

James Dobson shares this testimony of his paternal grandmother Juanita Dobson. She was married to a man's man, a six-foot-four railroad conductor. This man had never been physically ill in his life, going to his job every day – giving a hard day's work. He was a good and moral man – as good and morale as anyone else, but he was spiritually dead, and saw nothing he needed from God or from the church. Yes, he let Juanita go to church and participate in the activities there, but he never went and did not want anyone to try to get him to go

Juanita knew what he needed, but she never said anything to him – she simply prayed. Every day she prayed. Regularly, she fasted and prayed for her husband's salvation, but she saw no evidence of change. Nothing gave her reason to think her prayers were being answered – but still, she prayed.

Decades passed, and at the age 69, he still showed no signs of listening to God. Then he suffered a stroke. He became partially paralyzed and bedridden, and he was devastated.

One afternoon, his daughter carried out her daily ritual of straightening the bed, giving him his medicines, and seeing what else she could do to cheer him up or comfort him. Suddenly, she realized he was crying. No one ever remembered seeing a teardrop run down his cheek before. Gulping down her shock, she bent over the bed and asked, "Daddy, what's wrong?" "Honey, go get your mother," he replied.

The faithful Juanita ran up the stairs as fast as her legs would carry her. She took his outstretched hand and heard him say, "I know I am going to die, and I am not afraid of death, but it's so dark. Will you pray for me?"

Words she had waited forty years to hear. She called to heaven for her husband, and he accepted Jesus as his personal Lord and Savior. Her heart sang, knowing she was joining a heavenly chorus in rejoicing over a lost sinner who was saved. Two weeks later he died, saying what Jesus meant to him.

Later his devoted prayer-champion wife joined him in heaven, where he was, because she never gave up in her dedication to seeking the lost.

This morning we remember Palm Sunday, where almost 2000 years ago, Jesus entered Jerusalem for the last time – a city He had visited many times since the age of twelve, but this time – for the first time, Jesus publicly reveals He is the King – the King on a mission to seek and to save the lost

We are stepping away from our study in Revelation, and for the next two Sunday's, beginning this morning, we are going to spend our time in the Gospel of Luke – a favorite book of mine, for Luke is the “Paul Harvey” of gospel writers, giving his Gentile readers the rest of the story, and quite frankly, we need it.

So, if you have your Bible, turn to **Luke 19**, and before we get to our main passage, I need to set this up a bit.

Jesus was making His way up a mountain road, passing through Jericho on His way to Jerusalem, and on the road, He met a little man named **Zaccheus**. Zaccheus was a tax collector – a supervisor of tax collectors, considered a traitor – despised and hated by his own people because he collected money for the Romans, and on top of that, he took a little extra for himself as a fringe benefit. Well, Jesus was nothing like Zaccheus, and people were shocked that Jesus would even give this guy the time of day, but Jesus had a clear and divine mission – **to seek and to save the lost**. Zaccheus was lost and Jesus sought him out and through this unexpected encounter, Zaccheus trusted the Savior, and his life was dramatically changed for he found a new treasure, a lasting treasure in Christ, and as evidence of his changed heart, he promised to make restitution to all that he had wronged.

After this encounter with Zaccheus – with a large crowd around Him, Jesus went on to tell the people a parable because He was near Jerusalem, and He knew the people believed **that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately**. The people were on high alert and thought that Jesus was about to be declared the King and they believed He would kick out the Roman intruders with His miraculous powers, take charge, fix all their problems, and bring peace to the land – but that wasn't His mission, at least not yet.

Yes, at His Second Coming, Jesus will do these things, but not now. Jesus did come to bring **peace**, but not peace to the land, not an outward peace – rather a peace that flows from within – a peace that only comes through a right relationship with God. The people had wrong expectations about Jesus, they were hoping He would be their King and establish His earthly kingdom right then and there – Jesus knew what they were thinking, and so He sought to clarify things with a parable – a parable they would not understand until later.

In His parable, Jesus tells the crowd that a man of noble birth prepared for a journey to a far way land to be become a king, and in preparation for his long journey, this nobleman gathers ten of his servants, gives them an equal sum of money, and tells them to put the money to work until he comes back. Later, the

moment came when the king returned, and in this parable, Jesus explained that some of the servants were found to be faithful and they were rewarded, while one servant in particular, who had a distorted view of his master, was unfaithful.

The nobleman in this parable represented Jesus and this journey to a far way land was His upcoming death, and resurrection, and ascension into heaven, and this parable revealed two things – first, contrary to expectations of those who followed Him – Jesus could not stay with them. He had to leave for a time before returning as the King to establish His earthly kingdom, and secondly, while He is away, His servants are to be faithful. When the king is watching, everyone seems faithful, but it's while the king is away, that true faithfulness is revealed, and as expected, some will be faithful and some will not.

