

First Baptist Church Merritt Island
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Our Promise Keeping King
Mark 11:1-11

This morning, we are jumping back into our study of the life of Jesus according to the Gospel of Mark. Last year, we studied the first ten chapters of Mark. And, since we took a break from Mark for Advent, I think a quick overview is in order.

The author of Mark is believed to be a man named John Mark who traveled on part of a missionary journey with the Apostle Paul and later served as Peter's ministry assistant while Peter was leading the church in Rome. During his time with Peter, Mark was able to learn extensive details about the ministry of Jesus from Peter's perspective.

One of the features of Mark is that he moves very quickly through the earthly ministry of Jesus and focuses mainly on the works of Jesus rather than the words of Jesus. He's emphasizing the power and authority of Jesus as the King who is bringing the Kingdom of God to this world.

That's one of the first things you learn from Jesus in Mark 1:14-15:

14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

Jesus arrives on the scene and says the Kingdom of God is at hand. Without going into much detail, Jesus is being very intentional here. He is the King of God's Kingdom. He shows that through His authority over demons and disease and the natural world. However, He is careful not to come right out and declare Himself the King. That's another important feature in the book of Mark. It's called the Messianic Secret.

Jesus often tells people not to share the ways He had performed miracles. It seems like He is keeping His power a secret. For instance, in the first chapter of Mark (1:44), Jesus heals a man with leprosy and tells him not to tell anyone. In chapter 4 (v. 10), Jesus explains that He taught in parables precisely because He wanted to keep certain truths about His Kingdom a secret for the time being. So, what was going on there? Simply put, Jesus is controlling the way He will arrive on the scene and the way He will set up God's Kingdom and reveal Himself as the King.

And, in our text, the day has finally come when Jesus is making an unmistakable public announcement that He is the King of God's Kingdom. It's a turning point in the life and ministry of Jesus. And it's a great place to resume our study of Mark in this New Year.

Mark 11:1-11

Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples 2 and said to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. 3 If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.'" 4 And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. 5 And some of those standing there said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" 6 And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. 7 And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. 8 And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. 9 And those who went before and those who followed were shouting,

“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! 10 Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!” 11 And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

This event is known as the Triumphal Entry of Christ. This day is known as Palm Sunday because the crowd paved the road with palm branches for Jesus. And, if you know anything about Palm Sunday, you know it's the Sunday before Jesus' crucifixion on Good Friday.

That means, in the book of Mark, this passage isn't just a turning point concerning Jesus' approach to public ministry; it's a turning point in Mark's accounting of Christ's life. In the first 10 chapters, Mark quickly covered 3 years of ministry. In these final 6 chapters, Mark will basically cover 1 week of ministry. And our text is day 1 of the final week of Christ's earthly ministry. Mark is slowing down and emphasizing the events of each critical day in the final week of Jesus' earthly ministry.

So, what is Mark emphasizing here about Christ's entry to Jerusalem? Let me give you the big idea that I see in this passage.

Big Idea: Jesus is our Expected King who reigns in Unexpected Ways.

Now, let me show you why I say that...

1. Jesus is our Expected King

1 Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples 2 and said to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it.

For 10 chapters, Jesus has been ministering in Northern Israel, largely in a region around the Sea of Galilee. But a couple of chapters ago, Jesus set out on a beeline for Jerusalem on His journey to the cross. As you read the various Gospel accounts, you find that nothing would stop Jesus from getting to Jerusalem. This week, I read an estimate that said It was about 106 miles from Jesus' ministry home base in Capernaum to the city of Jerusalem, given the route Jesus likely had to take. And Jesus traveled on foot.

Until our text. In verse 1, we find Jesus just outside the city, near two villages called Bethphage and Bethany. Bethany was about 2 miles from Jerusalem. For reference, that's the distance from where we are sitting to Walmart.

Ok, so get this. Jesus has been on an unstoppable mission to get to Jerusalem. He's come 104 miles on foot and only has 2 more to go. With the finish line in sight, you might think Jesus would just run on into the city. But He doesn't. He stops and sends two of His disciples into one of the villages, probably Bethphage. He describes a donkey that He wants them to bring back for Him to ride into Jerusalem. He tells them that if anyone says anything, just tell them the Lord needs the donkey and He'll send it back shortly.

And that's exactly what happened. The disciples go to the village, find the donkey, tell the people that the Lord needed it, and bring it back to Jesus. Jesus rides it the final two miles into the city.

