

Mark 11: 1-11; “The Lord has Need of It”, A Palm Sunday Sermon
delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on April 17th, 2011,
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. We often think of our Lord going alone to the cross. We often think of the disciples fleeing away from the Garden of Gethsemane when the temple guard came to arrest Him there. We often think of their inability to stand with Him in that hour when the power of darkness came upon Him. We have come to know that our Lord had to go to the cross alone, and that the Scriptures show us that it had to be this way. Jesus in Mark 14, verse 27 said, “All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written, ‘I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered’.” Jesus had to go alone to the cross to accomplish the work of redemption. No man could go with Him to help Him or to minister to His needs that day. It was a work which only the Son of God could do. But I want you to see and to appreciate this fact this morning; that the truth which is given to us, here in the triumphal entry, is that the Lord Jesus Christ did have needs that His disciples around Him were meeting that day that as He entered Jerusalem. And in examining how these disciples were helping Jesus with His needs, I hope that you will see that the Lord Jesus still has needs which His disciples can meet today as well. The Lord Jesus 1st of all, we are told, had need of two of His disciples to bring Him a colt. (verses 1-6) 2nd – He had the need for the disciples to throw their clothes on the colt, and on the road before Him. (verses 7 and 8) And 3rd – He had need for the disciples to praise both Him and 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, Jesus had need of two of His disciples to bring Him a colt.

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. I hope that you can see; those of you who are disciples of the Lord; that His was never a one-man ministry except when Jesus went to the cross. There were many points when His disciples helped Him in His ministry. Witness the feeding of the five thousand. He did the miracle of multiplying the loaves and the fishes. But the disciples had the multitude sit down in orderly ranks on the grass and it was the disciples who gathered up the fragments that remained so that nothing was lost. Jesus needed his disciples then, and He needs His disciples now. He had need for 2 of them to go to get this colt for Him. And they were very willing to run this errand for His sake. Let me ask

you whether you, dear Christian, are willing to run errands for Christ? Some Christians do not seem to understand that a very great deal of kingdom work consists in running, what appears to be, small errands for Jesus. He needs your help to advance the interests and concerns of His kingdom. O yes it is true that He rules now and is sovereign over all the earth from His throne in heaven now. But still, He needs you to help Him to build; He needs you to help extend His kingdom's influence and advance it in this fallen world. He needs your help to minister His grace, and help, and truth to people around you.

I want to ask this morning; are you willing to go and run the errands which, when you do so, will show forth His love, and His compassion in a world of lost sinners? 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 your Lord what little errands that you might do for Him. Notice, however, that Jesus did not send all of the disciples; He sent only two. He could have sent one. But perhaps this would not have looked right to the owners of the colt. Even so, you should understand the importance of not seeing yourself as a one-person ministry, or an independent entity in your service to your Master, the Lord Jesus Christ. As it was; Jesus knew that they would need to bring back the mother donkey and the colt, even though He was only going to ride the colt. The mother donkey would be a calming influence upon the colt, and this would be needed because Jesus' purpose in riding the colt was to show that His kingdom is a kingdom of meekness and righteousness, peace, and joy. 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 look 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. That was Christ's cause. And the sword with which He was girded in His earthly ministry was the words that proceeded out of His mouth. But His Church is His body. And so we

are girded with the sword which is on His thigh. We go and run the errands. We preach and share the gospel. We do good works in the right spirit. And His cause prospers. He was going to ride this creature to show that His kingdom was a kingdom of peace and spiritual blessing; grace which would change hearts and lives, and take away the sins of all those who would live by faith in Him. The Lord Jesus had need of this colt, and He had need of these two disciples to bring it to Him.

