

Triumphal Entry Mark 11:1-11

The time has come for Jesus' kingship to be made plain. He has been working quietly in and around Galilee, forgiving sins, silencing demons, spreading the message of what God is doing but not wanting any sort of public status to get in the way of his ministry (cf. Jn. 6:15). He has said three times that he will die and rise from death but now he is heading into Jerusalem to do it (8:31-33; 9:30-32; 10:32-34; Is. 50:7). This public announcement will not prevent his work on the cross, but ensure it. We see his Lordship and his lowliness, his conquering strength and humble gentleness that led the crowd to exalt him.

Jesus is Lord

On the way to Jerusalem, they come to Bethphage and Bethany, about two miles away from the city and on the Mount of Olives (v1). He sends two disciples ahead into the village and tells them to bring back the unriden colt they find. The reason they would give: "The Lord has need of it" (v3). They obey him and find it just as Jesus said (vv4-7). Christians obey Jesus as Lord, and the church does mission and discipleship in community (Eccl. 4:12). Mark alludes to Zechariah 9:9: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (cf. 1 Kg. 1:38-40). It doesn't change anything if Jesus supernaturally knew about the donkey. The point is that the King of Israel coming into town—prepare to recognize! Many do. The disciples give their clothes for his saddle, and others clothes and branches to make red carpet (vv7-8). People yell out "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" (vv9-10). "Hosanna" means "save us, we pray!" They're quoting Ps. 118:25-6, a Hallel Psalm (Pss. 113-118) sung at Passover, and one of the six most quoted Psalms in the NT (2, 22, 69, 89, 110). It speaks of the stone rejected by the builders but destined to become the cornerstone (cf. Lk. 19:39-40). They add "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!" (v10).

Jesus is Lowly

In keeping with his entire ministry of self-sacrificial love, Jesus' entry is humble. He rode in a borrowed boat, came into Jerusalem on a borrowed donkey, and died in a borrowed tomb. He even promises to return the animal (v3). He is riding for the first time in Mark, but he's humble (Zech. 9:9). This is not how Caesar or Alexander the Great or even Judas Maccabaeus rode in triumph. This is the servant King of the world who had nowhere to lay his head. He was "crucified in weakness" (2 Cor. 13:4). He was overwhelmed. This crowd and the disciples would not be there for him in his hour of need, but he rode in anyway. This is his love for us, unwaveringly faithful to atone for our sins. We also see his patience and gentleness: "Christ looks more at the good in them which he means to cherish than the ill in them which he means to abolish." –Richard Sibbes
The triumphal entry is bitter sweet, a brief embrace before an unthinkable betrayal (cf. Heb. 2:17-18). Jesus had divine power and human weakness, faith in God his Father while beset with every human frailty.

Welcoming Jesus

This crowd is often mistakenly identified with the mob that shouted "Crucify him!" Jerusalem is a big city plus it's Passover, so there are thousands of people everywhere and many crowds. This one might be clueless at times, but they're not wicked. This scene is full of faithful disciples who are ready to obey, give their clothes, lend their colt, and wonderfully, yell out for Jesus (vv9-10). Are you?

NOTES FOR LITTLE SAINTS

Today's Passage: Mark 11:1-11

Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. 3 If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.'" 4 And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. 5 And some of those standing there said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" 6 And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. 7 And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. 8 And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. 9 And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! 10 Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!" 11 And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

1. What did Jesus ask his disciples to do, and what reason would they give for doing it (verses 2-3)?
2. As Jesus entered Jerusalem, what did people say (verses 9-10)?
3. Jesus is our King, the Lord who conquered our enemies of sin and death, which is why we worship, sing and celebrate on Sunday together. What are you thankful to God for?
4. Draw a picture of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a colt while people are singing and shouting in celebration.

Memory Verse to Recite Next Week:

*And those who went before and those who followed were shouting,
"Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! -Mark 11:9*