

Palm Sunday

1992 was a shocking year in American politics, at least it was for me. President **George H.W. Bush** [the Senior] – was fresh off experiencing a victory in the first Gulf War. As you recall, the United States had a tense relationship with Saddam Hussein, the president of Iraq [more accurately, the dictator of Iraq].

In 1989, he ordered his troops to invade near-by Kuwait, capturing the capital and the oil fields.

President Bush and the International Community warned him to get out, but Hussein defied the warning. Then President Bush put together an impressive coalition of nations opposing Saddam Hussein, including a number of Islamic nations. In time, coalition forces formed and carried out military operations led by the United States. An Air campaign in January of 1991 was followed by a 100 hour land battle that crushed the Iraqi forces. It was considered a high point of Bush's presidency with approval rating running at 90%. But less than 2 years later he was voted out of office, losing to Bill Clinton. He went from the heights to the depths very quickly. His story turned upside-down.

And that's what we see as we come to Mark, ch. 11 on this Palm Sunday morning. Jesus is greeted enthusiastically, but a few days and a few chapters later the story has changed dramatically.

Jesus is arrested, tried and crucified.

Radio commentator Paul Harvey used to say, "*this is a strange.*" President Bush went down to defeat in 20 months. Jesus went down in mere days. And yet his entrance into Jerusalem began so positively. [Look at Mark 11 with me.....]

This morning we'll consider **the preparation**
the reception...and
the rest of the story

[another Paul Harvey phrase]

Let's begin with the preparations for Jesus' entry into Jerusalem in vv. 1-7. [these were just read, but listen to them again][read]

Here we see Jesus preparing for his transportation – a colt, a young donkey. He sends two disciples ahead to get the colt and gives them the contingency plan. *If anyone asks you “why are you doing this?” let them know that the Lord needs it and you'll send it back right after it is used.* And lo and behold, that's exactly the way it happens...

But notice how Jesus self-identifies in v. 3 - “The Lord has need of it.” The Divine Authoritative Lord.

In ch. 1, John the Baptist *prepares the way of the LORD.*

Who is the he preparing the way for? Jesus...Jesus is Lord!

And Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath, ch. 2. [and the list goes on]

So here in ch. 11 Jesus is exercising His Lordship [His sov., control] over this situation. *It wasn't a coincidence. It wasn't luck that it turned out this way.....*

Jesus ordained that it was going to unfold exactly this way.

The one who healed the leper & cast out demons & forgave sins & calmed the sea, orchestrated this approach to Jerusalem. [pause]

But He didn't do it on a whim. He did it in accordance w/ God's word --- specifically **Zech. 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.

Can you see that everything was going exactly according to plan? Exactly according to God's word. The righteous/humble King, the bringer of salvation, was coming into Jerusalem exactly the way it had been prophesied 500 yrs. before by Zechariah. It shows the accuracy of the bible; the fulfillment of the bible and it shows that **Jesus is Lord!**

One more thing before we move on to the next section.

Did you notice that the colt had never been ridden?

Reminds me of the horse riding ranch where they have small horses for small people, tall horses for tall people, and for people who have never ridden before they have horses that have never been ridden.

That's a joke, but Jesus rode an unbroken, unriden colt into Jerusalem [not a war horse]. This colt was used for a sacred purpose, a peaceful sign that matched the prophecy of Zech. 9. It also matches Gen. 49 where the prophecy about the kingly line of Judah includes the mentioning of a foal/a donkey tied to a vine – you guessed it, Jesus was from the line of Judah!

So once again, Jesus is *perfectly aware* that he is the king of **Gen. 49 & Zech. 9** and he comes bringing salvation.

Also keep in mind that Jesus comes at the beginning of Passover Week, He comes to set prisoners free/ **much like the Jews in Egypt**

Is that how you see Him?

Has He brought peace into your heart and set you free from your sin like a prisoner being set free? even a guilty prisoner like Barabbas?

Do you see yourself as a guilty prisoner set free?

And do you see Jesus as your Liberator?

Well, this what Jesus is in the process of doing as he prepares to come into Jerusalem. The King/the Lord/the Prince of Peace

is about to enter. **How is He going to be received?** **The reception**
And initially the answer is quite well [look at vv. 7-10][read]

First, **what are we to make of people putting their cloaks on the road and leafy branches [or palms]?** Well, the cloaks call to mind **2 Kings** and the respect & recognition of those who learned that Jehu was anointed king, so they spread their cloaks on the steps before him. The cloaks, along w/ palms [**which were symbols of nationalism & victory**] seem to show that the people viewed Jesus as a king. A king who would use his power to bring victory over Jewish enemies – namely, the occupying Romans.

Next come the Hosanna's. They bookend **vv. 9 & 10** ---

Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest!

And in between you see some important affirmations....

