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Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York

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Of Donkeys, Rocks and Tears

Luke 19:28-44

Prayer: *Father, we just again thank you and praise you for the gift of your Son and we again thank you and praise you for this day that we can focus on your entry into Jerusalem, the beginning of your passion week. Father, we again thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit, we have Father, Son and Holy Spirit and we pray that your Spirit would guide us as we again open up your word. We want to learn more about you, we want to learn to be able to grow more, to love you even deeper than we do, and so we pray you would give us the presence of your Holy Spirit as we open up your book and that it would be of permanent value and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, we looked at the account this morning, we read from the account the gospel of Matthew. This is the gospel of Luke. This is the gospel of Luke's reference to Palm Sunday beginning at verse 28 of chapter 19. It says: *And when he had said these things, he -- this is Jesus -- went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. And when he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called*

Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, saying, "Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' You shall say this: 'The Lord has need of it.'" So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" And he said, "The Lord has need of it." And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they sat Jesus on it. And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. As he was drawing near -- already on the way down the Mount of Olives -- the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out." And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon

another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

Well as we've said, today is Palm Sunday, this is the day that we set aside to remember Jesus's triumphant entry into Jerusalem. And the palms, as you've seen, they represent the cloaks and the palms that the people outside of Jerusalem laid down on the ground in order to welcome the man that they believed would be their new king, their new liberator. And there were huge crowds in Jerusalem at the time because it was Passover and the families were all there to celebrate. The crowd that was on the road to Jerusalem swelled into an even larger crowd when it met up with those who had gathered to celebrate the raising of Lazarus from the dead. It was a crowd filled primarily with those who had seen Jesus's miracles and perceived him to be the Messiah. And on that one count they were absolutely correct. But on every other count they couldn't possibly have been more wrong. And Jesus took pains just to show them how wrong they were. In fact in Jesus's entry into Jerusalem, he demonstrated just how wrong the crowd was militarily, politically and spiritually. Jesus was the Messiah to be sure but none of the roles that were assigned to him by the crowd were even remotely accurate, and Jesus refused to be identified that way.

And so we look at the first attempt. The first attempt at

misidentification, what was a military attempt. Many in the crowd were longing for a military leader, someone who would help the Jews overthrow the Roman oppressors and usher in a brand new reign for Israel. I mean it's hard to imagine how desperately the Jews wanted to defeat and overthrow Rome. It's difficult, to say the least, to believe that you are the chosen people when another country occupies your country and dictates much of how you're going to govern yourself. And Rome was content to give Israel a small measure of autonomy, I mean, they were not enslaved like they were in the days when they were in Egypt under the Pharaohs but they had nowhere near the freedom to worship that they wanted to and to enact the laws that God had given them. They had their own Jewish kings like Herod but even Herod ultimately answered to Caesar. And every once in a while Rome found it necessary to crush Israel lest they get too convinced of their own power. Many in this crowd who were celebrating the Passover thought that Jesus was at long last their military answer to their longing. Well, Jesus wouldn't have it. Verse 29 says: *When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, saying, "Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' You shall say this: "The Lord has need of it."*

Well Jesus knew that in order to fulfill a prophesy written by Zechariah about the Messiah, he first had need of a donkey. And by the way, a colt doesn't necessarily mean a horse, it just means a young male of the horse family, a baby, if you will. So we know Jesus is looking for a baby donkey and we know that for two reasons. Number one, Matthew's gospel specifically tells us that the animal was a colt of a donkey; and number two, Zechariah's prophesy says this, it says: *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.* Well, any idea that Jesus was a military leader riding into Jerusalem to claim his prize would have been shot to pieces at the sight of Jesus mounted on this baby donkey trotting into town. Military leaders were not supposed to present themselves this way at all, I mean, they were supposed to emphasize their power and their might by riding on the biggest, baddest steed that they could possibly find. The sight of Jesus on a baby donkey borders on the pitiful. And it could not have been lost on those who saw him as potentially a great military leader. How incredibly humbling to be pictured this way. I try to picture what the scene must have looked like to the myriad of creatures and all of creation who do not live on planet earth, I'm talking about the heavenly beings, beings who from the beginning of time know this Jesus of Nazareth as he's referred to in the Bible

