

Palm Sunday – The King is Coming! Matthew 21:1-11

Each year on the Sunday before Easter, mainstream Christianity participates, through a variety of ways, in a commemorative feast which focuses on Christ's entry into Jerusalem. This event was recorded for us in each of the four Gospels and sets the tone for a somber Holy Week. Palm Sunday is a great time to draw our hearts closer to Christ as we reflect on the true meaning of our Easter celebrations. Jesus, the Christ, our Savior, the one who died on the cross for our sins, the one raised from death and now descended back to the Father should be our focal point this week. This coming week reminds us of all these things, but Palm Sunday reminds us of the final triumphal entry of Christ where our Lord returns for His bride. He is alive and He is King of Kings! So, on this day, I pray you know without any doubt that the **King is Coming!**

Most of you are familiar with the message of Palm Sunday, especially if you've been in church for some time. Palm Sunday messages typically focus on one of the stories from one of the Gospels and speak of humility, promise, and absolute peace. On this Passion Sunday, as Palm Sunday is sometimes referred, let's remind ourselves of the complete work of Christ; His sacrificial death on the cross, His saving work finalized through His resurrection, and to the hope we find in knowing that He will arrive once again. Yes, indeed, the **King is Coming!**

Let's look together at **Matthew 21:1-11**.

The Colt

There are two main thoughts surrounding the donkey and its colt. One is that a miracle took place as Jesus sent two disciples into Jerusalem with omniscient power knowing they would find exactly what He said they would. Or perhaps Jesus pre-arranged everything with a friend during one of His earlier visits into the city. Whether or not we believe this was a completely human act or an act of supernatural power, should be irrelevant because in both instances what we truly observe is Jesus asserting His authority and control into the situation. How does he do this? Look at what He tells them to say if anyone questions them about taking the colt. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, *'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once.*" (vs.3) In that moment, Jesus, God in the flesh, was asserting His authority.

I want you to think about something else this morning regarding the donkey and its colt. The disciples found them exactly where Jesus said they would be. I had never thought about it this way before, but accessibility is important to Jesus. The donkey and the colt provide a small picture of what we are like before being invited into the presence of Christ. Just like these two animals, we are tied up as well. Tied to our sins. Who here this morning is tied to a sin or sins? Are you tied to your pride? Are you tied to bitterness? Are you tied to your gossip? Are tied to your self-serving motivations? Perhaps today is the day we allow Jesus to untie us from all of it! After all, He can't use us if we remain tied to the hitching post. Will you admit today that you are a sinner, will you repent, and then follow Jesus? I love Jesus' words from **Luke 15:7**. *"Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."*

The Crowd

I learned many years ago when I worked in retail and restaurant settings that people are unique. People will be people if you know what I mean. What do you think the crowd was expecting? Jesus chose this moment to enter the city through the same gate that royalty would often enter. For the Jewish nation, this meant they could expect His arrival to be on horseback, as the warrior king, adorned in battle gear and perhaps a royal purple cloak. Instead, He entered on the innocent back of the servant animal, humble and wearing the clothes of common man and not the armor of a warrior. Still, Jesus entered the city to cheering crowds who were praising Him as their King. In that moment, while not exactly as they expected, Jesus was meeting their expectation by exercising His authority and presenting Himself as their hopeful king. This act garnered their praises. Remember though, people will be people and one's love can often change in a heartbeat, especially if we do not meet their expectations. When Jesus met their expectations, He was praised. When, he didn't, just like five days later when this crowd turned against him, the people would call for his crucifixion. The cries of "*Hosanna*", very quickly turned to cries of "*Crucify Him! Crucify Him!*" Jesus said in John 15:20 – "*'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.*" We need to guard ourselves against getting carried away with the praises of others. We need only make sure our praise is genuine and authentic. We need to see Jesus in His fulness and make sure to always praise Him and not just when we feel like He is meeting our expectations. Will you begin today, praising Him for His mercies, His grace, and His love?

The Prophecy

Matthew quotes the prophecy from Zechariah 9:9 but chose to leave a couple things out. When we compare Matthew's words with the words from **Zechariah 9:9**, we'll discover that the first and fourth lines of the verse have been omitted. "*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!*" and "*righteous and having salvation is he*". Why do you suppose?

J. Vernon McGee says its, "Because our Lord is not coming into Jerusalem for that time of rejoicing. That will take place at His second coming."

Even though the crowds were rejoicing and celebrating, Jesus was setting up the events of the coming week. He was preparing us for His true triumph. The conquering of hearts and minds for the purpose of saving us from eternal death. You see, there is a final time in which Jesus will make His true triumphal entry. I for one cannot wait for that day. But, in the meantime, there is also a call to you, to make sure you are prepared, waiting and available. Jesus desires to mimic this triumphal entry into Jerusalem by making a royal entrance into your heart. Are you standing at the entrance gate, waiting? Remember, not all who shout His praises will enter His Kingdom. It is not enough to simply say that He is your King. You must place Him on the throne in your heart also.

Who is coming? **The King is Coming!** He is the Lord Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for sinners, who triumphed over death through an empty tomb, and who now reigns in glory as the King of heaven and earth. Will you open your heart and let the King come in?