Now, why would Jesus take a 106-mile journey on foot only to stop two miles from His destination so that His disciples could borrow a donkey for Him to ride into the city? Great question. The answer is that He was sending an unmistakable message to the Jews (and us, in turn).

You see, God had promised His people a Rescuer who would rescue them in every way they needed to be rescued. That person was referred to as the Messiah, or the anointed One. The first prophecy about Him is found in Genesis 3:15, right after Adam and Eve sinned against God. Throughout the Old Testament, God told His people more and more about what that Rescuer would be like. And one of the details is that He would be a king. And not just any king, he would be THE King over all Kings.

One of the clearest portraits of that King is found in Isaiah 9:7, the text we studied on Christmas Eve: *Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.*

That's quite a description.

- This King will be so powerful, that nothing will stop Him – His government will increase without limit.
- He will be King where the throne of David sat (which is the city of Jerusalem)
- This King will be eternal - His peace will last forever, and He will rule forevermore.
- So, this promised King is an eternal, all-powerful King.

For hundreds of years, with great expectation, God's people looked for this promised King. But how would they know when He finally showed up? Listen to this prophecy from Zechariah 9:9 (written 500 years before Jesus entered Jerusalem)

9 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.

This is what Jesus is doing. He's intentionally fulfilling this prophecy. He's making it unmistakably clear that He is the King God's people had been expecting. As He rides on that donkey, He's saying, "I'm the King this world has been waiting on from the beginning. I'm the King you've been waiting your whole life to see."

Church, behold our King. His name is Jesus. He's the eternal, all-powerful King of Kings and Lord of Lords. No one and nothing can stop Him. He created this universe by the word and He rules this universe by His unstoppable power.

- He rules over kings and presidents and nations.
- He rules over politics and wars and global economies.
- He rules over natural disasters and cosmic events.
- He rules over all things.

The Bible plainly tells us that in everything that will happen next during the earthly ministry of Jesus - the crowd turning on Him, the mock trials and unjust punishment, the decision of Pilate to allow Him to be crucified...all the chaos and craziness...Jesus was in control. No one took His life from Him. He laid it down. He was making all the chaos serve His plan. He is the eternal, all-powerful King.

Before we move on, I want you to consider this. Do you have any chaos or craziness or out-of-control things in your part of the world today? Think of the thing that threatens to keep you up at night

or wake you up with fear and anxiety in the morning. What weighs on your heart but is out of your control?

Now, listen closely. Jesus is ruling over that this very minute. And He borrowed a donkey and rode it into Jerusalem to let the people know it. It may be out of your control, but it isn't out of His. Where I come from, we call that good news.

Jesus is our expected King. That's the primary point of what Jesus is doing here. But that's not all we see.

2. Jesus Reigns in Unexpected Ways

Mark 11:8-10 And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. 9 And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! 10 Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!"

Jesus is sending a message, and the crowd gets the message. They would have known the passage from Zechariah about the king riding a donkey into the city. And, as you might expect, they're thrilled. They spread their coats on the ground.

2 Kings records the coronation of King Jehu as King over Israel. Listen to what happened when he was announced as king:

2 Kings 9:12–13 Then in haste every man of them took his garment and put it under him on the bare steps, and they blew the trumpet and proclaimed, "Jehu is king."

Spreading your coat on the ground was sort of like rolling out the red carpet. It was a display of honor to the newly crowned king. Spreading out palm branches would have been a similar type of celebration. So, the crowd is acknowledging that Jesus is the King they had been expecting.

And the crowd doesn't just lay out their coats. They shout something, too. They cry, "Hosanna." Hosanna is an interesting word. As many of you know, the New Testament was originally written in Greek.

If you were to look in a Greek New Testament, do you know what the Greek word for Hosanna is? It's Hosanna. We haven't actually translated the word into English. We've just taken the Greek letters and replaced them with English letters. But what's even better is that Hosanna isn't really a Greek word, either. It's a Hebrew phrase – hoshiya na. The Greeks did the exact same thing that we did. They just substituted Greek letters for the Hebrew letters and didn't translate the word. So, if we want to know what Hosanna actually means, we have to go all the way back to Hebrew, which is the language that the Old Testament is written in. And out of the entire Old Testament, the phrase hoshiya na only appears once. It's in Psalm 118:25, and what it means is, "Save us! Please save us!" Hosanna was a cry for help.

But what's interesting is that, over time, the meaning of the word began to change. It started out as a cry for help from God but transitioned to become a cry of praise for the salvation the Lord had sent.

