

Jesus, Save Us!

Mark 11:1-11

Introduction

I remember years ago, when I was a college student in Bucharest, we were expecting Pope John Paul the Second to come and visit Romania, and I remember the preparations that were underway for months before this great event in the history of Romania. Even though there are very few Roman Catholics in Romania (because the main religion there is Eastern Orthodoxy), nevertheless the authorities knew that all the world will be watching us and they didn't want to look unhospitable and unwelcoming.

So they began trimming trees, patching the holes on our roads (at least on the main boulevards where the Pope might have visited), planted new flowers all over the city, removed every homeless person from the main streets and set up a huge welcome parade for the Pope. Everything was ready, and even though most people in Romania knew very little about the Pope and Roman Catholicism **they were hoping that somehow this man would find a way to save our country from corruption and poverty.**

The same happened when George W. Bush visited Romania. Almost a million people were on the streets of Bucharest to welcome him because we thought America will save us. We were singing (or trying to sing) the American anthem, learning new words in English and were really hopeful that something will change in our country. **Of course, they all came and left, and not much had change.** My home country, Romania, has one of the most corrupt political systems in Europe and people are still struggling to not be absorbed in poverty and depression.

But this not uncommon. All throughout the world and all throughout the centuries, important people, presidents and kings are received with a lot of festive and celebratory preparations, sometimes pompous ones.

Today, we celebrate as Christians Palm Sunday, which many have coined as being the "Triumphal entry of Jesus in Jerusalem." And that's because Jesus enters in Jerusalem as a King, but not in order to be coronated as everyone expected, but to do one of the greatest things that a King has ever done, in the history of the Universe: to give His life as a ransom for His people, **in a way that both establish His Kingdom and frees His people from their greatest enemy, sin and to reconcile them with God!**

As we read this text, I would like you to pay attention to what Mark, inspired by the Holy Spirit is telling us about Jesus in this account.

Let's read Mark 11:1-11.

As you have heard, this text presents few things about Jesus that I would like us to pay attention to today and be encouraged by. **Here are few of the attributes of our King Jesus, who is the same yesterday, today and forever!!** In v. 1-3, Mark is telling us that Jesus is the King who is in control over all things; 2) Then, in v. 4-7, Jesus is the Humble King; 3) Jesus is the Only King who can save in v. 8-11;

Let's start with the first three verses where

1) **Jesus is The King who is in control over all things – v. 1-3**

Let me take a moment and **remind you of the context of this passage**. Jesus was at the end of a journey that took him all throughout Israel, specifically in the northern part of Israel, the region of Galilee. He has been in a lot of locations and ministered to a lot of people, and in the last few chapters we have studied together, He started making His way to Jerusalem, where He is about to be killed.

Now what Mark doesn't tell us, but we find out from the other gospel writers is that Jesus makes a stop in Bethany, which is two miles outside of Jerusalem. In John 11 we are told that Jesus goes to Bethany where he brings back his friend Lazarus from the dead and from what we see in v.11 He goes back and forth during the week of Passover to Bethany to spend the nights there with his disciples.

While they are in Bethany, Jesus sends two of his disciples (and we are not told which two) **to a little village outside of Jerusalem**, which seems to be called **Bethphage**, to obtain a **donkey's unriden colt**. We are not told how Jesus knew that this colt was there but there have been many speculations on this. Some say that Jesus might have talked beforehand with the owner in some other setting and told him that around Passover he might need to borrow his colt; some think that one of his disciples had arranged for it; and some think that it may have been revealed by God through divine revelation that this colt was available and that his owner knew and admired Jesus so much that He would trust Him with his colt. We are not told exactly what happened, but based on the response of the owner, he seems to have full trust in the character and person of Christ, entrusting Him with a pretty important part of his possessions. In those times to have a colt was like owning a car today. You don't just give your car to anyone for a ride (at least I hope you don't). You need to trust them for that.

But why is Jesus coming in Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey when He has been walking almost everywhere until this point, with the exception when he was in the boat on the sea of Galilee?

Because over 500 years before, Zechariah prophesied that the Messiah, the promised King, would come riding on the colt of a donkey. Listen to Zechariah 9:9-12 “Rejoice, O people of Zion!^[a] Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious,^[b] yet he is humble, riding on a donkey—riding on a donkey's colt.¹⁰ I will remove the battle chariots from Israel^[c] and the warhorses from Jerusalem. I will destroy all the weapons used in battle, and your king will bring peace to the nations. His realm will stretch from sea to sea and from the Euphrates River^[d] to the ends of the earth.^[e] ¹¹ Because of the covenant I made with you, sealed with blood, I will free your prisoners from death in a waterless dungeon. ¹² Come back to the place of safety, all you prisoners who still have hope! I promise this very day that I will repay two blessings for each of your troubles”

And listen to v. 16 “On that day the LORD their God will save them, as the flock of his people; for like the jewels of a crown they shall shine on his land.”

