

Blessed Is The King
 Luke 19:28-40
 March 29, 2026
 Pastor Francis Bezzam

²⁸ And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹ When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰ saying, “Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘The Lord has need of it.’” ³² So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. ³³ And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?” ³⁴ And they said, “The Lord has need of it.” ³⁵ And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. ³⁶ And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. ³⁷ As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, ³⁸ saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” ³⁹ And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.” ⁴⁰ He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

On February 22, 1937, Time Magazine, published on its front cover a picture of a man with the following title “His Exalted Highness, The Nizam of Hyderabad”. The word *Nizam* is translated Ruler or King. This man, whose name was Mir Osman Ali Khan was the ruler of the state of Hyderabad in India. He was supposedly the richest man in the world. It was said this man owned a whole diamond mine and used a large diamond (worth more than 50 million dollars) as a paperweight. This man even gifted an expensive necklace to Queen Elizabeth II as a wedding gift. During the World War I, this man helped the British and Winston Churchill thanked him for his help. Jackie Kennedy had privately visited this king.

Now, imagine if I went to someone like that and said, “*Sir I would like to enhance your greatness by offering my dusty gold ring, what do you think he would say?*”

Similarly, do you think you and I can offer to God anything of value or profit to enhance his glory and honor?

I once heard a prosperity preacher say that God needed him and his love. Consider what the Bible says about God and his self-sufficiency.

- “*Can a man be profitable to God? Surely, he who is wise is profitable to himself.*” Job 22:2.

- “Who has first given to me, that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine.” Job 40:2
- “Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD, or what man shows him his counsel? Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?” Isaiah 40:13-14
- “The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.” Acts 17:24-25
- “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” Romans 11:33-34
- Now, consider the stunning words of Christ. “All that the Father has is mine” John 16:15

So, if all that God has, belongs to Christ, what is Jesus doing asking for a donkey to ride on Palm Sunday? Aren't kings supposed to be riding on chariots and horses? Is this the best animal Jesus could find? Why not a steed? The Romans were known for their horses as a symbol of wealth and prestige. On the other hand, in Greek literature and culture, donkeys were seen lower class animals and dumb. We get the English word *asinine* from the Latin word *asinus* for donkey. To be *asinine* is to be donkey-like, to be stupid, silly or foolish. Donkeys were unclean animals according to Jewish laws and are regarded as lowly and poor. Yet, Jesus seeks a donkey. Why?

Let's look at verses 28 through 33.

²⁸ And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹ When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰ saying, “Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘The Lord has need of it.’”

³³ And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?” ³⁴ And they said, “The Lord has need of it.”

After Jesus had said these things. What things? Jesus had just finished telling his disciples the parable of the minas. And then Jesus travels to Jerusalem. Why? To be betrayed, to be condemned and to be crucified. That is for Good Friday.

But on the way to Jerusalem, he goes to the Mount of Olives. The Mount of Olives has

huge prophetic and eschatological significance. The Mount of Olives is directly east of Jerusalem. After his resurrection, Jesus ascended to heaven from the Mount of Olives and he will return on to the Mount of Olives. But now before his crucifixion, he descends from the Mount of Olives towards Bethany and Bethphage. Bethany is a town about two miles from Jerusalem. Bethphage is located very close to Bethany. Bethany is translated house-of-humility and Bethphage is house-of-figs. There is a lot of symbolism here.

As Jesus descends from the Mount of Olives, he sends two of his disciples to bring a donkey. And Jesus knows that the owners will ask them “why are you untying the donkey?” *Owners* is the same word for *lord* but in plural.

And sure enough when the disciples are asked what do they say? “*The Lord has need of it*”. Notice, the lack of response from the owners (lords) of the donkey. The owners or lords simply obey. This implies Jesus’ Lordship and authority over creation.

But what an honor for this donkey because the Lord was needing it. This was one happy donkey because the donkey’s maker was glorified by its use.

What is Jesus doing by needing a donkey?

At least two things – *fulfilling prophecy* and displaying *humble Lordship*.

Zechariah 9 records the prophecy. Matthew’s gospel says it very explicitly – chapter 21.

This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, “Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’” Matthew 21:4-5

There is also another prophecy that dates back to Genesis 49:9. So Jesus fulfils prophecy by riding on a donkey.

This was also to show Jesus’ humble character.

There are people in this world who are humble. You may know people who are humble. History has people who are called humble. And there are others who appear humble. But some or many may be just humble bragging to gain the applause of others. Heads of state, people in authority sometimes want to meet people to receive applause.

Jesus, however, is not trying to appear humble. Jesus IS humble and no else comes close to how humble he is. There is no else to compare to how humble Jesus is.

Why? Because, even though Jesus is Lord of creation. Even though nature bends to Jesus. Even though the wind and sea obey Jesus. Even though unclean spirits tremble at the presence of Jesus, Jesus took on the role of a servant.

Do you know why Jesus being humble is good news to you? Because Jesus is approachable by the lowliest of people, the most depraved of people, the one with the

most struggles, addictions, infirmities, maladies or challenges can call on Jesus and he can understand your need. Not only does Jesus understand our need, Jesus is able to lift you up and transform you. Dear friend, have you called on Jesus? Have you gotten hold of him and said to him, “I need help with my life, my marriage, my children, my family?”. For one look at others, look ten times at Christ.

And as a believer, how do you view yourself? Would you say you want to be used by God for an honorable purpose? God doesn’t need us but just as Jesus used this donkey, Jesus wants you for a holy and good purpose.

“Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.” 2 Timothy 2:21

Implication#1.

Look at Jesus for humility.

So, Jesus seeks a donkey. And the disciples fetch a donkey for him. No one has ever sat on it before. Kings usually sat a horse that wasn’t used before. And what we see next is the reason for Palm Sunday.

