

Mark 11:1-11

¹ Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples; ² and He said to them, "Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring *it*." ³ And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it,' and immediately he will send it here." ⁴ So they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it. ⁵ But some of those who stood there said to them, "What are you doing, loosing the colt?" ⁶ And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go. ⁷ Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it. ⁸ And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread *them* on the road. ⁹ Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna! *'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'*" ¹⁰ Blessed is the kingdom of our father David That comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" ¹¹ And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.

The book of Mark is 16 chapters long. We are beginning the 6th from the last chapter. All of these chapters, more than a third of the book, are dedicated to Christ's last weeks. So we need to understand that Christ's death and resurrection and the events surrounding it are the most important things to God. This is what He wanted us to know. So as we enter this section of scripture we should hear the imaginary orchestra of heaven moving toward its crescendo. The plot is moving to its completion, like in a movie.

Now, as usual, Mark has left a few things out. But they are important things to note. It helps us gain perspective regarding what is happening during this time. After healing Bartimaeus, Jesus met Zacchaeus, the rich tax collector. Something to note is that Zacchaeus gave half of his money to the poor and pledged to reimburse anyone that he had cheated 4 times over. And all of that happened without the tax collector ever being asked to do so. What we see is the fruit of repentance. We see in this man the work of God that we don't see in the rich young ruler.

Then, after that, Jesus told a parable about the stewards. Two of them invested his funds for a profit. One buried them. The ones who invested them for the good of the master were given positions of great authority. The ones who distrusted the master and were rebellious were destroyed.

Jesus was likely using this parable to prepare his listeners to understand what needs to happen when Christ is gone. We are to be faithful and loyal to Him while we wait for His return.

Then Jesus arrives in Bethany. He probably arrived on a Saturday. What we are not told in Mark is that this is where Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, spreads perfume on Christ's head and feet. It is far more fitting than anyone realized. Perfumes were the most expensive part of a funeral. They were used to try to mask the smell of a rotting corpse. But Mary poured hers on Christ while He was still alive, as a gesture of her love and worship. She probably didn't know it but she was preparing Him for His death.

Now we are ready to get to our text.

¹ Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives,

Bethany is where Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived. Jesus stayed with them for an evening according to the other gospels. Then Jesus stayed the next day and attended a dinner at Simon the Leper's house. That would have been Sunday. Then Christ left the next morning. That would have been Monday morning, probably very early. Bethany was probably on the Eastern side of the Mount of Olives. So it probably was not within view of Jerusalem. Coming to Jerusalem from the East, Jesus would have needed to crest the Mount of Olives before He would be able to see the city of Jerusalem.

So as Jesus walked up this mount he sent two disciples on ahead of him. The crowd with Christ would have, no doubt, had some concern as to what was about to happen when He walked into Jerusalem. Would Christ be received as the Messiah? Would the religious rulers immediately have him arrested? What would happen?

¹ He sent two of His disciples; ² and He said to them, "Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring it. ³ And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it,' and immediately he will send it here."

We don't know which disciples Christ sent. The village opposite is probably Bethphage, which was located very close by.

Given that Christ arrived, and that we are given no details that Christ made **prior arrangements**, it is safe to assume that Christ is doing what is impossible for humans. He is displaying His omniscience. He knows all of these details about his surroundings simply because He knows them. He does not have to gather information like we do. He has access to all the details of all life everywhere. Much like He knew about the fish that the disciple would catch to pay the tax that was owed.

It is good for us to stop and notice something here. **Christ knows the details.** We have said this a lot of times, but I don't think it can be said enough. **Christ knows the details.** He is aware of them. He controls them.

Isn't worry really an accusation against God that He really **does NOT know** the details, or, if He does, He doesn't know what He is doing? I have to apply this to myself and I hope you find you must do the same. When I am working, trying to fix something or build something and it is not going well, do I really think that this difficulty is a surprise to God? Like He didn't know I would drop the same board off the top of the ladder three times in a row? Yet I find it easy to rail against my circumstances, as if they have somehow violated God's rule. Behaviors like that show a mistrust of God's will. It doesn't seem like it at the time. Rarely does our stuff appear to us what it really is. But that is its source. I expect my work to be easier or to go better. How about you? Where do you come unglued? Have you considered how that reflects upon God and your faith in Him?

