

Your King Comes to You

- Turn to Mark 11. The triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem is written about by all four of the gospel writers. We will jump ahead almost a year in our study of the Gospel of Mark and read about this event when the King entered Jerusalem, an act that marked the beginning of Holy Week, the beginning of what is called the passion of Christ that would culminate at the cross, and result in the triumphant resurrection we will celebrate next week!
- Mark 11:1-10
- What does it mean to “cross the Rubicon?” It means you take an action that is so decisive that there is no turning back. Where did that saying come from? The law in 49BC was that no general with a standing army could cross the Rubicon River and enter into Italy. He would be seen as a threat to the Roman empire and war would ensue. Roman general Julius Caesar did just that, and as he stood on the banks with his army, he said, “The die is now cast.” And he led his army into a civil war against the army of Pompey, eventually winning and Julius Caesar ruled supreme in Rome.
- On a much larger scale, that is what this text is about today. Jesus’ whole life has been pointed toward this moment, when he would enter Jerusalem to do what he had left heaven and his Father to do. He had committed himself to going to Jerusalem to die. There was no turning back. He knew that the Jewish leaders had been plotting his death for months, and he knew that they were waiting for the opportunity they needed to seize him. But Jesus would not go to the cross as a helpless victim. He said of his life, “No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.” (John 10:18) What happened on that Sunday in Jerusalem had to happen exactly as it did. Jesus would put on display his own majesty and his own authority by the way he entered Jerusalem as the One who came to give his life as a ransom for many. Let’s examine this text this morning under these three main points: The arrival of the king, the humility of the king, and the triumph of the king.
- **The arrival of the King**
- Jesus instructs his disciples to go into the next village and see a man about a donkey. In fact, they are to go into the village, find a colt tied up there that has never been ridden, never even been sat upon, and they are to begin to untie it. As soon as they do, Jesus says, there may be an interruption as someone comes out to ask what they think they are doing untying the colt. They are to tell the man, “the Lord has need of it, and will send it back.” That is exactly what happened! The people standing there said, basically, “What do you think you’re doing?” It is interesting that in *Luke’s* account, he uses the word for Lord, kurios, for the owners of the colt. The “lords of the colt” ask what the disciples think they are doing untying the colt and they respond, “The LORD has need of it.” You think you’re the owner of the colt? You’re not the owner. The Lord is the owner of all of creation, and the Lord has need of this colt that has been entrusted to you for a while, but hey, good news, he will give it back. This brings up an important reminder that what we have is not our own, including our schedules and including our bodies: as

Paul said, “we were bought with a price.” And make no mistake, the schedules we have and the bodies we are moving around in belong to the Lord, and the “Lord has need of them.” Amazing! Now, let’s keep this in balance. The overarching truth is that God needs nothing, and Jesus could have bent down, spit in the dust, rolled it around in his fingers and created a donkey colt right there out of nothing. In the same way, God does not NEED you and me. But the amazing truth is that God has chosen to use his people to accomplish his purposes. The Lord has need of you, and your time, and your resources and your intellect and your very life.

- They found a colt for the Lord to ride on. There is nothing haphazard or last minute or spontaneous about what is happening here. Jesus very deliberately fulfills Scripture and enters Jerusalem just as it was prophesied he would, as the King and Messiah:
- “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” (Zechariah 9:9)
- Jesus borrowed a colt, just as one week later he would borrow a tomb. He rides in on a colt that has never been ridden, which is fitting for a king. Not only that, but Joel Green writes that “the person who enters the city (in this way) does not do so in order to claim kingship; rather, entry presupposes an already achieved victory.” Jesus is King. As Gabriel told Mary when he brought her word that she was to conceive by the Holy Spirit, “He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.” (Luke 1:33). As Jesus would say to Pilate, five days after this entry into Jerusalem, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born, and for this purpose I have come into the world -- to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.” (John 18:37) That is the King of kings bearing witness to a kingdom that cannot be shaken.
- The people spread their cloaks in the road, and they waved palm branches and they began to sing out the great psalms that referred to the coming of the Lord as a king.
- They cry out, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” (vs. 9) Luke tells us some of the Pharisees rebuked Jesus for this, telling him to stop them from saying such things. Why? Jesus was being worshipped as he entered the holy city, one of the clear claims to his deity that he made over and over again, as men and women and even demons cried out to him, acknowledging that He was God. Not ONCE did Jesus command someone to stop worshiping him. Jesus replies to the Pharisees who would silence the people: “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.” In other words, the creation worships Jesus, and if those with vocal cords remain silent, those things without vocal cords, even rocks, would worship him with all their might. Because Jesus Christ is King.
- But let me ask you a question. Did Jesus ride into Jerusalem to set up an earthly kingdom that day? No, and that brings us to...
- **The humility of the King.**
- Why is this scene reflective of the humility of this King? Because there was no pomp or circumstance. The people who are praising him on Sunday are many of the same people who on Friday morning would be screaming for him to be crucified, and saying we have no king but Caesar. There are no dignitaries here who welcome Jesus to ascend to his

rightful throne. Remember, Mark's gospel was written for the Romans, and these people knew about pomp and circumstance. They had seen generals enter the city of Rome riding on powerful horses, with armies marching behind, followed by captured and defeated enemies, bloody and bruised, walking in chains. The Roman general received the praises of a grateful city and the prizes of a powerful Emperor.

- Jesus enters Jerusalem in humility. He has no army. There is no conquered enemy on display. There are no prizes, and no Emperor's welcome. Just a man on a donkey colt. He does not come to reign. Not yet. He comes to die. It is with meekness that he enters the city that is about to turn on him and have him crucified like a common criminal. And yet, there has never been a more majestic and powerful entry into Jerusalem as this one.
- It is important for us to remember that the only time Jesus talked about his own character, this is what he said, in Matthew 11. "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (vs. 28-29) The suffering servant, gentle and lowly in heart, entered Jerusalem with the cross set before him. But that would not be the end, which is why we have an Easter Sunday still ahead.
- **The triumph of the king.**
- Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon and led his army to victory over Pompey, and ascended to supreme ruler, being named dictator for life. Ahh, but that power was short lived, because just five years later, a group of conspirators in the Roman Senate turned on him and Brutus did their bidding on the ides of March, assassinating the man who had conquered Rome. The die was cast, however, Julius Caesar's adopted son, Octavius, eventually became the one we know as Augustus Caesar, the first Emperor of Rome, and the man who ruled in Rome when Jesus was born in a manger.
- Why the history lesson? Because the splendor of Rome crumbled and fell. As did, and as will, Every. Other. Kingdom. On. Earth! The power of the sword cannot stand up to the power of the cross. His kingdom was established while the glory that was Rome disappeared forever. Sinclair Ferguson wrote, "What Jesus did in Jerusalem established a kingdom that would outlast all the kingdoms of this world and would break in pieces every man-centered kingdom which sets itself against it. Jesus had come to take his throne—but had committed himself to begin his reign from a cross." (Sinclair Ferguson)
- Question: have you crossed the Rubicon in your own life, from unbelief to faith, from rebellion to surrender, from darkness to light, from death to life? Jesus calls men and women to come to Him, to drop the heavy burden of trying to save ourselves through works, and to take his yoke upon ourselves, for his yoke is easy and his burden is light.
- Prayer