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord”

This was a standard greeting used to greet pilgrims coming into Jerusalem.....but with the colt, the cloaks and the branches, this scene is charged with Messianic expectation.

v. 10 “Blessed is the coming of the kingdom of our father David”

The Jews believed that God's kingdom was going to come upon the earth in a way that reflected the grandeur of David's kingdom a thousand years before... expansive, powerful, prosperous, saving them from their enemies.

So it's a **Triumphal Entry**. They had likely heard of or seen his amazing powers, maybe they heard that Jesus had just healed blind Bartimaeus in Jericho. And there is Bartimaeus following him on the way [Mark 10:52]. **And what do the people do?**

They lay down their cloaks & palms and cry out to the one who saves. Hosanna means “**Save or Please Save**”

So this passage is dripping with Messianic Expectation.... This is looking really good - but then comes **the rest of the story**.

And the rest of the story of course is that the Triumphal Entry quickly devolves into Jesus’ arrest & crucifixion in just a matter of days. Yes, Jesus cleanses the temple and speaks against the Jewish leadership, but the turning of the tide is very quick.

So why did this happen to Jesus? I’ve tried to capture one answer to that question in this morning’s sermon title....

Misunderstood Messiah.

The people were looking for a political/warrior king who would cast out the Romans. They were looking for **Superman**, someone with an “S” on his chest who could overcome their enemies and change their circumstances. They were looking for a 2nd Exodus where mighty Pharaoh was put in his place.

The problem is that Jesus had not come to battle their present enemies, but their eternal enemies – Satan, sin and death.

He knew that people didn’t need **Superman**. They needed a **Savior**. Someone who saves them from sin & death - forever.

[But Jerusalem was blind to this]

Messianic King – Yeah!!!

Humble/Suffering Messianic King **what?** Misunderstood!

But Jesus said this to his disciples in Mark 10:45 “The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and gives his life as a ransom for many”

That’s why the Messianic Son of Man/Son of David/Son of God came. He came to pay our ransom for sin. He didn’t come into Jerusalem on a war horse, he came on a donkey colt -humble.

And that humbleness turned into humiliation.....

Turn forward to **Mark 15:16-20** [read]

Oh how things had changed since the Triumphal Entry. Now he was going to the humiliating cross. And people misunderstood a suffering messiah... Drop down to **vv. 27-30** [read]

Save yourself! But that is not why Jesus came. He came to save us from our sins – for eternity. That’s why he came to Jerusalem. Not to be Superman, but to be the Savior. He came to die in our place to save us from our greatest enemies – Satan, sin & death.

Have you ever been with someone at their final breath?

That’s an eternal moment

And some day it will be you. One more breath. **Then what?** That’s why Jesus came and that’s why he came into Jerusalem [not with an “S” on his chest and a cape] but as a humble/righteous king bringing salvation. A salvation he would accomplish by being a humiliated/suffering king, a final Passover Lamb, a perfect/eternal sacrifice for your sins & mine.

That’s **the rest of the story [at least part of it]...Do you see it?**

Do you see it like blind Bartimaeus who heard about Jesus and cried out to him, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.”

When Jesus called for him he threw off his cloak and came.

Later I picture him placing that same cloak on the road as Jesus enters Jerusalem. You see, Jesus healed his sight and his soul and Bartimaeus followed Jesus.

How do you see Jesus? Lord? Savior? With the eyes of faith?

Worthy of following? Worthy of worshiping and putting your cloak before Him?..... or is He something less? A compartment of your life, but not your life? A nice man? A nice story?

And here is the thing, Jesus not only intended and orchestrated coming into Jerusalem on a colt, he intended to go to the cross. In Mark 8, 9 and 10 Jesus tells his disciples exactly what he is walking into. [Here is the last one in Mark 10:33-34][read]

The Lord intended to be humiliated and crucified for you.

Do you see that?

There's a chorus to old hymn that goes like this:

**No one ever cared for me like Jesus
There's no other friend so kind as He
No one else could take the sin & darkness from me
Oh how much he really cared for me.**

Yes, He does and so my final exhortations are.....

- Believe in Him and what He came to do for you
- Worship Him as your Lord, bow before Him
- Walk w/ Him, Follow Him to Jerusalem and to the cross this week. Get caught up in your relationship w/ Him.

On Friday night my wife went to pick up my daughter from someone's house and ended up talking for 1 hr, 45 minutes.

Did I mention that she accidently left the car running that whole time? She did, but it's because she got caught up in that friendship.

Friends at Living Hope Church, let's get caught up in our relationship with Christ this week. I encourage you to read one of the Gospels from the Triumphal Entry to the cross to the empty tomb. See Jesus. Follow Jesus. Fellowship with Him. Then let's come together on Good Friday and Easter and do that together.

Let's pray