These disciples **don't hesitate** to do what Christ asks. And look how it works out for them? They don't always do this well. But they did well this time. We would do well to follow their example.

So Christ sends the disciples to find a young donkey that was never sat on. Other gospels tell us that they were to bring its mother as well. Probably so they could control the colt.

Now why all this trouble to get a young unriden donkey?

Well, unriden animals were more suitable for royalty in ancient cultures. The fact that it was a young animal was in order to fulfill the prophecy written in Zech 9:9.

Matthew 21:4-5

⁴ All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: ⁵ ***"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.'"***

The daughter of Zion is referring to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Coming into the city on a donkey, a very humble animal, seems incongruous.

Wouldn't it seem more fitting if Christ were to enter on a white stallion? But it was prophesied he would enter humbly. And so He did. Maybe the scholars should have gotten a clue from this.

So Christ was choosing to enter Jerusalem as the royalty He truly was.

Now let's see how Christ's instructions work out.

⁴ **So they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it.** ⁵ **But some of those who stood there said to them, "What are you doing, loosing the colt?"** ⁶ **And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go.**

We see from this that Christ not only knows the hearts of men. **He knows their future actions. We don't.** And we often feel like we are at the mercy of those for whom we don't know what they will do. But God does. And He has it covered.

Whether it will create painful circumstances or pleasure filled circumstances, He has it all under His control.

⁷ Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it. ⁸ And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread *them* on the road.

Everything that is being done here is behavior normally dedicated to royalty. It is what you would do for a very important and powerful leader. People would throw their clothes on the road as a sign of respect and submission. And in our text they are doing it for Christ. Waving palm branches in the air was commonly deployed when a leader was entering a city.

⁹ Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna! *'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'* ¹⁰ Blessed is the kingdom of our father David That comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

Hosanna means Save Now. If these people only knew. They were with someone who could save their souls. But most were only interested in a better lifestyle that would be brought in by the political candidate of their choice. They wanted their situations to be improved. They wanted to return to their former glory. But they missed what Christ was all about.

You know, I wonder how often we fall victim to the same mindset. Look at the political jargon that surrounds us. Isn't it easy to get addicted to the mindset of a stronger America, an America where government assumes its proper role so we can live the best lifestyles available to us without so much government intrusion? Or for those who think more liberally, isn't it easy to get addicted to a government that can really take care of the needs of all its people? Yet I think both of those hopes are distractions. When we cry out "Save Now" we need to be careful what we are really asking for. This country will probably some day run its course and disappear. **We know** that **our bodies** will run their courses and rot in the ground. So when we cry **Save Now**, it should be for our souls, and the souls of our families, and neighbors and communities. That is the **Save Now** that Christ came for. Christ came to seek and save those who are lost. He didn't come to save anything else.

When the crowds were yelling

***'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'* ¹⁰ Blessed is the kingdom of our father David That comes in the name of the Lord!**

Those phrases were references to the Messiah. Everyone there would have understood that. These were the most common references to the Messiah they were eagerly expecting.

A little aside here- We often see this phrase, "The Kingdom of God". What is that? Well, the Kingdom of God is best displayed in the Garden of Eden. The Kingdom of God will reach its intended goal only when it is God's people in God's place under God's rule. When Adam rebelled, the kingdom was destroyed. The Bible is about God restoring His Kingdom and preparing a people for His future kingdom- His people- Christians, in His place- Heaven under His rule- an environment unhindered by sin.

These people were looking for an earthly kingdom of God. They wanted what was had in the old days. They wanted the days of King David to return. The kingdom we need is something new.

Look how spiritual these people look. Look at how they are saying the right things and doing the right things. They were all worked up about Christ. But we will see very shortly that this was all just bogus worship.

