

STONE HARBOR

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April 5, 2009

Who Jesus Is & Why He Matters **Jesus' entry Into Jerusalem**

Mark 11:1-14

Introduction

This morning in the life of the church we come into the heart of the season which Christians have set aside to remember the high cost of our salvation in the death of Christ and to celebrate His resurrection from the dead. We have the tradition of remembering and celebrating these two core events in our Good Friday and Easter services. I would like to formally invite you to both services.

Good Friday – 12Noon to 12:50 PM

Purpose: Remember the High Cost of our salvation

Tone: Somber and reflective

Why Come: Reverential Respect and Honor of Jesus Christ

Easter – Next Sunday 9:30

Purpose: Celebrate Resurrection of Jesus Christ and all that means to us and God

Tone: Celebration

Why Come: There is no greater reason to celebrate. Fourth of July is worth celebrating our freedom as a nation. Easter is all the more worth celebrating our freedom from estrangement and our new life in Christ secured by His death.

Who Should Come: All

Today, on the church calendar, is Palm Sunday. It has never made it onto my radar as being as significant a day of observance as Good Friday or Easter. I have to admit, when I read the text traditionally associated with Palm Sunday, it raised more questions than it answered.

You can tell I started with more questions than insights by the titles of my outline: What's with the colt; What's with the cheering section; What's with the anticlimactic entry; and What's with the fig tree?

But as with all passages that make you scratch your head if you are willing to dig for the answers you'll find gold. So, ...

Let's dig a bit.

I. What's with the Colt (1-7)

A. Recap of Colt Story with Special Mention to Key Elements

Setting: Pilgrims going to Jerusalem, Judaism's most holy city, to observe religious festival, most likely Passover. This is the beginning of Jesus final ministry in this city.

B. Jesus Blesses His Disciples by Involving/Including them in His Plans

1. The Blessing of Training -- OJT

a) Result of OJT -- What the Disciples Learned from the Master Teacher

i. Jesus is trustworthy -- What Jesus said would happen, did happen "just as Jesus told them." (11:6).

ii. Jesus sends His disciples on missions they don't necessarily fully understand or agree with – go and take someone's colt? Yeah!

iii. Jesus sends us on mission with risks -- Taking someone else's colt has got to come with some risks, they shoot horse thieves, don't they?

iv. Things work out miraculously when we obey Jesus – what are the chances that all these details would play out.

v. He is Lord-Initiator, I am Slave-Responder

2. The Blessing of Fellowship on Mission – God chooses to use Jesus' disciples to accomplish His mission.¹ It is good and sweet to the soul to be so small and yet to be called onto Team Jesus. They were not fishermen in some far off land who eeked out a living and then died, they were disciples of God's Son Jesus through whom all the families of the earth were blessed. To God be all the glory, and to those He chooses to use for His purposes all the joy and value of life lived for the highest of purposes.

C. The Significance of Jesus Securing and Entering Jerusalem on a Colt

1. It Was God's Pre Existing Intention that His Christ Would Enter Jerusalem this Way

Zechariah 9:9 – "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey." (NASB)

Although it did not seem to inform the popular expectation of God's Messiah coming as a conquering king, God had announced how His Messiah would come – humble and mounted on a donkey even on a colt... As God had formerly announced, so Jesus Christ came. God the Father, like God the Son brings about what He says, even if mankind doesn't pick up on the details He gives us.

2. But It's More Than Just God Said So – He Had a Plan in This Humble yet Distinct Entry
 - a) Jesus was to be distinguished -- Larry Hurtado (p.179) says most pilgrims entered Jerusalem on foot and entry even on a donkey's colt would distinguish Jesus from the other pilgrims who probably saw one riding on a colt at least as some curious prophet, if not the Christ as Peter and His disciples had come to regard Him. I hear the crowd asking, "Who is this guy?" Matthews account of this same event records that this very question was being asked.
 - b) Jesus entry was a sacred act – In v. 2 Jesus describes the colt as one "...on which no one yet has ever sat...". God had previously made clear that only animals not already used for ordinary purposes should be used for sacred purposes. Here the sacred entry of King Jesus happens in accordance with the dignity God requires, on a colt never before used for the secular. (cf. Num. 19:2; Deut. 21:3; 1 Sam 6:7)
 - c) God's plan required first things first – As distinct and sacred as this scene is, a colt just doesn't speak to our ears as the mode of transportation for the big kahuna. Can you imagine President Obama pulling up to a state dinner on a moped? We would not have written this script. We'd have had Jesus riding in on a white stallion in POWER... but God has scripted that for laterⁱⁱ. First we have Jesus just as God intended: the king of God's kingdom, but the humble, servant king who must first die so that He might bring "life out of the death"ⁱⁱⁱ (death which is our separation from God) to all families of the earth. "Life Out of Death" Is God's Way of Redemption from the Beginning. We see it in Creation, Seth, Noah, Isaac... We see it hear in that Jesus must come first to die.
 - d) We will say more on why Jesus had to die on Good Friday when we focus on His death. For now, know that it is God's way that the very instrument of salvation must die before new life comes from it -- just as a seed must fall into the ground first and die before the plant of God's designs comes forth^{iv}.