Even so; Jesus has need of you, His disciple, to accomplish certain and definite things for Him. They may seem to be very small things to you; very little errands to run for Him. But when you do these small errands for Him, you find that there was something much greater that the Lord Jesus wanted to do, to show forth the greatness of His person, and the greatness of His grace, to the people He would minister to, through your being faithful to His commands. 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 members 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? Are you, if you are a child, willing to help with chores around the house? Are you willing to visit the sick? 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 if you are sensitive to the commandments of our Lord which are found in the Bible, you will be thinking how you can keep them? Are you sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading, so that you 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 2 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 which His 2 disciples should give to the owners when they were asked. 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, could not possibly have seen what Jesus was intending to do, but they went at His command because the Lord had need of it. And the Lord had need of their obedience in these small things that His glory might be manifested. Even so, dear believer, the Lord Jesus in order to show forth the glory of His person and the truth of His kingdom 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 the 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. 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 before this time, that many would have drawn the wrong conclusions about what kind of a kingdom this 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 to know as possible, 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 1 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 quickly performed his task, so quickly that those who were close to him didn't understand what had happened, and so when they asked him in verse 12 what he said to Jehu, 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 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 coming into Jerusalem; 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 Jesus was well pleased to accept and receive their doing these things for Him. They were 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 Lord and King. Jesus has come to reign in the heart of any person who will receive Him. But secondly, we must also say that true religion is not merely being caught up in the religious movements of the day. It is not simply a matter of Jesus being popular that day; either then or now. There were people who were caught up in throwing their clothes in the way of Jesus' path, and waving palm branches that day, who later would become very disillusioned and abandon their professed allegiance to Him during the time when He was taken and tried. Some of these same persons may even have been among those who cried out for His crucifixion on the day when Pilate brought Him out and said, "Behold the Man!" The human heart can be fickle in its loyalties and 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, and to heal them. They may glory in the fact that He is a great King to defeat all of their spiritual enemies and able to forgive 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 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. 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. Know that this will involve opposition, and at times persecution, but that He will be with you in those times as you look to Him in faith. Pray to be faithful and to be light in the midst of this perverse generation. Christ's cause looked very good and very popular on that afternoon of the triumphal entry. But it looked very bleak a few days later. And then it was raised from the dead with our King after He died on the cross, lay in the tomb, and was raised on the 3rd day. Resolve, by 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!'" I wonder if you have ever thought about the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, was never formally worshiped by His own people, the Jews, in the temple, as He ought to have been? Worship to the true and living God had been conducted in this temple for many centuries; worship which the Lord Jesus knew all about and received to Himself as the 2nd Person of the Divine Trinity, before His incarnation. But when the Lord Jesus came to His own, in His incarnation and in His ministry of truth and righteousness; He was not received by them. They should have been worshiping Him. They should have been receiving

His teaching. They should have bowed down before Him! But in fact; in just a few days, at the time of the Passover, the very leaders of the nation who should have been out there welcoming Jesus into Jerusalem, and praising Him with this multitude as He entered the city; these wicked religious men were responsible for agreeing together to see that He was put to death! How deceptive is sin. How deceptive are our hearts! But one thing that you can be assured of, my friends; It is always right to praise Jesus. It is always right to praise Jesus and His bringing His kingdom to fallen sinful people. I hope that you see that Jesus had a need for the multitude to praise Him that day. If the religious rulers would not, the poor and the needy, those who saw their need of Christ; even the little children would. If it was not right to praise Jesus, and He did not need people to praise Him that day, He would have told the disciples and the others to cease. But He did not. The fact is; He deliberately planned this entrance of His coming into Jerusalem so that it would be seen and understood that He was the King of Israel.

Some of the Pharisees who were there that afternoon when Jesus came riding in on the colt; they saw all the praises and were offended. In Luke's gospel it says that some of them called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." "But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out." In Matthew's gospel it says that when Jesus came to the temple that same day, He drove out the moneychangers and overturned their tables and the seats of those who sold doves. He said, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves.'" But right after that, the blind and the lame came to Him and He healed them right there. And the children were crying out in the temple saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" And the chief priests were indignant and they said to Him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" They were saying that He was the Messiah! "And Jesus said to them, 'Yes, Have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise?' That's where praise was being perfected. It was being perfected by those who simply knew their need of Christ, and His need to be praised before He went to the cross and died for them there. You will never get in trouble with God for praising Jesus, but you certainly may get in trouble with men. Let me apply it to you this way in closing with the words of J.C. Ryle. "Who does not know that spiritual religion never brings a man the world's praise?" "It never has done, and it never does." "It entails the world's disapprobation, the world's persecution, the world's ridicule, the world's sneers." "The world will let a man go to hell quietly, and never try to stop him." "The world will never let a man go to heaven quietly—they will do all they can to turn him back." "Let him begin to read his Bible and be diligent in prayers, let him abstain from worldly amusement and be particular in his employment of time, let him seek an evangelical ministry and live as if he had an immortal soul—let him do this, and the probability is that all his relations and friends will be up in arms." "You are going too far," "You need not be so very good"—this is the least that he will hear." Certainly this true. But I would have us to go one step further and to

say that there is no greater witness to the truth of Christ as King, Christ as Lord, and Christ as Savior than the praises of His people. A false Christian or a hypocrite will not always be praising God and Christ. But a true Christian will. And a praising Christian is a joyful Christian. And a praising Christian comes to see that he or she does not need to be great in the eyes of other people. A praising Christian can therefore become a servant and serve His Master and His King. Praise Jesus in spirit and truth and you will be meeting a need that He has. Remember the words of Psalm 145 and practice them. "I will extol You, my God, O King; and I will bless Your name forever and ever." "Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever." Verse 10 – "All Your works shall praise You, O Lord, and Your saints shall bless You." "They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power, to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and glorious majesty of His kingdom." "Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations." The one who praises Jesus from a sincere heart; they are doing what is pleasing to God; they are meeting His need. The Lord has need of it.