

Mark 11: 1-11; “The Triumphal Entry”, A Palm Sunday Sermon
delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on April 10th, 2022,
in the Morning Worship Service.

This incident of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem in the week before His crucifixion shows us much about the way that His kingdom and cause came to be founded, and established in those days; and how it advances to conquer in people’s hearts in our own day. It has great significance for us in terms of our faith and our obedience to our conquering King. At this time I want to show you how Christ and His kingdom were triumphant in the sight of God, and in the sight of all those disciples who were faithful to Him, because the Lord’s purposes were being fulfilled.

If we are going about to do the Lord’s will and we rejoice to give to Him what He needs when He asks for it, then God is glorified in us, and Christ’s kingdom will triumphantly advance even when it is being greatly opposed. 1st of all, we are told, that our Lord had a need for His disciples to bring Him a colt. (verses 1-6) 2nd – He had a need for His disciples to throw their clothes on the colt, and on the road before Him. (verses 7 and 8) And 3rd – He had a need for the disciples to praise Him for the kingdom which He was bringing to them. (verses 9 and 10) Let us see how these observations relate to the advance of Christ’s kingdom in our own day.

1st of all, we are told, that Jesus had a need for His disciples to bring Him a colt.

Perhaps you have thought that the Lord does not need anything, because He is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Since this is the case, you might not think that He needed anything then, nor does He need anything now. It certainly is true that as God, the Lord Jesus needs nothing in the strict sense of how we understand His Deity. And even as we think of Him as a Man, I think that we often think of our Lord going it alone in everything that He did in His earthly ministry. When we think of His going to the cross, this is how we often think of how it was for Him.

But I want you to see and to appreciate this fact, that the truth which is given to us here, in the triumphal entry, is that the Lord Jesus did have needs that He wanted His disciples to meet that day, even as He entered Jerusalem. There were some who He specifically asked to do this service for Him. I hope that you understand that He still has needs which you, as His disciple, can meet as well. The Lord Jesus sent two of His disciples on an errand at this critical point in His ministry. He wanted them to go on His behalf. He sent them off to the neighboring village of Bethphage to get a colt.

Let me ask you whether you, dear Christian, are willing to run errands for Christ? The Lord knows, in His providential wisdom and grace, what He wants to do and to accomplish through your obedience to Him on any given day; how He might use you. It should be obvious to you that there is no physical presence of our Lord to command you to go to the village opposite you and find the colt that is tied; to loose it and to bring it to Him. Christ does not enforce His commands by His physical presence in this age, in this way, since He has gone back to heaven and is seated at the Father’s right hand.

But if you are His disciple, you are His servant. You will be reading His word and you will be seeking to know His will at every point. You will be praying during the day, and you will be asking Him what little errands that you might do for Him. Christ’s kingdom is not like the kingdoms of this world which advance through their subjects waging war to obtain earthly territory. Jesus was not asking for His disciples to go looking for a horse, so that He would come into Jerusalem looking like a man of war; a political conqueror. He told them to go looking for a colt, the foal of a donkey. His kingdom advances through meekness and lowliness and through deeds of righteousness.

Think of what was prophesied of Jesus in Psalm 45, verse 1 – “My heart is overflowing with a good theme; I recite my composition concerning the King; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.”

“You are fairer than the sons of men; grace is poured out upon Your lips; therefore God has blessed You forever.” “Gird your sword on Your thigh, O Mighty One, with Your glory and Your majesty.” “And in Your majesty, ride prosperously because of truth, humility, and righteousness.” If you see the greatness of Christ’s cause and you want to serve Him, what should you do? What practical things can you do?

He has commanded you to show hospitality to those in the church and perhaps some outside of the church as well. Are you willing to take meals to those who are need? He has commanded you to make disciples in connection with the local church that you are a member of. Are you willing to speak a word for Him, or share a verse, or to explain to another person why they need Christ? How will the gospel spread if you remain silent? Are you willing to go and get the colt and bring it back to Him so that He can ride upon it? Are you willing to run little errands for your wife or husband? If you are a child, or a young person, are you willing to help with chores around the house? And whether you are old or young, are you willing to help the weak? Are you willing to do little works of kindness to help the elderly and the needy?

Are you a disciple who is willing to do the thousand little errands which He will give you, which are related to the commands of the Bible, and the precepts of love and kindness that He will assign to you by His Spirit’s causing you to see what you might do for people around you? Will you will be thinking of how you can serve Christ? Are you sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s leading, so that you will go forth to do what He is commanding you to do, in relation to the things which He will providentially order; the particular people and situations which He will cause to come your way every day? This is one obvious application which you and I ought to take to heart.