II. What's with the Cheering Section (8-10)

- A. Recap of Entry Story with Shouts of Hosanna – Jesus had, up until now, avoided the spot light. But here we have an entry participated in that looks more like Brad and Angelina arriving at the Oscars, than the servant slipping in the back door to do His work.
- B. Comments on Story
1. Rolling out the Red Carpets – Normal Joes get to walk on the dirt. Jesus was getting to ride on a colt, with garments and leafy branches to carpet His path.
 2. The Crowd – John MacArthur sees the crowd size as “perhaps several hundred thousand people”^v
 3. Pronouncements Fit for a Dignitary – From in front of Jesus and behind Him came shouts:
 - a) Verse 9b – “Hosanna!” – English word Hosanna comes from Greek word Hosanna which comes from Hebrew phrase hoshiya na which is found in one and only OT passage, Psalm 118:25
 - a. “... where it means, ‘Save, please!’ It is a cry to God for help. Like when somebody pushes you off the diving board before you can swim and you come up hollering: ‘Help, save me... Hoshiya na!’ ... over the centuries the phrase stopped being a cry for help...instead it become a shout of hope and exultation... It came to be what you would say when you see the lifeguard coming to save you... So ‘Hosanna!’ means, ‘Hooray for salvation! It’s coming! It’s here! Salvation! Salvation!’”^{vi}
 - b) Verse 9c – “BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD” – both from context and from the original quote in Psalm 118:25 we see Jesus as the saving one who comes representing (in the name of) the Lord God.
 - c) Verse 10a – “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David” – God’s Messiah/Christ was to come and reestablish the kingdom of David, not in part but in superior full. The 2,000 year old echo continues even to this morning as we sing it again and declare it afresh in our hearts and minds.
 - d) Verse 10b – “Hosanna in the highest!” – JP: Let the cry of salvation being upon us in this person ring to the heights of heaven!
- C. Significance of Event
- a. Luke’s gospel records that some took offense that Jesus was allowing this degree of praise to be lifted up in regards to His entry into Jerusalem. But Jesus counters, “**I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!**” Luke 19:40b So I gather from this that God intended this chorus of praise to ascend to Him and be heard in the world.
 - b. God’s Savior had come to His holy city. **He should be announced with great glory!**
 - c. They Got the Title Right and the Mission Wrong -- The tragic irony being set up is almost painful to anticipate. God was allowing Jesus rightly to be announced – He was Savior; but the salvation He brought was deliverance from the yolk of sin and estrangement from God, not from Rome and it’s

political rule over them. So the same people who were crying out with such fanfare would prove to be fickle and turn their exclamations of praise celebrating God's savior to shouts of "crucify... crucify" in just a few days as they hope of His delivering them from Roman rule faded. "He had not come at that time to be crowned, but to be crucified."^{vi}

III. What's with the Anticlimactic Entry (11)

- A. Recap of the Anticlimax – From great shouts of acclamation to, "Whatever, let's go home." Listen to verse 11.
"And He entered Jerusalem and came into the temple; and after looking all around, He departed for Bethany with the twelve, since it was already late."
- B. Comments on Story
- a. This catches me off guard. If I was younger I'd say, "This is so random." I would expect something more than just looking all around and then leaving but that is what happened. Shaking off the oddness of it we do note that...
 - b. Jesus did not only come to the holy city, but into the holy building at the heart of the city. Jesus came to the place God had originally meant to be the place of His dwelling with and meeting with man. The temple was intended by God to be sacred space.
 - c. Apparently the fanfare over Jesus' arrival was only on the approach to the city. As we get to the temple it appears Jesus is now traveling either alone or just with His disciples. Odd if the crowd was sincere in their shouts of Hosaana! Fitting if that was just a lot of hoopla in a crowd with out heartfelt conviction.
 - d. Jesus did enter the temple as Malachi had prophesied the Messiah would in 3:1-2:
 - i. Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to the temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the Lord of hosts. "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap."
 - e. "after looking all around..." – William Lane says the point is "that Jesus is the Lord of the Temple, who must inspect its premises to determine whether the purpose intended by God is being fulfilled." P. 398 As the following context will show all is certainly not as God intended and Jesus will demonstrate His displeasure and judgment when He returns the next day.
- C. Significance of Event
1. Noteworthy that after entering Jerusalem, Jesus did NOT go to the political center of the city – Pilate's court = Praetorium, but to the religious center, i.e., the temple. He was later taken there by force after the chief priest had beaten and bound Him. He would be in that palace and He would wear a royal robe and a crown, but the robe would be soaked in His own blood from His scourging and the crown would be the crown of thorns woven and placed on