Jesus consciously and intentionally fulfilled this prophecy to the letter, and in fact exceeded it. For He chose a colt upon which no one had ever ridden. This was because in the ancient culture an animal devoted to a sacred task must be one that had not been put to ordinary use (see for example the animals that pulled the ark of the covenant in 1 Sam. 6:7).

In addition to this, Jesus told his disciples **they would find the colt “tied” or “tethered”**. This points to another **Messianic prophecy pronounced by Jacob to Judah in Gen. 49:10-11** “The

scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from his descendants,^[a] until the coming of the one to whom it belongs,^[b] the one whom all nations will honor. ¹¹ He ties his foal to a grapevine; the colt of his donkey to a choice vine.”

Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, wants us to see the connections here. By riding on the colt of a donkey that was unriden and that was found tied down (most likely to a vine, but we don't know that), Jesus fulfilled not only the prophecy from Zechariah but Jacob's prophecy to Judah. Also, riding a donkey (contrary to what we might think today) was **a kingly act which identified Jesus with the royal line of David, who also rode donkeys** when he entered in a city as a king and **Solomon as well, at his coronation** (1 Kings 1:32-40).

Jesus has planned everything out to the last detail and is in complete control. Jesus is Lord and He is in control of every detail of His divine destiny, including fulfilling the prophecies that were made about Him 1,500 years before.

Jesus' choice of the donkey told the whole world who He was, but it also proclaimed what He was like.

And this takes me to my second point.

2) Jesus is The Humble King – v.4-7

The prophecy in Zechariah 9:9 beautifully makes a connection to His riding in on a donkey and His **humility**. Zechariah 9:9 says **that He comes in to bring righteousness and salvation**, but He is also **humble riding on a donkey**.

The people who were witnessing this they immediately started **to spread their garments and branches on the ground to prepare a road for Jesus, a kind of “red carpet”** treatment if you will. **In John's gospel**, we are told that the **people were laying down palm branches** (hence the inspiration for calling this Sunday, “Palm Sunday”).

And even though until this point Jesus rejected to be treated as the Messiah, He now welcomes it and presents Himself as the most expected Messiah to the masses that were gathered from all over to **celebrate the Feast of the Passover**. Many commentators believe that this event was witnessed by tens of thousands of people.

But His declaration is bathed in humility even though He had all the rights in the world to come in **glory and opulence**. **But, as someone pointed out**, “He is royalty and deity wrapped in a single person, yet He moves forward in His declaration to be King in lowliness, weakness and service. He doesn't come in pomp, but in meekness and lowliness. He comes in humility and simplicity.”

I love the way the Scottish author and pastor Sinclair Ferguson captures this moment:
 “Think, for a moment, what Mark's record would convey to those who read it first – the Christians in Rome. No doubt many of them had seen generals enter Rome in triumph to receive the accolades of victory. How stark the contrast between Roman glory and Jesus' humility must have seemed. How mighty and powerful the sword and political power by contrast with King Jesus! Yet we know that His kingdom was established, while the glory that was Rome disappeared into oblivion. We know that what Jesus did in Jerusalem established a kingdom which would outlast all the kingdoms of this world and 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.”

Or let me give you another comparison, that someone pointed out, between the way Jesus entered Jerusalem, and the way Mohammed, who founded Islam, entered Mecca. “Mohammed rode into Mecca on a war horse, surrounded by 400 mounted men and 10,000 foot soldiers. Those who greeted him were absorbed into his movement; those who resisted him were vanquished, killed or enslaved. Mohammed conquered Mecca, and took control as its new religious, political and military leader.... Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, accompanied by his 12 disciples. He was welcomed and greeted by people waving palm branches, which was a traditional sign of peace. Jesus wept over Jerusalem because the Jews mistook him for an earthly, secular king who was to free them from the yoke of Rome, whereas Jesus came to establish a much different, heavenly kingdom. JESUS CAME BY INVITATION AND NOT BY FORCE.”

And this leads me to my third point, the fact that:

3) Jesus is The Only King who can save – v. 8-11

You can imagine the excitement of the disciples and the ones who are following Jesus at this specific point in time. They witnessed several miracles in the last few days from Jesus: feeding 5000 men with almost nothing, giving sight to the blind Bartimaeus in Jericho to seeing Lazarus being resurrected from the dead 4 days after he was buried.

One of the lines repeated regularly, and mentioned in all four gospels is from Psalm 118:26 that says “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.” And this saying was often used as a greeting for pilgrims but here it perfectly fits Jesus. And it seems that the crowds got excited about this and they had a bit of a cheerleading tone to it. Many commentators think that One group would say “Hosanna” and others would respond with “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.”

“Hosanna!” was a customary religious greeting at Passover, but on the lips of these people full of expectations it literally meant “Save!” or “Save us!” So the people were prophetically repeating over and over and over that Jesus was their deliverer, shouting: “Save us, save us, save us!” Not even the disciples understood the implications of their words and how right and true they were to ask this from Jesus, and only later on they pieced it all together.