This is what Christ says about this crowd in Luke 19

⁴¹ Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, ⁴² saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things *that make for your peace!* But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, ⁴⁴ and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

Jesus was surrounded by this throng of shallow worshippers. He had gained the status of a rock star and was being hyped up with that same kind of hysteria. But this didn't make Christ happy. It didn't give Him a thrill. In fact it only appeared to depress Him. Because He knew the reality of all these people's hearts. He knew how superficial all of this so called worship was.

So how did Christ respond?

These people, maybe hundreds of thousands of them, had come out of Jerusalem and over the Mount of Olives crest to meet Christ on the other side. Christ is walking up the hill and suddenly He crests the hill and the city of Jerusalem bursts into view.

This is what He did. He cried. The word means to wail aloud. Jesus didn't just get teary eyed. He had a serious cry due to the pain He felt over the loss that all of these people would suffer. And due to the dishonor they had been to Christ's Father.

He bemoans that they do not know anything about real peace. They want political peace. They want a better here and now. But what they had in their

midst in **the here and now** would have offered them a sure **eternity**. If they had only known what would have really created peace. If they only cared about eternal things.

Warren Wiersbe says this about Jesus weeping:

No matter where Jesus looked, He found cause for weeping. If He looked back, He saw how the nation had wasted its opportunities and been ignorant of their "time of visitation." If He looked within, He saw spiritual ignorance and blindness in the hearts of the people. They should have known who He was, for God had given them His Word and sent His messengers to prepare the way.

As He looked around, Jesus saw religious activity that accomplished very little. The temple had become a den of thieves, and the religious leaders were out to kill Him. The city was filled with pilgrims celebrating a festival, but the hearts of the people were heavy with sin and life's burdens.

As Jesus looked ahead, He wept as He saw the terrible judgment that was coming to the nation, the city, and the temple. In a.d. 70, the Romans would come and, after a siege of 143 days, kill 600,000 Jews, take thousands more captive, and then destroy the temple and the city. Why did all of this happen? Because the people did not know that God had visited them! "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" ([John 1:11](#)). "We will not have this man to reign over us!" ([Luke 19:14](#))

Bible Exposition Commentary (BE Series) - New Testament - The Bible Exposition Commentary – New Testament, Volume 1.

Now keep in mind, Christ is talking about those who are worshipping him as well as the inhabitants of the city. And He is telling them what kind of future they are looking at.

A military siege is in their future. It is coming soon. And most everyone in Jerusalem, this wonderful city, will be destroyed. And all of the buildings will be leveled. All of the things these people were so proud of, all of the things they wanted to maintain, all of the things they wanted a Messiah to restore, all of the things they are dependent upon for a kingdom... and the Messiah is telling them that they will all come to ruin.

And why. This is important. Why will they suffer these horrible fates? Jesus has no difficulty laying out the cause. **because you did not know the time of your visitation."**

Essentially these Jews are going to refuse to acknowledge that Jesus truly was their Messiah. They will consider Him, not sent from God but smitten by God. They were going to read the whole situation wrongly. And by doing so they will display the wickedness of their hearts.

There were tax collectors and prostitutes and blind and lame who did know the time of their visitation. But the populace, as a whole, would completely reject Christ.

This event in Christ's life is often called the triumphal entry. And that name is helpful because it quickly identifies this event for most of us. But it is a misnomer. It really was not a **triumphal** entry. It was really just a massive display of **how flesh regards God**. A subtitle might be added, **the true value of popularity**. Jesus was as popular as He would ever be at this moment. But He knew that it **meant nothing** because it was **based on nothing permanent**. It was not based on hearts that have been changed by God's power and grace. People were just doing what people always do. And Jesus just happens to be getting some of their positive attention. But as soon as He does not live up to their expectations, they will be yelling for Him to be crucified. Human selfishness is very fickle in its choices. John MacArthur makes the point that if this were actually the coronation of a king, it would be most unusual.

He says:

Coronations are not humble, unexpected, spontaneous, unofficial, or superficial. This event was all of those. Nor are true coronations reversed a few days afterward, with the one who had been exalted and praised being rejected and executed. Although Jesus was heaven's true King, deserving of all exaltation, honor, worship, and praise, this was not a real coronation; it was, in fact, the false coronation of the true King.

MacArthur New Testament Commentary, The - MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Mark 9-16.