This parable is still relevant for us today, because we are living in the period while our Master is away, and while He is away, we must all be faithful – giving our very best until Jesus returns as He promised.

There is a legend about an ancient village in Spain. The villagers learned that the king would pay a visit! In a thousand years, a king had never come to that village. Excitement grew! “We must throw a big celebration,” said the villagers, but it was a poor village, and there weren't many resources; however, someone came up with a great idea. Since many of the villagers made their own wines, the idea was that everyone in the village would bring a large cup of their very best wine to the town square, and they'd pour it into a large vat and offer it to the king for his pleasure. When the king draws wine to drink, they hoped it would be the very best wine he'd ever tasted.

The day before the king's arrival, hundreds of people lined up to make their wine offering to the honored guest. They climbed a small stairway, and poured their gift through a small opening at the top. Finally, the vat was full! The king arrived, he was escorted to the town square, given a silver cup, and was encouraged to draw some wine – which represented the best the villagers had.

He placed the cup under the spigot, turned the handle, and the only thing that came out was water. You see every villager thought, “With so many cups of great wine in the vat, I'll withhold my wine and substitute it with water – the king will never know the difference!” Everyone thought the same thing – everybody assumed everybody else would be faithful and do their part, and in the end, nobody was faithful, and the king was greatly dishonored with nothing but a cup of water.

Jesus will return just as He promised, the King is coming, and I hope He finds you and me faithful when He does.

Now, we move to another story – a story so important that God gave prophecies about it in **Daniel**, in **Zechariah**, and in the **Psalms**, and this story begins in **Luke 19, verse 28**. Luke starts by telling us,

After He had said these things, He was going on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.

After Jesus gave His parable, He continued on towards Jerusalem to begin the Passover celebration – a yearly celebration that reminded the Jewish people of their deliverance from bondage and slavery in Egypt. Celebrating Passover in Jerusalem was a very special time for devout Jews, as thousands upon thousands of them, from all over the world, arrived in their Holy City, more than tripling the population.

As you might image, at this particular time, this Passover celebration held a special significance for the Jews because they were currently in bondage to Rome and they wanted to be delivered by God once again. The moment seemed right for their deliverance – God had to come through for them, and many had hoped it was Jesus who would bring it about. They had hoped that Jesus was the promised Messiah who would be their Deliverer – and He was – but not like they expected.

Then Luke continues with the story beginning with **verse 29**.

29 When He approached Bethphage and Bethany, near the mount that is called Olivet, He sent two of the disciples,³⁰ saying, “Go into the village ahead of you; there, as you enter, you will find a colt tied on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here.³¹ If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say, ‘The Lord has need of it.’”³² So those who were sent went away and found it just as He had told them.³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?”³⁴ They said, “The Lord has need of it.”³⁵ They brought it to Jesus, and they threw their coats on the colt and put Jesus on it.

We are told that Jesus and His disciples walked towards Jerusalem from the east, and they approached the nearby villages of **Bethphage** and **Bethany**. They were about two miles from Jerusalem, and we are told that Jesus was about to do something He had never done before publicly, something He had repeatedly

cautioned others not to do for Him: He was going to publicly reveal the secret – He is the Messiah they’ve been waiting for. He is the true King.

So, Jesus sends two of His disciples ahead to find a **colt** – a young, unriden donkey. Jesus tells His disciples to untie the colt and if anyone asks what they are doing, they are to say “**the Lord has need of it**” and of course, it played out exactly as Jesus said it would.

Now, Matthew’s gospel indicates that the mother donkey of the colt was brought by the disciples as well, **so how do we explain the difference here?** My guess is mama donkey was just following her natural instincts and had no intention of being separated from her youngster, so she simply tagged along.

You know, there seems to be a lot of attention given by all four gospel writers about the need for this young donkey. So, what’s up with the donkey, because up to this point, Jesus has either been walking or sailing where ever He went, **so why does He need a donkey now when He is only two miles from Jerusalem?** There are two things I want to point out about the need for the donkey:

First, most people today think of a donkey as being nothing but a humble beast of burden – a pack animal, but in Jewish history, a donkey was looked upon as an animal fit for a king. In the ancient Middle Eastern world, kings rode great horses, sometimes pulling a chariot to show off their power when they rode to war, but kings rode donkeys if they came in peace, and that’s what Jesus is doing here. One day, Jesus will come on a great white horse for battle, but here Jesus rides on a humble donkey to bring peace.