Because the great prophecies about the Messiah were not being fulfilled in the way they thought, hoped and believed it would be. They were very right by saying that Jesus is the King. But He was not there to save Israel from their earthly enemies. No, He was there to SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS! They were looking and longing for a temporal, political and military Savior, while JESUS IS BRINGING WHAT HE ONLY CAN BRING: A COMPLETE AND ETERNAL SALVATION OF BODY AND SOUL!

The people of that day in Jerusalem were wanting and expecting a Savior only for the Jews, but Jesus is a Savior for the whole world, for any and all who will believe on His Name.

John 1:12 says it so well: “¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name”

John 3:16 says it so well: “¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that He gave His ^[a]only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

John 14:6 says it so well: “Jesus *said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”

Acts 4:12 says it so well: “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”

1 Tim. 2:5 says it so well: “For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus”

CHRIST’S SALVATION AND TRIUMPH WOULD BE THE VICTORY OF LIFE OVER DEATH, SALVATION OVER SIN, TRUTH OVER ERROR, LOVE OVER HATE, FORGIVENESS OVER CONDEMNATION.

They cried out for salvation that day. Have you cried out to Him to save you? He is the Only One who can!

You might be among many people today who are fearful about this Corona Virus and the repercussions that it could have in your life, including maybe killing you. I want to encourage you today to cry out to God for mercy and that He would intervene and stop the spreading of this virus.

But, more importantly, if you haven’t had a moment of giving your life to Christ, you have bigger problems than this virus and the many earthly problems that this crisis can bring, including death. YOUR BIGGEST PROBLEM IS GOD’S JUDGMENT for your sin!

And if you don’t believe you are sinner, think twice about that! How many times did you covet or lied or lusted in your heart even this week? All of these things the Bible presents them as sins. **And if you think that a little lie is not such a big deal, think twice. Especially in these times, just think for a second what little lie can do. I know in Romania for example hundreds of people in a city are infected because one guy lied and didn’t tell the authorities that on his way from Spain,** he stopped by few days in Northern Italy to see some relatives. He thought to himself that he is feeling just fine and why should he disclose that. He was asymptomatic and without realizing he infected an entire city and many more. **So there’s no such things as little lie or big lie. In our eyes looks like that, but in God’s eyes He treats it as disobedience of His perfect and just Law.**

The penalty for one sin, says the Bible, is death! Eternal death in hell, where there is eternal suffering and torment! Cry out to God and ask Him to save you!

- **Others of us need to cry out to JESUS AND ASK HIM TO SAVE US FROM OUR LOVE OF THIS WORLD!** We profess to be Christians, but we started to live as if Christ is a means to an end! We have put Him on a back burner and filled our lives with WORK, LEISURE, HOBBIES, SPORTS FOR US AND OUR KIDS, AND WE DON’T HAVE TIME FOR HIM ANYMORE, BECAUSE WE ARE BUSY TO MANAGE “HIS BLESSINGS!”

This crisis I think, it’s a good time to re-evaluate our priorities and our destiny! I hope now than ever you are realizing that life is short and we don’t take anything with us from this world! NOTHING! IT ALL STAYS HERE! THAT’S WHY WE NEED TO SET OUR MINDS ON THE THINGS ABOVE AND START INVESTING IN GOD’S KINGDOM RATHER THAN THIS HERE! **By the way, more you hoard here, harder it is to let them go!**

Also, **remember the anecdote with the Great Greek Emperor, Alexander the Great, who conquered the entire world by the time he was in early thirties.** And few years later, he got sick and he was dying. And the story goes that He called his generals close to him and asked them to

make a hole in his casket and to put his hands out, to show the entire world how much he took with him in eternity! **Do you know how much he took with him in eternity? NOTHING!**

LET ME READ TO YOU SOMETHING THAT A SISTER IN OUR CONGREGATION SENT TO ME AND I THINK IT'S RIGHT ON. It's called: Exposed by Sarah Bourns

Exposed

We've all been exposed.
Not necessarily to the virus
(though maybe...who knows)
We've all been exposed BY the virus.

Corona is exposing us.
Exposing our weak sides.
Exposing our dark sides.
Exposing what normally lies far beneath the
surface of our souls,
hidden by the invisible masks we wear.
Now exposed by the paper masks we can't hide
far enough behind.

Corona is exposing our addiction to comfort.
Our obsession with control.
Our compulsion to hoard.
Our protection of self.

Corona is peeling back our layers.
Tearing down our walls.
Revealing our illusions.
Leveling our best-laid plans.

Corona is exposing the gods we worship:
Our health
Our hurry
Our sense of security.
Our favorite lies
Our secret lusts
Our misplaced trust.

Corona is calling everything into question:
What is the church without a building?
What is my worth without an income?
How do we plan without certainty?
How do we love despite risk?

Corona is exposing me.
My mindless numbing
My endless scrolling
My careless words
My fragile nerves.

We've all been exposed.
Our junk laid bare.
Our fears made known.
The band-aid torn.
The masquerade done.

So what now? What's left?
Clean hands
Clear eyes
Tender hearts.

What Corona reveals, God can heal.

Come Lord Jesus.
Have mercy on us.

JESUS, SAVE US!

Let's pray: