

## **Mark 11:1-11** **The Savior's Arrival**

<sup>1</sup> As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples,

<sup>2</sup> saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here.

<sup>3</sup> If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.'"

<sup>4</sup> They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it,

<sup>5</sup> some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?"

<sup>6</sup> They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go.

<sup>7</sup> When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it.

<sup>8</sup> Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields.

<sup>9</sup> Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

<sup>10</sup> "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!" "Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

<sup>11</sup> Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve

Good Morning First Baptist Members and Friends I greet you this Palm Sunday Morning with the joy that comes from knowing that Easter is only 7 days away. Palm Sunday is as important in the life of the Christian church as Christmas and Easter. And although some of my earliest memories are of being in church with Martha Ann I don't have many clear memories that are unique to Palm Sunday.

We did not have Palm Sunday poems, plays or speeches; no Palm Sunday palm hunt and I don't even remember a traditional Palm Sunday meal. In the memory bank of my youth Palm Sunday was a day the church gave us palms; sometimes folded as crosses we could wear; sometimes very long so we could annoy the people sitting in front of us; or just something to play with during church. Yet without many Palm Sunday memories I somehow grew up knowing that Palm Sunday was important.

That brings me to the challenge for today. How do we make the events of Palm Sunday make sense, when we know what will happen before Easter Sunday? I am of the opinion that if I can make sense of something I can then decide if it will have a positive or negative impact on my life.

Would you pray with me and for me as I think about this topic?

### **JESUS IS NOT A FAST FOOD ITEM!**

#### **SHALL WE PRAY!**

God of Heaven and Earth we are in your house on this Palm Sunday. We have shared our palms, welcomed each other into your house, sang our songs and prayed our prayers now we come to the teaching moment. The teaching moment will only have value if we are able to understand it and apply it to our lives, so we ask the Holy Spirit to move in this place so that we might hear from heaven and be transformed. Abba, let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to you. In the name of Jesus the Christ we pray. Amen and Amen.

### **JESUS IS NOT A FAST FOOD ITEM!**

A few years ago I gave up fast food for Lent. I remember that Nick Daniels was in class as I discussed my decision and in Nick's own way he tried to convince me that Harold's Chicken was **not** fast food because it took a long time to cook! But contrary to Nick's opinion I think we can all agree on what constitutes fast food.

Dictionary.com says:

food, as hamburgers, pizza, or fried chicken, that is prepared in quantity by a standardized method and can be dispensed quickly at inexpensive restaurants for eating there or elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

So it is easy to see that **JESUS IS NOT A FAST FOOD ITEM!** Jesus is not offered to us as a standardized item from a menu. Jesus is not something that may be gained quickly and Jesus is surely not inexpensive. Yet I think there is a slogan from the fast food industry that applies to how we treat Jesus.

"Hold the pickles, hold the lettuce, special orders don't upset us."

I think we might be guilty of wanting Jesus on our terms.

"Hold the shouting, hold the praise, more than 60 minutes will upset us.

Think about what I am saying before you decide I have lost my mind. We want a Jesus that fits into our lives – not a Jesus who requires us to fit into His. We want a Jesus that does not interfere with the flow of our lives.

if service was shorter – if the people did not talk back to the preacher- if they were not always talking about money – if they would just let me have it my way.

Think about the people you know, not heard about, but know, who have left the church, avoided the church and/or quit the church because they could not have it their way.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/fast+food>

This is one way of looking at the problem on the first Palm Sunday. Jesus rode into the city on a donkey, prepared to fulfill the scriptures and allow the people in the city of Jerusalem to see the **kind of King** God had sent in answer to their prayers.

He did not come as a knight in shining armor riding a great white horse. He did not have a chariot. He was not carried into the city by the disciples. Nor did He sneak into the city in the dead of night to launch a surprise attack. He entered the city on a donkey, the lowest of burden animals, a donkey!

The people had waited so long for a King, the Messiah, that they saw what they wanted to see and decided to have it their way.

Some say there were nearly three million Jews in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. They had come from all over Israel and various other parts of the Roman Empire. They had been waiting for generations for a King, a Messiah, a Savior who would remove them from Roman rule and set them free. They had been waiting so long that tradition says they sat a plate at their tables for the Messiah each year during Passover just in case He came that year.

They wanted a King and so seeing Jesus riding a donkey and making that steep descent into the valley and the climb from the valley into the city they sensed that something was happening! So they begin to celebrate, celebrate without even understanding exactly who He was.

The people placed their cloaks on the ground and others cut palm branches and laid them on the path the donkey and Jesus would take. Now all of this sounds very good. But I ask you to consider for a moment Jesus, nor the disciples had spoken a word to the crowd. The crowd had decided that they could have it their way. This was different, this had not happened before, so this must be the King, the long awaited Messiah.

The priest, the members of the Sanhedrin Council and a few others who could remember what they had heard and read knew that the Messiah would come from the house of David and come on a donkey.

For to us a child is born,  
 to us a son is given,  
 and the government will be on his shoulders.  
 And he will be called  
 Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
 Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
<sup>7</sup>Of the greatness of his government and peace  
 there will be no end.  
 He will reign on David's throne  
 and over his kingdom,  
 establishing and upholding it  
 with justice and righteousness  
 from that time on and forever.  
 The zeal of the LORD Almighty  
 will accomplish this.<sup>2</sup>

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!  
 Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!  
 See, your king comes to you,  
 righteous and victorious,  
 lowly and riding on a donkey,  
 on a colt, the foal of a donkey.<sup>3</sup>

Yet they still wanted to have it their way.

It said **lowly** but they wanted to make him **royalty**.

It said **reign with justice and righteousness** but they wanted a **warrior**

It said **Prince of Peace** but they wanted to have it their way.

Because they wanted to have it their way

<sup>9</sup>Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna!"  
 "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"  
<sup>10</sup>"Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!"  
 "Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

This was not a song they made up on the spur of the moment this was a song from the Songbook of David, Psalm 118:25-26.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah%209&version=NIV>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Zechariah+9%3A9&version=NIV>

We do something similar...

I had a talk with my God last night  
Nothing you can take me away from my God  
Get here anyway you can

But as we sometimes do, the Jews in Jerusalem for Passover were overcome by the moment.

So they said Hosanna – save now or save we pray – and made it an expression of praise!

Hosanna in the highest – they declared the angels of heaven would praise Him!

Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David. They were ready for a revolution – not a personal sacrifice.

That was Sunday. That was a good day. Jesus had come to Jerusalem to declare that He was the promised Messiah and the people received Him with joy. Even though they did not understand. They still believed they were going to have it their way.

Just as the Jews and the gathered Gentiles could not have it their way on the first Palm Sunday we also cannot have it our way today.

We come to Jesus in a variety of ways – attendance, baptism, membership/covenant, service, tithing.

We stay with Jesus as long as things are going our way. If...

the people of God don't worry us about attendance

the pastor does not get in our face about our sins

the church covenant remains just words we speak and not words that guide our lives

we serve when we feel like serving – when it suits our needs when it makes us look good

we ignore the call to tithe with our time, talent and money

And if we are not careful we become more and more like those on that first Palm Sunday. We ignore the obvious and try to have it our way.

I challenge you as we move through Holy Week:

to pray and ask God to show you the places where you are trying to have it your way.

Find a song that reflects what you need to learn and do and sing it at least once a day.

Move toward Easter Sunday in anticipation of your own resurrection.

For Jesus says "I AM THE WAY..."