

The Triumphal entry.
Mark 11:1-11
Sunday morning, June 21, 2008.

I. The Lessons from a donkey Vs. 1-7.

A. It is now the Sunday before Passover, known in the Christian Church as palm-Sunday, and Jesus makes His approach to Jerusalem for the last time.

B. He had slowly worked His way south from the regions of today's Lebanon, through

Galilee and the region East of the Jordan river toward Jericho, and now He approaches Jerusalem from the East. On this side of Jerusalem was the Mount of Olives. On the East side of this mountain was the village of Bethany. On the North-West side was Bethpage.

C. It appears that the Lord sent two of His disciples to get the donkey in Bethpage as they were in the vicinity of Bethany, and that He rode the donkey from the top of the mountain, down across the Kidron valley, and up again into the city of Jerusalem.

D. A colt... on which no one has sat.

1. A young donkey that has not yet learned to bear burdens or people.

An animal reserved by God for sacred use, indicating that the burden he was carrying was no ordinary person, nor was this an ordinary event.

2. Similarly the Lord Jesus came into the world in the "unused" womb of Mary who was still a virgin when she gave birth to the Lord Jesus, thus indicating that this was no ordinary birth nor an ordinary boy being born. Matt. 1:18-25.

3. Similarly also the Lord was buried in an unused tomb, indicating again the uniqueness of His Person and the work He did in His doing and dying.

E. The Lord has need of it and will send it back here shortly.

There is no need to harmonize Mark with Matthew here.

Matthew relates that the owners will willingly send the donkey.

Translating Mark along those lines strains the Greek text. More naturally Mark reads Jesus to say: "The Lord has need of it and will send it back here shortly."

In doing so the Lord gives assurance to the owners that the animal is not being stolen but will be returned shortly.

Some lessons from the donkey:

1. Singularity of purpose and service: "On which no one has sat..."

"I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." 2 Corinthians 11:2.

Do you reserve the love of your heart and your service for Christ alone?

2. Holding all things loosely. "The Lord has need of it...and immediately he will send it." How easily do you part with your "donkey?"

3. "The Lord has need of it and will send it back here shortly."

In giving do you do so with a sense of loss, or with a sense of assurance and faith that says: "Be still my soul, your Jesus can (and will) repay, of His own fullness, all He takes away."

II. The tragedy of the crowd.

A. Who were they?

1. In all likelihood the Lord had spent the night, and the Sabbath, in Bethany. Here Lazarus and his sisters lived. It is therefore likely that a number of followers besides the 12 disciples joined them from there.
2. It is also likely that in passing by Bethpage a number of others joined them.
3. A great crowd was at Jerusalem for the celebration of Passover. They had heard of Jesus and of the resurrection of Lazarus acc. to John 12:18. They, hearing the tumult coming down the Mount of Olives, came out of the city, and met them somewhere in the Kidron Valley.

B. What were they thinking?

1. They quote from Psalm 118: 25,26. One of six Passover Psalms. "Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the kingdom of our father David!" Hosanna means "Save now!" or "Save (we) pray!" It is an expression of Prayer and adoration; of prayer and praise, and of Messianic acclaim.
2. It was Passover, when the deliverance out of Egyptian bondage was remembered. Now they were shouting to be delivered out of Roman bondage.
3. Hence the impetuous and exuberant shouting. The unrestraint and tumultuous enthusiasm. The Palm branches waving and the clothing in the road.

C. The tragedy of the moment.

"As he drew near, He saw the city and wept over it." Luke 19:41.

1. The crowd had it right with regards to who they were dealing with.
2. But they were so far from reality with their expectations.
3. Having their expectations disappointed they were ready to crucify Him five days later, for their highest values were their own expectations.

Application: Has Jesus ever disappointed You? Has His church ever done so? Or His people? What do you do with them at such times?

III. The triumph of the Christ.

- A. Christ did not come to give this crowd what they really wanted; He came to give them what they really needed. Love looks beyond what its object really wants, and it gives what its object really needs.
- B. By deliberately coming to Jerusalem in the midst of this kind of tumult He would enrage the hostile leaders of the Jews so they would act in putting Him to death. So He would free them from their greatest burden and their greatest bondage.
- C. So He identifies himself, not with a high spirited white stallion, but with a beast of burdens, and an inexperienced one at that. He Himself would become that "beast of burdens" as He carried away the burden of the sins of the world. Like the donkey, He was inexperienced at that, for He had never known sin.

Application: Christ's love will always give you what you need more than what you want. His ways and His wisdom are higher than yours. Will you give yourself to Him on that premise?