

JESUS' ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

Mark 11:1-19

Key Verse: 11:9b

"Hosanna!" Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

This morning, we want to learn three things from this passage. First, the Lordship of Christ. Second, Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and why it is called a triumph. Third, Jesus' cleansing of the temple what it means to each one of us. Let us open our hearts and hear the word of God personally!

I. THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST (1-6)

Look at verse 1a. *"As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives..."* Bethphage and Bethany were satellite towns of Jerusalem. Whenever Jesus visited Jerusalem, he did not stay in Holiday Inn and Marriot. Instead, Jesus and his disciples stayed in the home of Mary and Martha in Bethany. Martha would cook delicious meals for them. Jesus would teach them the word of God. Mary would sit at Jesus' side to soak up all the word of God, yearning to hear more. Her sister Martha would come in and complain about Mary not helping her in the kitchen. They loved Jesus so dearly and were happy to have him as their guest.

This was Jesus' last visit to Jerusalem. As he predicted many times, he would suffer in the hands of the religious leaders and be crucified as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. While staying in Mary's house, Jesus told two of his disciples to do something very unusual. Look at verses 1b-3. *Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.'"* Jesus told them to bring someone's baby donkey without asking permission. In our society, this is called stealing. It is a misdemeanor offense and you can go to prison for this. I mean, you cannot just enter a house and take a donkey that belongs to someone else. Jesus had never told them to steal someone's property before. So the disciples could have complained about this strange instruction. Amazingly, however, the disciples obeyed his words without questioning.

Look at verses 4-6. *They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go.* When the two disciples obeyed the words of Jesus, the owner of the colt let them go without any objections. To the eyes of Mark, the author of this gospel, this was a remarkable thing. Mark was probably impressed by the absolute obedience of the two disciples. They obeyed Jesus by faith because they trusted him. This is what it means to have faith. If we have faith in Jesus, we obey his words even when we don't fully understand them. When the disciples repeated Jesus' words exactly, the owner let them go. They did not even ask the disciples to make a deposit or leave their driver's license.

They simply said, "Okay. Take it." When the disciples obeyed Jesus' words, they experienced the spiritual authority of Jesus' words. We learn that we can also experience the spiritual authority of Christ when we obey the word of Jesus absolutely.

Now let us think about the main point of these verses. Look at verse 3 again. *If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.'* "The Lord needs it." This short sentence teaches us the Lordship of Christ. The Lordship of Christ means that God is the Creator and we are his creation. It means that God is our Father and we are his children. The Lordship of Christ has a very important meaning in our Christian faith. It teaches us that Jesus is the real owner of everything in this world, because he is the Creator God. Though there was a human owner of the donkey, the real owner was Christ Jesus. In the same way, the real owner of our lives is Jesus, because he is the author of our lives. Our life is a gift from God. When we accept this truth, we know we should not waste our life or abuse it by living a pleasure-seeking life. Hedonism, substance abuse, and suicide are examples of ignoring God's ownership of our life. Similarly, our children are not our own; they are God's children, entrusted to our care. When we are clear about the Lordship of Christ, we can live a life that fulfills a purpose that God has given us.

Living in a capitalistic society where private property rights are essential, the Lordship of Christ may be difficult for us to accept. During my middle school, I bought my first property, a used bicycle, with the money from delivering newspapers early in the morning. I polished and shined the bicycle everyday as if it were a Corvette or Ferrari. One day, a teacher asked me to borrow it, but I refused. He called me a selfish person. This was the first time I began to realize that I was selfish. But I said to myself, 'I had to get up at 4 o'clock in the morning to earn the money, skipping breakfast many times. Why should I share it with anyone?' My sinful, selfish behavior came from not knowing that my life, and everything I had, came from God. I did not know the lordship of Christ.

There was a man of faith in the Old Testament who knew the Lordship of Christ. His name was Job. He was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil (Job 1:1). Job was very prosperous. He had seven sons and three daughters and he owned 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 donkeys. He also had many servants. One day Satan suggested to God that Job was faithful only because God made him financially successful. So God permitted Satan to test Job's faith. A great tragedy struck Job and his family one day. All his children and servants were killed by a tornado. All his livestock were destroyed. And yet, "in all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrongdoing" (Job 1:22). He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised."

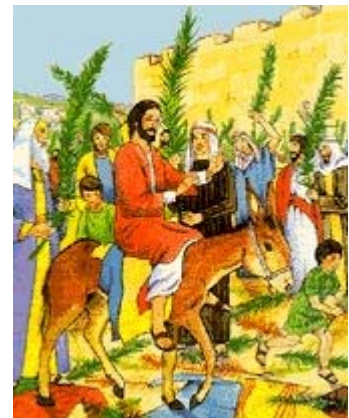
Still, Satan would not give up. He sneered at Job's faith and said to God, "But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face. (Job 2:5). God allowed Satan to test further Job's faith. Suddenly painful boils broke out from the sole of Job's foot to the crown of his head. Job sat in the midst of ashes and scraped his sores with a piece of pottery. His wife could not stand it any longer and told him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" (Job 2:9) But Job refused to curse God. He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept

good from God, and not trouble?” (Job 2:10) Job believed the Lordship of Christ. Job did not sin against God in what he said and what he did, despite the terrible things happening in his life. From Job we learn that what we have is not ours. Our life is not our own. Our children are not our own. Our looks, our talents, our properties, everything we have comes from God. Like Job, we must acknowledge the Lordship of Christ. And we must learn to surrender what we have to God “when the Lord needs it.” Would you be willing to give to God your time and energy if the Lord says he needs it?