His head not in reverential respect but in cruel, ignorance. There indeed He would be hailed King of the Jews, but in mockery.

2. After entering Jerusalem, Jesus went to and then entered the temple. Not the palace but the temple. It is as if He were saying, "I'm not concerned with the political dealings of man, but with the things of God." I could imagine if I were writing the story this would be a good time for Jesus to walk through the outer courts and right into the holy of holies and even sit upon the mercy seat and declare Himself King of the Kingdom of God. But He did not. Our text says, "after looking all around, He departed for Bethany with the twelve..."
3. "The ending is quiet, but it is the quiet before the storm!" Lane. p. 398
4. The focus was shifted off Jesus as political king, to Jesus as Lord of the Temple – Lord of the place of God's dwelling with man. His concern is not strife between Romans and Jews in Palestine, but between God and man in all creation.

IV. What's with the Fig Tree

1. We will cover this in another message
2. Suffice it to say that Jesus would display His authority to judge.

Conclusion

So this confusing story with some careful study moves from a blurry "whatever" to a brilliant revelation.

Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a colt because kings enter their cities mounted, and God had pre ordained that this king would enter in humility poised to serve.

People cheered because The King was entering His holy city to oust him who ruled by deception over the souls of men and if the crowds had not cheered the stones would cry out.

The day of His entry seemed so anticlimactic because Jesus was shifting man's hope off of Himself as political deliverer of the Jews, onto Himself as deliverer of mankind from the greater tyranny of their estrangement from God. God wanted our false expectations to fail.

All this taken together makes more clear the person and mission of Jesus.

Person: He was the King, but a different type of King who would rule over a different type of kingdom than popularly expected. Yes, He was King of the Jews, but His kingdom was not of this world. It was bigger and farther reaching, indeed it includes all creation.

Mission: His mission was clear and endorsed by God, but different than popularly expected. As he had directly taught His disciples He must suffer, be rejected and killed, but He would rise again (Mk 8:31). And as students of the rest of the Bible we are learning that this is how God faithfully fulfills His promises. Out of the death of His promised Son comes life for

all who join themselves through faith to that Son. Jesus mission was way bigger and better than establishing a Jewish kingdom to rule like David's. Jesus was establishing the Kingdom of God of which there would be no end, neither in time nor in scope.

So on this Palm Sunday, I'm so excited not to just lift up a chorus of Hosanna without knowing or believing what that means, but to rejoice that God is faithful and has sent His One and Only Son who alone is the worthy substitutionary sacrifice who's death secures, for all who trust Him, new life in intimate and eternal communion with God.

Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest!

Let's pray.

ⁱ This has roots all the way back to beginning. God spoke the world into existence out of nothing. He can certainly accomplish His will without me. Yet, He chooses to use the like of us to junior-partner with Him. From the very beginning He did this choosing to use the seed of the first woman (Gen 3:15) to carry out His plan of restoration of all things to the way He intended. He did use Adam & Eve's son Seth, and his progeny Noah and his descendents, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the Son to be born in their line who became King David, and ultimately He who was born in that royal line, Jesus who we know as Lord and Christ. This same Jesus who we have learned not only came for to reconcile the Jews but the Gentiles as well adopting all who believe in Him as God has provided to be the source of restoration and blessing to all mankind. This Jesus chooses to use us in accomplishing His mission.

ⁱⁱ [Revelation 19:11](#) [*The Coming of Christ*] And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a **white horse**, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.

ⁱⁱⁱ Pastor Kit Culver

^{iv} This is the story of Abraham sacrificing Isaac.

^v John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Matthew 16-23 P. 260

^{vi} John Piper, Hosanna! P.1, 3/27/83, www.desiringgod.orgResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByDate/1983/384_Hosanna/

^{vii} MacArthur p. 262