Now Luke 19 gives us an extra detail.

³⁹ **And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples."** ⁴⁰ **But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out**

Somewhere in this procession the Pharisees need to chime in. They are so carefully looking out for God's best interest that when people begin to praise "**God in the flesh**", they feel inclined to **tell "God in the flesh"** that He must make it stop.

They say, teacher, rebuke your disciples. Tell them they are sinning to ascribe to you the glory you actually deserve. Tell them to stop praising you as if you are God. Tell them to stop displaying some of the few gestures that the Son of God actually deserved.

Yes. The Pharisees truly were blind guides. They were prime examples of the people Christ cried over. They did not know the time of Christ's visitation. They did not recognize who was in their midst. Or if they did, they wanted to kill Him

to remove Him. Maybe, like in some of the parables, they did know Christ was the owner's Son, but they wanted to keep this domain for themselves.

But Christ tells them that it was necessary that Christ be praised. It is the right time. And **Christ will be praised**. If the people won't do it, the rocks will. It is that necessary right now.

That ends anything else the Pharisees would have wanted to say.

While Christ's entry was not ushering in the coronation of the Messiah, it wasn't like it was not important. There was another important prophecy that Christ fulfilled when He entered the city this way. It was a prophecy from Daniel. Daniel 9:25 says this.

Daniel 9:25-26

²⁵ **"Know therefore and understand, *That* from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, *There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.* ²⁶ **"And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it *shall be* with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.****

In the prophecy, each week was 7 years. So 7 weeks plus 62 weeks equals 69 weeks. 69 weeks times 7 years equals 483 years. And so there were 483 years from Artaxerxes' decree until Christ entered the city. So when Christ entered the city He fulfilled the important expectation that the Messiah truly would enter Jerusalem in the year in which Christ did it. This entry was very important in God's timetable. It had to happen.

¹¹ **And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.**

It must have taken a long time for Christ to ride this donkey through this thronging crowd. Maybe all day. It is not that great of a distance. It is less than a mile. When He was done with the ride, He went into the city and into the temple and observed everything. The city was His, after all. Christ was preparing for the upcoming week. This was the first day of His final week in Jerusalem. Once he got the lay of the land he went back out of the city, probably to stay with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus at Bethany.

In closing there is a question we should look at.

Jesus allowed the people to openly praise Him and worship Him. In the past He had stopped much of this activity. But now he allows it. Why would that be?

Well, if Jesus had stopped it in the past because it would have led to his death prior to His planned time, then it makes perfect sense that He allows the crowd to praise Him now. His time is up. It is now time to die. So He is now willing to accept the praise He deserved all along.

Also, it was important that Christ be slain on Passover as the Passover lamb. So Christ may have been using the crowd and the Jewish leader's hatred of Christ and the greed of Judas to make sure that He died at the correct time. From our perspective, doesn't it look like all these things happened **to** Christ. But from God's perspective He had everything planned to the minute. All the players were **responsible** for the parts they played. But someone was going to play every part. How that all works out is beyond the realm of human reason. But we can rest assured that **it does** work out.

I think a good final application for us this morning is this.

We can find great comfort in the Sovereignty and Omniscience and Omnipotence of God. Look at this event in our text. There were thousands of things that had to be in place for this week to accomplish what was in God's mind. Christ had to step foot into Jerusalem on a distinct date on the calendar. The Jews had to be prepared to kill Him. There had to be a betrayer ready to betray Him on that date. There had to be an unriden donkey available in a nearby town. And it goes on and on. But none of this was **hard** to God. And none of it was simply at the whim of what a person might do. It was perfectly planned, even using humans who have choices, variables that we would see as impossible to know or plan with.

Our lives rest in this Sovereign God's hands. His plans for us are good. He causes all things to work out for the good for those who love Him, those who are the called. If our hearts and minds tell us that our lives are out of control, our hearts and minds are lying to us. It only seems that way. God has a plan and He will fulfill it. There is no person or no event that can interfere with it.

Do you trust God? Do you trust that He is applying His Sovereign rule to the plan He has for your life? If you are His, He is.