II. JESUS’ TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM (7-10)

When the disciples brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields (8). Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted. Look at verses 9b-10. *“Hosanna!’ ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’ ‘Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!’ ‘Hosanna in the highest!’”* In the ancient time, worldly kings marched into capital cities as a part of inauguration ceremonies. A king usually rode on a white stallion with a large entourage accompanying him and with the national guard marching behind him.

Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Jesus is the Son of God. But at this moment, Jesus entered into the city riding on a baby donkey. Actually, he did not even own a donkey much less a horse. He had to borrow someone else’s baby donkey. Imagine how Jesus looked when he rode on a baby donkey. Certainly it was not a spectacular-looking event. Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem showed no hint of glory or power. Jesus rode on a donkey’s colt to enter into Jerusalem in order to fulfill the prophecy of Zechariah. This shows that Jesus is a humble king, not like kings of the world who love to display pomp and power. It revealed that Jesus is our gentle and humble king.



So why do we say Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem on a donkey was a triumphal entry? It did not look like a triumphal entry at all. In fact, his entry on a donkey’s colt was so humble that it probably looked like children’s game. But spiritually speaking, his entry into Jerusalem was indeed a triumphal entry because he would conquer sin and Satan in Jerusalem. Jesus entered the city to become the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world through his death on the cross. His resurrection would crush Satan’s head and open the door to the kingdom of God for us.

The manner in which Jesus entered into Jerusalem revealed that he was not a political king, but a spiritual king who rules his people with love and peace. Isaiah prophesied that when he rules, all peoples of all nations will make weapons into agricultural tools and will enjoy heavenly peace and love. When the Messiah rules, we can have true peace in our hearts for Jesus rules love and peace. Praise Jesus that he is a humble king! Praise Jesus who became a triumphant king by defeating sin and Satan through his cross and resurrection!

The word “Hosanna” summarizes the meaning of his entry. Look at verses 9b-10. *“Hosanna! ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’ ‘Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!’ ‘Hosanna in the highest!’”* “Hosanna” means in Hebrew, “save now!” When the people shouted “Hosanna,” it was a cry to God to save the humanity from the bondage to sin and Satan (Zec 9:9).

However, the same crowd that shouted “Hosanna” would shout “Crucify him” when Jesus was tried by the Roman Governor. They did not have a personal faith in Jesus. Instead, they followed the shifting winds of the public opinions. Let us pray earnestly to develop a personal faith in Christ so that we may follow Jesus as our Savior no matter how our human circumstance changes.

III. JESUS CLEARS THE TEMPLE (11-19)

What did Jesus do first when he entered Jerusalem? He didn’t go to a tourist spot. He went to the temple, the house of God, and looked around, and since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve (11). The next day, as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find if it had any fruit. When he reached out, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. Then he said to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” Jesus cursed the fig tree, and the disciples heard him say it (12-14).

Why did Jesus curse the fig tree when it was not the season for figs? As verse 11 indicates, at that time the temple was on Jesus’ mind. Jesus must have associated the temple with the fruitless fig tree. It was beautiful in its outward appearance, but it had no fruit. Likewise, the religious leaders looked holy and dignified in their purple robes and flowing beards, but they had no spiritual fruit in their lives. As we learned from our Bible Café, God wants us to be fruitful. He wants us to bear good fruit—fruit that will last. We can bear good fruit in our lives by remaining in Jesus and in his words (Jn 15:5). Let us examine our life of faith to see if our life is like that of the fig tree Jesus cursed.

Look at verses 15-16. *“On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts.”* Jesus was very angry. He was so angry that he overturned the tables and the benches in the temple area. We know that Jesus is a gentle shepherd. He is so gentle and humble that he does not break a bruised reed or snuff out a smoldering fire (Mt 12:20). So what made him so furious that he behaved in this unusual manner? We can call this righteous anger. We often get angry for a selfish reason. We become angry when our ego is hurt or when we don’t get what we want. But Jesus became angry when he saw the injustice done to the house of God. He saw how the chosen people of God turned the temple into a market place. The religious leaders should have taught the word of God in the temple. They should have prayed for the work of salvation. But they allowed the merchants to use the temple area for profit-making activities. They were corrupt. Their love of money turned the house of God into a den of robbers.

Look at verse 17. *And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"* Jesus declares that the temple is a house of prayer for all nations. We learn that Jesus wants his people to pray for all nations. Jesus said this because God's will for world salvation was on his mind. Jesus said, "My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations." Our church and all of us (who are the temple of the Holy Spirit) should be a house of prayer for all nations. This is a biblical constant. But when Jesus went into the temple, it was not a house of prayer for all nations; it was a den of robbers. So Jesus revealed his righteous anger.

In today's passage, we learned the Lordship of Christ. May God help us to bring to him what we have when the Lord needs it! Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was triumphal. Praise Jesus who humbly entered Jerusalem and became our Savior King by dying on the cross to take away our sins! May God help us to learn to pray for the salvation of peoples in all nations!