Christ knew exactly what He intended to do with this colt. He was able to see all the details of what His two disciples would encounter when they went to get the colt. He could see the question that would be asked, and so He gave the exact answer to the question which His two disciples would be asked, so that they would know what to say. It is the same for you who are His disciples who are here today. Jesus sees all the situations that you will come in to, each and every day. He sees very clearly how He can use you in His service. He sees what He would like to reveal of Himself to those other people who He brings you into contact with.

See how important this small errand was. Jesus was intending to ride in triumph into Jerusalem upon this colt, this foal of a donkey, before the tens of thousands of people who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover week; people who would come out to greet Him. He had just raised Lazarus from the dead in Bethany the day before, and many people were anxious to see Him. Perhaps this would be the only chance that they would have to get a glimpse of Him. Jesus very much needed to make use of this colt; for His riding upon this colt would show forth particular truths about His cause and His kingdom, and what He was like as the King over this spiritual and eternal kingdom.

These disciples who gave the colt, and these disciples who were sent to get the colt and bring it back to Jesus, they could not have possibly seen what Jesus was intending to do, but they went in faith and in obedience to His command, because the Lord had need of it. The Lord had need of their obedience in these small things so that His glory might be manifested. Even so, dear Christian, the Lord Jesus needs you in order to show forth the glory of His Person by and through your humble obedience, and the truth of His kingdom by your humble service. He needs you to be faithful in many little things. “He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much,” Jesus said in Luke 16: 10.

Now 2^{ndly} – He had a need for the disciples to throw their clothes on the colt, and on the road before Him.

Verse 7 says, “Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it.” “And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread them on the road.” These actions were all done voluntarily by the Apostles and

disciples. They were proclaiming Him to be their King. They were proclaiming Him to be their Messiah, the One who had rightful rule over them. They were not commanded by the Lord Jesus to do this, but I believe that Jesus did have a need for them to do this for Him. In all of His ministry up until this point, Jesus had deliberately kept his disciples from this kind of public display of loyalty and homage to His Kingship.

But now He had a need for them to display their loyalty and allegiance to Him. Why the change in policy? I think that it was because our Lord at this particular time wanted all of Jerusalem to know that He was indeed their Messiah and their King. He knew that if He would have permitted this display of public loyalty to Him before this time, that many would have drawn the wrong conclusions about what kind of a kingdom it was, that He came to bring. They would have thought of Him as a political deliverer, and that His kingdom was of this world. He had deliberately tried to keep the multitudes from drawing that kind of conclusion all the way through His public ministry.

In John Chapter 6, after Jesus fed the five thousand, it says in verse 15, “Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.” So Jesus, at this time in His public ministry, really wanted as many Jews as possible, to know that He was their King. But there is also another reason why Jesus permitted this public display of allegiance to Himself. In just a few short days, the Passover would come, and He knew that He was to be the fulfillment of that Old testament ordinance.

He knew that His death as a sacrifice for sins would bring to those who believed in Him, the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting. He knew that He must die a sacrifice, at the hands of the chief priests and the Pharisees, and the rulers of Israel. He was to become the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” He knew that His disciples coming out with this public display of loyalty to Himself would bring out the greatest opposition to Himself which He had yet encountered from the leaders of Israel.

But He also knew that this is just what it would take, to bring to fulfillment, all the prophecies concerning Himself so that He would be able to accomplish His mission; to lay down His life a ransom for many. He knew that God His Father’s timing of these events would be perfect. And so too, He knew that it was right, at this very time that He entered Jerusalem, to permit his disciples to do this for Him. He needed them to do it for Him. Notice how definitely and how willingly the disciples did these things.

“Then they brought the colt to Jesus and they threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it.” He did not raise one objection to what they did. “And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread them on the road.” What did these actions mean? Well, if you will turn with me to 2nd Kings Chapter 9, verse 13 and we will find the answer. In this chapter, the prophet Elisha has ordered another one of the sons of the prophets to go to Ramoth-Gilead and to anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king. He would be the man responsible for striking blows of judgment to the house of Ahab, that wicked king who had sinned so greatly against the Lord and had brought Israel so heavily into the sin of idolatry.

The prophet appointed for this task came, and he quickly performed his task. So quickly did he do it that those who were close to him didn’t understand what had happened. And so when they asked Jehu in verse 12 what the prophet had said to him, Jehu said, “He spoke to me saying, Thus says the Lord: I have anointed you king over Israel.” “Then each man hastened to take his garment and put it under him on the top of the steps and they blew trumpets saying, “Jehu is king.”

So evidently, this practice, of taking your garments and putting them under the king and laying them in his path was common to that time. These actions were expressing recognition and loyalty to one who was the newly-made king. This is what the people were saying that day when Jesus

was placed on the colt's back. The leafy branches and the palm fronds being spread on the road or waved before the King were expressive of their affirmation that He had been victorious, or He would be victorious in all that He came to do.