It's as if God's people had experienced His faithfulness so many times that they began to understand that when they called on God to save them, that's exactly what He did. It wasn't just a cry of dependence upon God, it was a cry of confidence in God.

That's why the atmosphere on Palm Sunday was filled with celebration. The crowds weren't simply asking for God to save them, they were celebrating that their salvation had come because the expected King was riding into the city of Jerusalem and He would save them.

And let's take a really quick pop quiz: Did Jesus come to save His people? Yes. That's exactly what Jesus came to do. So, the crowd expected a King who would come to save them, and that's exactly what they got, a King who came to save them.

But hold on. The crowd cried out something else, too. Verse 10 tells us they cried: Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!"

They expected Jesus to save them by reestablishing the kingdom of David on the earth. They expected Him to overthrow the Roman Empire and defeat all their enemies. They expected Him to usher in an age of peace and prosperity. They expected Him to head straight to the great palace of King Herod and take His seat on the throne.

Now, it's easy to be hard on the crowds like they are just a bunch of fickle, wishy-washy people. But there's good reason for them to expect that. Remember what the prophecies about Jesus said. They said He would sit on the throne of His father, David. They said He would establish a government that would fill the whole earth.

Even the prophecy from Zechariah says that.

Zechariah 9:10

I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

The people expect Jesus to go to the palace and take His seat on the throne and usher in an age of peace because the bible says Jesus will sit on the throne and usher in an age of peace. But, when Jesus enters the city on Palm Sunday, does Jesus go to the palace? No. Where does He go?

Mark 11:11 And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

Jesus comes to Jerusalem as the expected King. But He doesn't go to the palace, He goes straight to the temple. I love the way Mark writes this. The crowds have seemed to go away. The light is fading, and the day is almost done. And there's Jesus, looking around the Temple, knowing what is to come in the week ahead. He would go to the palace by the end of the week. That's where He would be put on trial. But He has to go to the Temple first, to see the altar and the place of Sacrifice.

On this day, He didn't come to take His seat on Israel's throne. He came to take our place at the cross. He came to do battle, just not with Rome. He came to bring victory, just not over Caesar. He came to bring victory over sin and Satan and death and hell. He didn't come to restore David's Kingdom; He came to restore us to our Father in Heaven. His plan was better than His people expected.

You see, Jesus planned to come to Jerusalem twice. Once as our Suffering Savior and someday in the future to return as this world's Conquering King.

The crowds had the right idea, they just expected it to happen in the wrong way. They didn't expect Christ to die. They didn't expect Him to rise again. They didn't expect Him to ascend to Heaven.

They didn't expect Him to come again. Our expected King reigns in unexpected ways. Jesus had a plan for something better and greater than anyone could imagine.

- His plan included the greatest sin ever committed, the murder of God's dear Son.
- His plan included the darkest hour in all eternity as the Father turned His face away.
- His plan included the forces of hell seeming to have won the day as His body was lifeless in the tomb.
- His plan included a powerful resurrection from the dead and a glorious return someday soon!

And I can't explain it or answer all your questions about it, but even in the face of sin and suffering and the evil work of Satan Himself, our King was in control and accomplishing the Father's plan down to the smallest detail. Our expected King reigns in unexpected ways.

And there's an important lesson for all of us in this because Jesus is still the King and He still reigns in unexpected ways. I won't beat around the bush on this one, so let me just ask you this: Is there anything that King Jesus has allowed to happen in your life that you never would have expected?

- You didn't expect cancer.
- You didn't expect that the God who promised to supply all your needs would allow you to lose your job.
- You didn't expect that the abundant life Jesus promised to give you would require you to experience so many things that feel like death.

What do you do when your expected King reigns in unexpected ways?

You see, from this moment on, Jesus doesn't do what the crowds or His disciples expect Him to do. He brings them peace, just not the way they expected. He defeats their greatest foes, just not the way they hoped. He establishes an eternal Kingdom, just not the way they envisioned. He has a better plan than the one they imagined...so, He doesn't submit to their plans. So, they abandon Him because of it. Even the disciples run away.

If they really believed Jesus was their glorious King, then they would have followed His lead. They didn't have to understand Him, they just had to trust Him. They didn't need to figure it all out, they just needed to believe He had. And that's a sobering test for all our hearts today.

I urge you to examine your heart. Do you truly embrace Jesus as King? Do you trust Him even where you don't understand what He's doing?