as the Word. The Word who was in the beginning with God and who was God. I mean these heavenly beings all knew by experience what God tells us about this Word. It says in *John 1:3*: *All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* So from galaxies to donkeys, Jesus had created them all. And we seldom try to really grapple with the enormity of who this man really is because the deeper we look, the more astounding and the more ungraspable things become. This is the creator of the universe and he's riding into town on a donkey. I mean as the Creator he knows the real name of every one of the stars because God says that's one of the things that the Creator did. *Psalm 147* says: *He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names.* So just think about this for a second. This man on a donkey created a star that we call Alpha Centauri. I don't know what he calls it but whatever he calls it, that's its real name. It's only four light years away. It's our closest star. We've come to believe that that's actually pretty close but a light year is 27 trillion, with a T, trillion miles away. We talk about light years all the time as if it's no big deal, but you have to understand that one day of a light year is the distance that light travels in a day, that one day is a 160 billion miles. Our Milky Way galaxy is such that if you traveled 160 billion miles every single day, it would still take you at that speed 100,000 years to get from one side of the Milky Way just to the other. And we're no

big deal as a galaxy. And it's said that in our galaxy there is approximately 1,000 million stars. Let's say you wanted to get to the very next galaxy, well then you'd have to take a trip that by going 160 billion miles a day, if you wanted to visit the next galaxy that would take you at that speed 2.2 million years. I mean that's how long it would take to get from the Milky Way galaxy to the Andromeda galaxy. And by the way, scientists estimate that there are 100 million galaxies, each of them with a thousand million stars. So try to wrap your head around the author of all that and he's sitting on a donkey. He's sitting on a baby donkey and he's riding into Jerusalem. *Psalm 19* says: *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.* I mean it's incredibly difficult to put into perspective the absurdity of this picture of the King of the universe, the Creator of the universe riding on this little baby donkey. May I suggest to you that no amount of trying will ever enable a human being to wrap his head around the humility of Jesus. It's almost impossible to imagine. And he surely put to bed any notions that people had that he's going to use his entrance into Jerusalem as a means to mount some kind of military campaign. Most people who saw the Messiah as a military figure saw a Jesus who refused to play by their rules. They saw a man who was quite content to be seen as an almost laughable figure instead of who he really was, the ruler, the King, the Creator of the universe.

So here comes this King of the universe riding on a donkey into town. Verse 37 says: *As he was drawing near -- already on the way down the Mount of Olives -- the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"*

Now you got to understand where this crowd came from, the demographics of this crowd. A large part of this crowd were people who had assembled to see the site of Lazarus's resurrection. This was a miracle that Jesus had done that could not be kept hidden. I mean Lazarus was not only dead, his body was already actively decomposing by the time that Jesus had arrived at the tomb and when Jesus called Lazarus out of that grave, everybody who was around had witnessed this spectacular miracle. But as I said before, miracle is not going to make someone a Christian against his will. After Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, there were two groups of people and two very distinct reactions. One group simply could no longer deny that this was an act of God, so they believed. The other group saw this as a threat to their power and they decided that their only option was to have this Jesus killed. But you know it didn't stop there, I mean, they also figured they had to get rid of the evidence, so they plotted the death of Lazarus as well.

John 12:9 says: *When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.* So it was many of these Jews who made up the crowd that joined with the crowd of pilgrims entering into Jerusalem and they all had this one thought in mind, they're all thinking, could it be, could it possibly be that this Jesus of Nazareth was really the Messiah?

Now I want you to picture another group that's mingling with this Jesus as Messiah crowd. They're all mixed together. They're the ones who are hearing their worst nightmare starting to materialize because the crowd is starting to shout things like "*Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!*" And "*Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!*" And they're thinking to themselves this is not supposed to happen. Lazarus has to be made to disappear. Somehow the miracle that he was brought back from the dead, that doesn't matter at all any more. What matters is that this Jesus is being regarded as the Messiah, that he's actively being worshiped. And so they appeal to Jesus himself thinking that he's going to agree with them how unseemly it is to be regarded this way. And just as he disappointed those who expected a military Messiah, so

