does not need anything. Yes, indeed it is true. ¹⁰ **Everything belongs to God, and all things were created by his power** (Hebrew 2:10). **The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; The world and all it contains...** (Ps 89).

How is it with us today? Does our Lord need something from you? How do you understand for yourself? The Lord needs it. Maybe you also think: It all belongs to God anyway? He needs nothing! So why to give? How much to give? Maybe just enough, so I feel good about myself? Or maybe giving always has to be based not on calculating but trust? Who is our Master anyway?

As we saw today in our little play, probably the owner of the donkeys got in trouble, when she find out what her husband did. But think in a bog picture, it served and it brought a glory to God. It served to fulfilled the Scriptures. Let's continue to hear these words: the Lord needs it. Would you be part of giving?

In verse 7 we see the Scripture be fulfilled. Jesus, this prophet from up north, starts this two-mile inauguration day parade down into the heart of Jerusalem, he comes riding down from where? The Mount of Olives. He comes riding on the back of a donkey, exactly the same animal that Solomon rode when Solomon became king. One clue that the people of Jerusalem recognized this connection is that, when they saw Jesus riding on the foal of a donkey, they said, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

So nobody misses that this is the moment. Nobody is unclear about the message. Everyone knows that God has finally sent this new king, which sends people to actually take off their jackets, lay them on the road so that the hooves of the donkey carrying the new king don't even have to touch the dirt. That's how excited they are about it.

People, the crowd, all were clear Jesus is King. Wow. People turn to each other and say: "This prophet from Nazareth—Jesus—he's the one. He has to be. Hebrews had always

understood Zechariah's prophecy to refer to the Messiah, to God's anointed king. The prophet said: "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9). It was that moment.

Aren't you happy with these people? We probably would be. Just one big problem we know what happened in just few days. All these people suddenly were against and were shouting totally different things. When we think about "these" people, "that" time, we somehow have disconnection from our days. But I think of myself, of us. I think of Sundays. Isn't a great moments, the great hour. We all are uplifted, we sing, we pray, we are moved... We are in the moment of recognizing our Lord and King. Jews just cut the branches instantly, they did not bring them from somewhere, they were moved but what is happening and they did all instantly. They were moved at the moment and even took they clothes to put on the ground. Awesome worship. But the momentum passed. Sunday worship ended. What is next? Sunday afternoon? Monday through Friday...Are we still surrendering, recognizing his sovereignty by laying our hearts before him, throwing down our wills in absolute surrender, and asking Jesus to govern everything we think and say and do. We forget, or at best, we leave at that it was a good worship...back to life...

We are so fast to change our minds. I will share one funny story that happen to me. Last Sunday at our Lenten Bible study we had some great discussions. Somehow we talked about blessings. I have always wondered why we bless the food. I think it would be so much better to bless people and bless God that just the food. But I believe there is some great Biblical support for it. I also shared that sometimes I am not that enthusiastic to pray and bless things... Like blessing the motorcycle or just things...So the same evening I come home and my computer, my Apple computer, need an update. Great, not a big deal. The problem was that after 6 hours of updating was still stuck in the same spot. I turned it off and on for few times. It would show no progress. I mean for us, especially at this time, when we had more financial troubles than we would imagine to have, I could not even think of another huge expenses... Guess what I started to do. Oh, my..., I started to pray for my computer to start, I can see God was just chuckled and smiling at me. Yes, my computer started to work. Yes, it works just fine. But I praise God for our God is not a little God. He is God of universe. As much I as I would like to frame, to put some box around Him... **"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts"**. (Isaiah 55:8-9).

That moment people were shouting: ***"Hosanna! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord!"*** When I hear Hosanna is somehow to me sounds like glorious: "Hallelujah", But that's not what "Hosanna" means. It means "save us" or "deliver us." It was a cry, a desperate need. In Psalm 118:25 we read: ***"Save us [hoshee-ah-na], we pray, O Lord! O Lord, we pray give us success!"*** In this context it is a plea for help. The Jewish people, in times of trouble would cry out: "Hosanna!" "Lord, save us now!" What kind of saving people wanted? What kind of deliver they wanted? The people were calling out to Jesus to save them from the Romans; to deliver them from the occupation.

This great crowd was misguided by their ambitions. They saw Jesus as a savior, but not from their sins but from an oppressive government. What is easier to say: save me from these people, save me from these challenges, save me from what is around me or praying save me from me? Help me to see the log in my eyes, before I see splinter in others. One of my professor once said, I can not remember the exact quote but the idea was: I thought all are the sinners till I saw the most sinful person is me. This Palm Sunday when the King is with us, when you hear His words, when we recall and sing Hosanna, do we truly ask King to deliver us from our sins? We want His kingdom? Or our kingdom?

During all the famous, glorious parade, we hear not a word from Jesus. Let's remember how many words we heard from Jesus last Sunday? The only words Jesus said to Pilate was: "You said it". After that through all these accusations, Jesus not said a word. Today we continue to learn from Jesus silence. Jesus silence is not so silent. He speaks to us today. In our hearts our minds and souls. How you will answer?

Verse 11 **Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. After he looked around at everything, because it was already late in the evening, he returned to Bethany with the Twelve.** Jesus looked around. Why would he look around? What he was looking for? Seeing if there is still people with him? Still following or it just Sunday morning deal? Jesus looked around in the temple...and left. He and his twelve disciples went back to Bethany.

Is Jesus your King? Do you serve Him and give Him? Is Jesus your King during the week? Is Jesus Your Savior? From your sins?

Let's pray.