Secondly, Jesus needed the donkey so that He might fulfill Old Testament prophecy. In **Zechariah 9:9** we are told:

“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.”

Now, Luke does not mention this prophecy but both Matthew and John do, and I suspect the reason for this is because **Luke** is written for a Gentile audience and this Old Testament prophecy may not have resonated with these readers.

So, without saying a word, Jesus is already beginning to publicly reveal His identity and status. He is the King – riding on a king’s mount to make His grand entrance, and then Luke tells us this in **verse 36**.

As He was going, they were spreading their coats on the road.

We are told that many people **spread their coats on the road**, and we know that others laid down palm branches which were part of a traditional Jewish reception for royalty. It was a sign of submission and adoration – similar to rolling out the red carpet – again, this was a response fit for a king.

I have read this passage many times, but when I read it this time, I was reminded of something spoken by King David in **1 Chronicles 21**. King David had disobeyed God by taking a census of the people – in essence, David was counting on men rather than counting on God, and as a consequence of his disobedience – a plague came upon Israel and 70,000 men were killed. Then there came a point where God instructed the angel who was carrying out this destruction to stop, and the angel was left standing with his sword drawn at a threshing floor belonging to a farmer named Ornan. A threshing floor is a place where wheat is separated from the chaff.

God told David to build an altar to the Lord on this threshing floor because God wanted to meet David there in worship, and David did not want to see the plague again, so, David met with Ornan about acquiring the property. Ornan, who wasn’t even an Israelite, wanted to give it to David, plus the wood, and the meat for an offering – whatever David needed Ornan wanted to give it, and it would have been easy for David to accept Ornan’s generosity, but here is his reply in **verse 24**:

But King David said to Ornan, “No, but I will surely buy it for the full price; for I will not take what is yours for the Lord, or offer a burnt offering which costs me nothing.”

That was deep! David would not give anything to the Lord that cost him nothing – meaning David had made up his mind that he would give God his best. True worship of God – true love for Him, will generally cost you something – and if it costs you nothing – **then what is it really worth to you?** Often times we give God our leftovers, we serve Him only when it is easy and convenient, we pray and read His word only when we find the time, and using the prior illustration – we are prone to pour our water in the vat instead of our very best wine. When I read

David's words, I had to ask myself, "*How can I cry out to God to be my everything if I am unwilling to sacrifice anything?*"

Well, David purchased Ornan's threshing floor at the full price to build an altar for worship to God, and if you don't know, it was on this very spot that Abraham had offered up his son Isaac, and it was on this very site that King Solomon, David's son, would later build the temple in Jerusalem.

These people on the road leading into Jerusalem, leading to the temple in Jerusalem, were tossing their coats on the ground, a coat that might not be worth much after donkeys walk on them. Many of these people were poor and their coats were their only possession, but it would seem they were more interested in praise and worship than their coats. It cost them something – they made a sacrifice to the King – the King who in just a matter of days would sacrifice His very life for them.

Then beginning with **verse 37**, we are told,

³⁷ As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, ³⁸ shouting:

**"BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD;
Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"**

³⁹ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." ⁴⁰ But Jesus answered, "I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!" ⁴¹ When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, ⁴² saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes.

The crowd was excited, shouting for joy, praising God, and take note that as the people shout, they call Jesus **the King**. This is the only time that Jesus permitted a public celebration on His behalf. Jesus is the King, riding on a young donkey, and He comes to bring peace to His people, but look carefully at **verse 41**.

As Jesus approached Jerusalem, **He saw the city and wept over it** and then He said, "**If you had known...**" Jesus came to bring **peace**, but the people did not understand the sacrifice that makes for peace. They believed Jesus will bring peace by setting all things straight *around them*, but He came to bring peace *within them* – into their hearts. They do not understand that Jesus is the peace offering sent by a holy and loving God to a fallen people who have gone their own way.

God desired to reconcile with His people who had gone astray, but sadly, the religious leaders would rally the people of Jerusalem to reject that peace offering because they would reject Jesus, and a few days later, the people would stand at the Lord's trial before Pontus Pilate and declare we have no king but Caesar.

Almost 2000 years ago on Palm Sunday, Jesus entered Jerusalem as the King – on a mission **to seek and to save the lost**, and a few days later, He would willingly sacrifice His life on the cross. His obedience to the Father would cost Him everything, so that for those who trust Him, they could have peace with God and eternal life, and in light of what Jesus has done on our behalf, it's only reasonable that the least we can do is to say to Him with all sincerity, *“Here I am Lord, all of me, do with me what You will.”*

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