too, he disappoints those who expect him to refuse worship. Verse 39 says: *And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples."* And the Pharisees grow increasingly frustrated by Jesus's popularity which is at this point unstoppable because they believe that worship belongs to their God and their God alone and they've willfully blinded themselves to the fact that Jesus is their God and their God alone. But there's another reality that Jesus is part of that they have no clue of, and that is that Jesus from before the dawn of time itself has always been the recipient of worship, and Jesus alone knew the worship that he was worthy of. I mean we've already seen that the heavens declare the glory of God but the heavens are not alone. Every single part of creation exists to bring honor and glory to God in Christ. And so we look in scripture and we see that the earth itself worships Christ. *Psalm 66 says: All the earth worships you and sings praises to you; they sing praises to your name.* We see that the creatures of earth, those who fly and those who walk and those who are in the sea, they too worship Christ. *Revelation 5 says: And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"* We learn that the very mountains and the trees, they too worship Christ. *Isaiah 55 says: "For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the*

mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." We further learn that the whole angelic host worships Christ. *Psalm 148: Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights! Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts! Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars! Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the LORD! For he commanded and they were created.* And we learn in scripture that everything in all of creation worships Christ. *Revelation 4* which says: *"Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."*

So now we see the very same Lord and God who created all things and is worshiped by all things is riding on a donkey into Jerusalem. He's infuriating the Pharisees who see him as hardly worthy of worship from anyone. Again verse 39, it says: *And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples."* And he answered, *"I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."* Well the stones would cry out because every other part of creation recognizes the Lordship of Jesus Christ with one exception, it's those creatures at the very top of creation, the very ones who are made in his image. That

would be us. The Pharisees absolutely refused to recognize that Jesus was God in the flesh, the very one responsible for all things animate and inanimate but please, please don't think that was then, this is now and things have changed. We do the exact same thing today. We just do it with a little more sophistication and it's such a part of our culture my guess is we don't give it a second thought. We have this whole concept of who God is, the secular concept of who God is and who it is that we give worship to and who it is is mother nature. She's the god that all of us collectively worship. You know when the architect Frank Lloyd Wright said this: "Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature, it will never fail you." He was extolling the god that every one of us worships in one way or another and actually what he said is not even close to true. Nature is quite happy to fail you. In fact nature will absolutely crush and destroy you if you get in the way because it's an inanimate force with no ability whatsoever to recognize anything of any more or less value than anything else in nature. We are attracted to mother nature because it enables us to remove God from the equation and insert something else in its place that doesn't call us to account. We have to fight against that.

You know, one of the first things I do each morning when I go to pray is I reassert God's ownership of all things that have been given over to mother nature. So I praise him for his sky and his

planets and his air and his birds and his trees and his grass and his flowers and his seasons because I really feel the need to reassert his ownership of all things that have been given over to mother nature. See, the secular world insists that mother nature is the giver of all good gifts but God insists: *His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.* And now the very one who is the author of that divine power, glory and excellence as I said is sitting on a baby donkey listening to the Pharisees complain bitterly that people are actually giving him worship. He said: *"I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."* The stones would cry out because all of nature can remain silent for only so long in the very presence of their King. Shut down every single venue of praise to the king and the very creation he created for his own praise and glory and the pressure to express that praise will grow so great that eventually even the rocks will start to cry out. That's what Jesus was saying. You know shut it down as godless cultures like North Korea tries or misdirect it into the worship of mother nature as our culture does, and just like a powerful torrent of water, it's going to find some way to express itself because all of creation including you and me were made for the expression purpose of giving honor and worship to God and Christ. Jesus knew that. And he made it clear to the Pharisees who were trying to

shut down any idea of worship for him.

But you know he also knew something about the worship that this crowd was offering as well. He knew that it, too, consisted largely of false worship based on a false premise of who they thought the Messiah would be. Just like the sight of Jesus on a baby donkey confounding those who saw him as a military leader, so too was the crowd confounded by what Jesus did next. And again I want you to picture the sight. The crowds are gigantic. The tumult is great, everyone is shouting out Hosannas to this man on a donkey being triumphantly welcomed into Jerusalem, and what does Jesus do? He bursts into tears. And he wasn't shedding the quiet dignified tears of someone who's humbled by an adoring crowd; no, that might have been acceptable under the circumstances, but those were not even remotely the tears that Jesus was shedding. This Jesus riding on a donkey was wailing, and I want you to picture that. I mean the Greek word here does not mean weeping, it means wailing. Jesus was weeping and wailing in the midst of this crowd, not exactly the behavior that's designed to increase your stature among those who want to make you a ruler over them. But Jesus had no desire to be an earthly king, and this crowd consisted largely of those who wanted him to be just that. Part of Jesus's wailing no doubt was the certain knowledge of this very same crowd so attentive, so worshipful today would be shouting "crucify him"

within a week. Well, such is the way with crowds. They wanted a political Messiah who would lead them to defeat Rome and when they saw a suffering servant instead of a political rescuer, they turned on him. But that's not the primary reason why Jesus was wailing. He was looking at Jerusalem through prophetic eyes, prophetic eyes that could see 37 years into the future, and what he saw was wholesale slaughter. See the crowd that day was looking at a happy and whole Jerusalem celebrating a Passover and Jesus was prophetically looking into the future at a Jerusalem on fire and a Jerusalem with women and children being slain, bodies stacked like cordwood and blood flowing like water. He said: *"Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."*

