

## “Presentation of the King”

**NCIS Palm Sunday.** Jesus draws 2 of his followers aside. And he tells them, “Go into the village up the road a piece. Lean right on the first dirt path and you will **find a colt** that has never been ridden. Untie him and bring him to me. If you get stopped along the way – if anyone asks what the heck you are doing, tell them, ‘The Lord needs it.’” That is exactly **how it unfolds**: they go, find the donkey, they get interrogated, and they give the password, “The Lord needs it”

The instructions are so explicit. Secret plan. Premeditated? I don’t know who talked with who ahead of time – but the plans went off without a hitch and Jesus gets his donkey... his colt. This **one day turned things** in Jesus’ life.

One day. One thing can really make a difference. Can you think of that one day that changed your life? Maybe it was the day you accepted Jesus as your Savior? Or was it something heartbreaking or something joyful? A marriage or a diagnosis – a graduation, baby, or a promotion? Think about how life can change in one day. One day you are a **rabbi with disciples**, and the next you are a **suffering servant**...riding a donkey into the city...and it’s on.

On this day that we call Palm Sunday, Jesus had just traveled **17 miles**, from Jericho to Jerusalem. It probably took about **6 hours**. The trip wound mile after uphill mile through sandy hills from Jericho, the lowest point, through the **Judean desert**...all the way, climbing - hot. Toward the end, he and his disciples had passed Bethphage and Bethany, places where Jesus had spent a lot of time. And once you passed those 2 towns you **crest the hill, the Mount of Olives**, and immediately see Jerusalem.

**Jesus knew** what was up ahead. The gospel of Luke says pretty clearly what Jesus was about. Earlier in the chapter it says, **“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost (19:10).”** The living God was at work to heal and save, and the forces of evil and death were ready to oppose Jesus. The first 2/3’s of the gospel of Luke were stories of **Jesus seeking the lost** – and now, it was time to **save**. **Nothing could stop Jesus from moving ahead.**

These days, finding someone who knows scripture *well* is rare. But when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on that donkey ... those people knew what the scriptures said about this day. **“See, your king comes to you gentle and riding on a donkey.”** This was all done to fulfill the **prophet Zechariah (9:9)**. Jesus riding into Jerusalem, **a king** riding into Jerusalem. Those details were a promise in the

Old Testament. This Jesus is the **promised king**. That is why people began shouting, “Hosanna.” They **knew the scripture** and they **saw it unfolding** in front of them. Long before Jesus came to earth, people were telling the story. It is all there in the bible. It is helpful to read it and know it. The **crowd cheers and yells Hosanna, because when they saw Jesus on the colt – they knew that the promises were coming true.**

Because we hear all of the things that the bible isn't and teachings interpreted that are harmful and hurtful, we forget that the **bible can change our life.** We read of a humble king,

riding on a lowly donkey,

showing the **humility of God** (he could have been in a pope mobile).

But no, he rode in on a donkey. That image triggers the Zechariah prophecy and the people lining the roads begin to lay down their **outer garments**. They put their **clothes on the ground** to show **submission to a king**. People worship and praise Jesus.

I have seen this – over and over. I think you have too. When people finally see Jesus – they want to lay down their **worldly self**. To imagine that Jesus knew what was ahead and willingly chose to follow a path to death – humbly on a donkey...**for us** – still makes us want to lay down ourselves...at his feet. Oh humanity ... as the week unfolds – the cheers turn to jeers.

Psalm 118:22-26 that Sammy read says, “**The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. O Lord, save us; O Lord, grant us success. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**” The people start screaming “Hosanna”, which means *save us*.

This is the guy.

This is the king, the promised messiah.

**This King is going to sacrifice - himself.** But for now...but for today, we sing out (like they did), “All Glory Laud and Honor” because we **want to celebrate**, we can't stop ourselves – and we know the story.

Is it no wonder **Jesus wept over Jerusalem?** Knowing. Then moving ahead - silently, willing the people, lining the road to receive him as their king – as their **Savior**. The Pharisees demand that Jesus tell the people to be quiet. **Rebuke** those guys. **Make them stop yelling**, “Blessed is the King!” Jesus can't. If he tried to tell them to be silent – creation would cry out. Same thing happens today.

You can try to shut up Christians from singing Jesus' praises, but the truth of who he is just pops up in the next willing place.

**Jesus isn't an ancient story.**

He is our story...our story of salvation.

**We sing today because he is our King.**

Who is this man, Jesus? He is the king of kings and Lord of Lords and he deserves our heart. **Are you following** the King of Kings? Are his priorities your priorities? When you say, "Thy will be done, do you mean it?"

The Lord is inviting you to say, "**He is my king, I will give him my life.** I will be devoted to Jesus as king of kings and lord of lords." You can't make everyone happy – your struggle to honor everyone and everything is impossible. Jesus is saying, "**Please accept me be your Savior. Please take that step.**" Some of you have never pledged your life to this king... Jesus. He is saying, "I want you.

I forgave you as I rode on that donkey that day.

I offer you my life.

Will you believe that and receive my love?"

God is **inviting you to pledge your life to Jesus** because he has already given his life for you.

As we sing this next hymn #3085 from the green book, **would you open yourself up to Jesus?** Will you offer to him those things that keep you from following? Let them go. **Christ took the blame, the shame, the sin** that you want to hold onto and offers you the power of the cross:

The power to heal.

The power to start again.

The power of eternal life.

Let's sing. #3085.