I think that many of them thought that Jesus had come to restore the kingdom to Israel. I do not think that the vast majority of the people there that day in the crowd knew what Jesus was intending to do by His coming into Jerusalem; that is, to lay down His life so that all the spiritual enemies of every believer would be defeated, and so that the grace to be saved from sins, and the gift of eternal life could be won through the purchase of His blood. But I do believe that their intentions toward Jesus were good even so. And so Jesus was well pleased to accept and receive their doing these things for Him. The vast majority of them were not hypocrites, as some have suggested. They were sincere supporters of all that Jesus came to do.

They were a part of the fulfillment of prophecy. It is mentioned in Luke's gospel in Chapter 21, verse 4 – "All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet saying: 'Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.'" They were acknowledging and showing their entire approval of Jesus to be their king. Let me apply this to you in this way. It is very important that when you hear of Christ and the salvation that He came to bring, that you receive Him not only as Savior, but as your Lord and King. Jesus has come to reign in the heart of any person who will receive Him.

But we should also receive the truth, that true religion is not merely being caught up in the religious movements of the day. It was not simply a matter of Jesus being popular in that day, or now. There were people there that day, no doubt, who were caught up in throwing their clothes in the way of Jesus' path, and waving palm branches to acclaim Him to be a king, who just a short time later would see Him be taken and crucified, and they became very disillusioned with what it would mean for them to be His disciple. They wanted to fade into the woodwork when He was not able to deliver Himself, let alone them, politically.

But let us remember why Jesus came. It was not to proclaim Himself a King and then command obedience from all of His subjects. It was to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. It is true that the human heart can be fickle in its loyalties, and especially in its proclamations of allegiance to Jesus. Some persons may become Christians thinking that Jesus will be to them someone who will bring them political peace. They may identify with Him in terms of what He can do for them to feed them and clothe them, or to heal them. They may even glory in the fact that He is a great King to defeat all of their spiritual enemies, so that He is able to forgive their sins, and give them the gift of eternal life. But they may not at all want to own Jesus in days of persecution.

When you take Jesus to be your King and your Lord, be sure and count the cost. Come to terms with the fact that He would have your heart's highest allegiance. Take Him to be your King for the right reasons; to rule over you in righteousness. And then learn the way of humility, and walk the road that Jesus walked, of keeping all of His commandments. Jesus has a need for you to proclaim your allegiance to Him publicly; to publicly show your allegiance to Him and to His cause and kingdom. You can do this by Your words of witness as to His Kingdom not being of this world. Tell people that you are fighting spiritually for His cause; the cause of meekness and truth and righteousness. Tell them that, yes, it is true, that this will involve opposition, and at times even persecution. But tell them that you know that He will be with you always, in those times, as you look to Him in faith. Pray to be faithful, and to be a light to people all around you.

Christ's cause looked very good on this day. He was very popular, on that afternoon of the triumphal entry. But His cause looked very bleak just a few days later. Being a part of a popular movement is not what it means to follow Jesus. But when you follow Jesus, neither should you be discouraged, or think that His cause will never triumph. God knows how to bring that about in its proper time. But in days of opposition and discouragement, remember that He was raised

from the dead on the 3rd day! And remember that you were raised with Him, spiritually, if you believe in Him. Resolve, therefore, by His grace, that you will stick with Jesus and His cause and kingdom in the good days and the bad. And pray for grace to persevere all the way through your life; so that He might be glorified in you. And this leads us to our final point.

3^{rdly} – Jesus had a need for the disciples to praise both Him and the kingdom which He was bringing to them. (verses 9 and 10)

“Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: ‘Hosanna!’ ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’ ‘Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the Lord!’ ‘Hosanna in the highest!’ These are words taken from Psalm 118: 25 and 26. The whole multitude together are acknowledging that they needed the salvation that Jesus was bringing, for that is what Hosanna means in the original. It means – Lord save! However, it is possible that many did not understand the kind of personal spiritual salvation that Jesus came to bring. They did believe that He was coming in the name of the Lord. They were acknowledging His greatness and that He was their Messiah.

Let me close this message by saying that it is always appropriate to praise our Lord Jesus Christ, even in an open manner. Yes, it is true that we must not throw our pearls before swine. We must be discerning of the characters of men. And yet, we must see how much it honors God to praise the Son that He sent into the world to be its Savior. May He ride triumphant into every heart in this place today. May we be those who rejoice greatly and even shout that our King has come, that He is just and endowed with salvation; that He did not come riding on a great white horse as an earthly king would, but He came riding on the colt, a foal of a donkey. In this He showed forth His coming into the world to save sinners. Let us praise Him for this, even today.