Josephus was an historian who actually observed the event, he described what took place some 37 years later as Jerusalem was ravaged. He said this of Rome, he said: *"But when they went in numbers into the lanes of the city, with their swords drawn, they slew those whom they overtook, without mercy, and set fire to the*

houses wither the Jews were fled, and burnt every soul in them, and laid waste a great many of the rest; they ran every one through whom they met with, and obstructed the very lanes with their dead bodies, and made the whole city run down with blood, to such a degree indeed that the fire of many of the houses was quenched with these men's blood." See Jesus's tears at the very height of his worldly recognition represent his third profound humiliation and they were all of his own choosing. You see in Jesus's entry into Jerusalem he embraced humiliation militarily, politically and spiritually. The first humiliation was his refusal to become a military leader that so many wanted him to be and he symbolized that refusal by the donkey that he chose to ride. The second humiliation was his refusal to accept the false worship of the crowd who saw him as their own personal Messiah, not somebody who was going to save their people from their sins, I mean, they had no interest in that at all. They were far more interested in a Messiah who would restore Israel to its previous place of prominence. To those Pharisees who saw Jesus accepting worship and who were offended, Jesus gave a glimpse of what worship he had always enjoyed and had given up, humbling himself for the very people who were soon to slaughter him.

Well his third humiliation, again, a humiliation of his own choosing was his reaction to the very people who would reject him,

and once again it completely confounded the crowd. Jesus began to wail over the people of Jerusalem and their rejection of him saying: *"Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace, but now they are hidden from your eyes."* It was the Prince of peace entering the city that he loved knowing that they were soon to rise up and crucify him but here's the amazing part of this third humiliation. Jesus was weeping and he was wailing not for his own, he was weeping for -- he was not weeping for his sheep. He wasn't weeping for those who would soon be scattered and persecuted. Instead he was weeping for those who would utterly and completely reject him. Well how do we know that? I mean, well, we can surmise he wasn't weeping for his own because he frequently encouraged his sheep that no matter how severe their persecution, how severe their torture, how severe even their death, that they were going to be immensely rewarded for their faithfulness. I mean it was Jesus who said: *"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell."* In fact Jesus even went so far as to tell his disciples that persecution was in fact a blessing that would reap for them huge rewards. I mean he knew that this life was brief. He knew that eternity was forever and that any sacrifice made in this life would be paid back a hundred fold in the next. And so instead of weeping for his persecuted sheep, he encouraged them. He said in *Matthew 5*: *"Blessed are*

those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." What is truly astounding as we look at Jesus wailing, at the tears that he's shedding is that these were tears shed for his enemies, for those who would utterly reject his message and then kill the messenger, mocking him as he hangs there dying. When Jesus looked at Jerusalem utterly destroyed by the Emperor Titus in A.D. 70, he wept not because the temple had been destroyed and the city ravaged but because precious souls had refused his offer of peace. He said: *"Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes."* It was not like another time where Jesus lamented again over Jerusalem and again Jesus' heart broke for those who would ultimately be lost, for those who would utterly reject him. This is what he said in *Matthew 23: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you desolate."*

So what are we to make of this Jesus? I mean, was he simply and

utterly a confounding man or was he precisely who he claimed to be, God in the flesh come down to earth to rescue and ransom his sheep? And is it possible that God would actually weep over the very people he was going to later condemn? Well it's not just possible, it's scriptural. It's a fact. *Ezekiel 33:11* says: *Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?* And add to that what Jesus said: *"How often I would have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!"*

And so it raises the question if God is sovereign over man's wills, why didn't he simply make everybody a Christian? Well, one side says because he has profound respect for human free will. The other side says God is infinitely capable of mourning over something that he still wills to happen. I take the latter side because I understand what happened at the cross. The cross happened only because God willed it. That has to mean that God willed something that he absolutely detested, and that was the slaughter of his own Son. You know we often quote the words of Isaiah and his prophesy of the Lord's crucifixion at this time. This is *Isaiah 53:7*: *He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as*

a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked -- but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief.