Verses 35 through 38.

³⁵ And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. ³⁶ And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. ³⁷ As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, ³⁸ saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

What the people do? They take their outer garment or their cloak and put it on the donkey and the road. The Gospel of Matthew tells us that people also cut palm branches and lay them on the road. (Matthew 21:8).

This was a way of honoring someone in those days.

In ancient Israel, when Ahab and his wife Jezebel reject God and his law, God rejects them and appoints Jehu as the future king. And in a dramatic turn of event, after Jehu was declared as king, the people took off their cloaks and put them under the king’s feet.

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.” 2 Kings 9:13.

Implication#2.

Exalt Jesus. And he will exalt you.

Many people want to be great, to accomplish something significant. There is an inherent human desire in us to seek significance, excellence, prominence, distinction or influence. Why do we honor students with summa-cum-laude when they achieve high grades in school? It's not wrong to desire greatness. Even these early disciples of Jesus wanted to be great. Jesus does not condemn their desire for greatness. Jesus acknowledges that you can seek greatness. But, oh, how twisted and distorted is the world's definition of greatness. This world teaches you to use others, to play the game so you can get ahead. Last week, I read the tragic story of a TikTok beauty influencer, only 21 years old, who jumped to her death from a bridge. How sad! How wrong and convoluted this world has it.

You see, even the disciples' view of greatness was distorted. They were discussing among themselves who was great, and Jesus knew their thoughts. Jesus defines what greatness looks like. Jesus tells his disciples if they truly desire greatness, they must first have a child-like attitude. A teachable and lowly spirit.

According to Jesus, greatness must begin with humility. If you want to be great, start by serving. Humility *precedes* greatness. Meekness *predates* exaltation.

Here, the disciples understood that Jesus deserved the highest honor and praise. They rightly honor him. And others joined him too.

However, the Pharisees have a problem with this praise of Jesus. Verse 39.

³⁹ And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." ⁴⁰ He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."

The Pharisees perhaps understood the way Jesus was being addressed – "Blessed is the King". And they complain to Jesus to stop his disciples praising him that way. To the Pharisees, this praise was too much to handle.

The Pharisees addressed Jesus as a teacher, a rabbi. Yes, Jesus was a teacher. But Jesus was more than a teacher. Jesus was more than a prophet. He is the King of peace and glory. He is Lord. The Pharisees could not stand the praise Jesus was receiving. To them it was praise only God receives.

What does Jesus say in response?

Jesus has the final word.

Even the stones would cry out if the people became quiet.

What does Jesus mean?

Even if these people were quiet, creation would not be quiet. Jesus means that even creation knows, acknowledges and praises its Maker.

- In the book of Revelation, we see all creation praising God.
¹³ And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, *“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”* Revelation 5:13
- God spoke to the people in Isaiah’s day because they had failed to acknowledge their Maker.
 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord has spoken: *“Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me. ³ The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master’s crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.”* Isaiah 1:2-3
- Habakkuk 2:11 says *“surely the stone will cry out from the wall”*. *God was calling out the sins of his people.*

As I conclude this morning’s message, the heart-wrenching irony of Palm Sunday is that this crowd that shouted “hosanna” will change their mind and yell, scream and cry and say “crucify him, crucify him”.

This crowd will change their minds on a dime from *veneration* to *vilification of Jesus*. From *admiring* Jesus to *antagonizing* him. From *honoring* Jesus to *hating* him. From singing to bless Jesus to crying out for his blood. Even the disciples will all bolt and run from Jesus. Peter will deny Jesus three times. Jesus knows all that.
“But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.” John 2:24-25

And yet Jesus marches on a lowly donkey. Why? To fulfil ancient prophecy. To display his meekness. To fulfill his journey to the cross. To bring peace to mankind. To bring glory to his Father.

Jesus does not seek the approval or the praise of man. Jesus knows what is in the heart of man - Sin. That is why Jesus came - To seek and save those who are enslaved to sin. To set you free from the power and the dominion of sin. To die on behalf of sinners by becoming like sin.

Let me close with an illustration: When you go to the bank to apply for a loan, you are first checked for credit worthiness and then you are given a loan. With God, however,

none of your good deeds will ever qualify to be forgiven of sin or for a right standing before a Holy God. The Bible says even your righteous deeds are filthy rags. So, Jesus is not in the business of taking “loan applications” to see if you are credit worthy. Rather Jesus is looking for bankrupt people. Only those who declare spiritual bankruptcy receive a full pardon. Jesus came to make full payment for your sin by his death. Whoever acknowledges that they have sinned before a holy God, and confess their sin, and trust in Jesus Christ as their only Savior, only they will receive full forgiveness with Jesus Christ. Which implies one must first humble themselves before God.

Jesus rode on a donkey on Palm Sunday to fulfill Scripture. He was soon betrayed, beaten, spit upon, crucified, killed and put in a grave. On the third day Jesus rose again - victorious over sin and death. One day Jesus will return on a white horse with eyes like a flame of fire. Jesus will come to judge and make war on the nations. (Revelation 19:11). Then there will be no escape from the judgment of God. If you have not yet turned to Christ as your Savior, turn to him, repent of your sin and trust in him before he comes back as Judge. Go to the humble Savior. Jesus will give more than anyone ever has - Joy and peace unspeakable.

Blessed is the King!

----- Discipleship Questions-----

MESSAGE SUMMARY: Blessed Is The King. Luke 19: 28-40

HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. Why did Jesus seek a donkey? What does the passage reveal about Jesus' character and his identity?
2. HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.
 - Do you believe Jesus deserves your highest praise? Why or why not?
 - What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.

3. HEART For personal reflection: What will you do to make much of the Lord Jesus in your life? Mark 8:36