Now you may be reading along as if you're reading attentively along with us, you're going to say at this point, stop, wait a minute, it pleased God to slaughter his Son? It pleased God to bruise him, to put him to grief? Well the answer to that question is a resounding yes. Not because God is some kind of sadistic fiend but because he is the very opposite. Father, Son and Holy Spirit agreed, the only way to rescue man from the sin that alienated him from God and filled his heart with hatred toward his creator was for God himself to become a man, live out a perfect life and then go to the cross and pay the price of that rebellion, and that's exactly what God said prophetically in Isaiah. He says: *But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.* Did

it please God to see his Son stripped naked and nailed to a cross? In one sense the answer is yes. The excruciating agony of seeing God's only begotten Son, the deepest and the greatest object of his affection mocked, flogged, humiliated, executed was offset by the fact that Father, Son and Holy Spirit had all agreed on a plan to rescue us and that in spite of the incredible pain they were undergoing, they could take pleasure in knowing that the plan would ultimately succeed. God in *Hebrews 12* says that Jesus went to the cross: *"For the joy that was set before him."* It says: *For the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.* Here we have God taking joy in something he despised. I mean we all know John 3:16 which tells us that God would do something as excruciatingly awful as to give over his only begotten Son to the monstrous intent of the ruling Jews and of Rome and of the powers of darkness. Why? *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* You see it confounds every bit of human thinking to imagine a God who would love the very creatures who wished him nothing but harm and delighted in executing that harm when they had the opportunity, but that's the God we worship. It's a God who chose to absolutely destroy the notion that he would come as a triumphant military ruler by riding into Jerusalem on the foal of a donkey, who so limited himself from the rightful worship the universe had

bestowed on him from before the beginning of time that he would tell the Pharisees that even the rocks would cry out to worship if given the opportunity. It was an opportunity he forsook for us. *Philippians 2* says: *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.* Jesus so loved the very ones who would try him in a kangaroo court that he wailed over the agony of those who would torture him telling Pilate when he washed his hands of Jesus claiming he was innocent of this man's blood that they wanted this blood of Jesus not just to be on themselves but also on their children. And when he went to the cross, the leaders of the nation of Israel, the nation that he had raised up and protected so that he could be born a Jew to rescue the Jews, those leaders upon seeing him naked and writhing in agony chose that moment to mock him, saying: *"You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross."* Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, *"He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted God; let Him deliver Him now*

if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

I try to imagine the depravity that is depicted here. Picture the worst kind of person you could imagine, a murderer, awful, awful, terrible person in agony, stretched out on a cross, bleeding, dying, gasping, breathing his last breath and you choose that time to mock him? These are the very people that Jesus wept over as he entered Jerusalem.

So what are we to do with this Jesus of donkeys and rocks and tears? Well, God tells us just what to do in the scripture we just read. *Philippians 2:5* says: *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.* God says we are to be Christ to our brothers and sisters, to our neighbors and to a world that still chooses to reject him. He says we are to choose the donkey. Jesus came into Jerusalem humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. We too are to choose to ride the lowly donkey instead of the snorting stallion. We can seek out the mind of Christ and trust Christ instead of our flesh. And God says: *Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.*

Secondly, we can keep the rocks silent by giving the Savior the worship He was entitled to, the worship he gave up to take on

flesh. And thirdly, part of that worship includes the ability to weep as he wept for those who don't know Christ, for those who are headed to a Godless eternity, those are the friends and those are the enemies that we become willing to weep for for Christ's sake. They're the ones that we seek and we serve and we pray for and share the gospel with because first and foremost we are imitators of Christ. We set our eyes on our Savior. That's what we do with the God donkeys and rocks and tears. *For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.* Let's pray.

Father, we praise you and thank you for who you are. We recognize how ungraspable is the enormity of who you are, the humility that we can't even begin to get a handle on, the King of the universe, the Creator of the sun, the moon and the stars riding on a wobbly little donkey. Father, I pray that during this Easter season, during this time when people are even more open than normal to hearing about this Jesus, that you would give us the opportunity and the wisdom and the courage to share this gospel, and I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.