

The Lord Has Need

Mark 11:1-11

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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. 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.

Jesus drew near to Jerusalem. Why Jerusalem?

Jesus had a profound grief and a particular love for Jerusalem.

The Gospel of Luke tells us that Jesus lamented for Jerusalem as he made his way towards that city – “*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!*” In Luke 13:34.

Jerusalem was once called a city of the perfection of beauty and the joy of all the Earth. (Lamentation 2:15, Ezekiel 16:14, Psalm 48:2). Jerusalem was called the city of God. It was once the dwelling place of the glory of God.

If David was the greatest king of Israel, his son Solomon was given the great task of building a temple for God. Solomon built a temple that was magnificent and glorious. The temple was the place where God’s presence descended.

After Solomon built the first temple, and when he dedicated the temple, fire came and devoured the burnt offerings. God’s glory consumed that place that the even priests could not enter into the temple.

And yet, in a tragic turn of events, Solomon’s disobedience led to a divided kingdom. God sent prophet after prophet to the people of Israel to amend their ways and return to God. Did they listen to the prophets? No. Did they amend their ways? No.

Jerusalem did not just disregard the prophets. It killed the messengers of God. God sent people like Zechariah and Uriah to kings of Isarel and yet these men were killed. (2 Chronicles 24:20-21, Jeremiah 26:20-23).

The disobedience and faithlessness of Israel eventually led to the ruin and destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. God's glory left the temple.

Malachi, writes concerning Judah and Jerusalem this way – *“Judah has been faithless, and abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem”* Malachi 2:11

What did they do? Idolatry.

“For Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the Lord, which he loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god” Malachi 2:11

Yet with all the abominations of Israel, God's love and promise for his people was not withdrawn. God's plan was to send one final Prophet. One Priest. One Redeemer. One King who will come and give his soul for the life of the world. That Prophet, Priest and King is the Lord Jesus Christ who shed his blood and died on the cross of calvary outside of Jerusalem.

Some might ask “why would Jesus go into Jerusalem to put himself in harm's way?” Surely, the scribes and the Pharisees were the hostile towards our Lord. In Mark 3:22, *“And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and “by the prince of demons he casts out the demons.”*

What was Jesus trying to prove? Did he have a savior complex? No, Jesus did not have a savior complex. Jesus is the Savior! There is no other Savior who saves!

Jesus wasn't going to Jerusalem just to prove his divine nature.

Jesus wasn't going to Jerusalem to become a martyr or to have his name recorded in history books.

- Jesus was going to Jerusalem to prepare the straight and narrow way to heaven. Straight and narrow is the way to eternal life. Crooked and wide is the way to destruction.
- Jesus was going to Jerusalem to do His Father's will.
- Jesus was going to Jerusalem to rescue sinners from the awful wrath of God.
- Jesus was going to Jerusalem to take upon himself the wretchedness of our sin.
- Jesus was going to Jerusalem to redeem people from all nations, tribes and languages. This includes those who hated and crucified him who will later repent and believe on the Crucified Christ.

So, Jesus drew near to Jerusalem and two other towns - Bethphage and Bethany.

Bethphage is called house-of-figs. Bethany is called house-of-humility. Jesus asks for a donkey to ride on. Very symbolic of Jesus' actions. And here you also see the Mount of Olives. Jesus met his disciples at the Mount of Olives after his resurrection and gave them the Great Commission before he ascended to heaven. Chapters 11 through 13 walk us through the ministry of Jesus in and around Jerusalem before he is handed over to be crucified.

Here Jesus tells the disciples to go and fetch a donkey.

Verses 2 through 6.

*“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.

A few weeks ago, we had covered Luke's version of this passage. So, I won't go in that passage now. It should be available online for you to watch or read.

Jesus gives exact directions where, how to get the colt.

Some comment that Jesus pre-arranged this whole thing where the disciples should go and bring a colt to him. He could have but I don't see it as necessary.

If Jesus could cast out demons, raise the dead, calm the seas with just a word, could he not summon a colt? What we here is see Jesus' omniscience.

Jesus also tells his disciples what to say when they are asked about the colt. What does Jesus want them to say? *The Lord has need of it.*

This sounds like a paradox.

Lords don't need donkeys or colts. They own colts and a lot more.

Jesus is one of a kind of Lord. Jesus is the Lord of creation. Nature bends to Jesus.

When Paul preached in the city of Athens at Mars Hill, he makes a very compelling case about the un-neediness of God. Here's what it says in chapter 17.

“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

And yet Jesus says he is need of a colt. Why? To fulfill his Father's plan. To fulfill what was written about him. Zechariah 9:9 – *“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”*

Jesus became needy and frail in his humanity. Why? To identify with our humanity. He was so bruised that his cross was carried by another man to Golgotha. Jesus is the Lord of humility. Jesus is also the Lord of mercy. His mercy hears the cry of the needy, the poor, the desperate, the contrite and broken in heart. Like the blind beggar who cried out and Jesus stopped for him.

Just when you think you have more than you can handle in life, know that Jesus is relatable and approachable. Call out to him. Jesus has a more than a thousand remedies at his disposal for you.

So, the disciples do exactly as they were instructed.

And what unfolds is a celebration.

Verses 7 through 10.

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!”

When Bartimaeus cried out for Jesus to have mercy on him, and when Jesus called him, he flung his cloak to see Jesus.

Here the disciples threw their cloaks on the colt. The people spread their cloaks on the road along with leafy branches. And there was great shouting.

They cry out “Hosanna” which is interpreted “Save us now”.

You have at least two kings in the Old Testament honored in a similar way.

1. When Solomon was announced as king he went on a mule. *“And the king said to them, “Take with you the servants of your lord and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, and bring him down to Gihon. ³⁴ And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet there anoint him king over Israel. Then blow the trumpet and say, ‘Long live King Solomon!’ 1 Kings 1:33-34*
2. King Jehu was inaugurated by people taking their cloaks under his path. *“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*

Jesus is greater than Solomon, Jehu or any other earthly king.

Jesus is Lord. Jesus comes in the name of the Lord. Jesus is the Messiah from the line of David. And he deserves the highest praise. It is fitting that Jesus receives this honor.

For some people, however, this praise for Jesus is too much. It is tantamount to praising God himself. To the Pharisees this is blasphemous.

The Gospel of Luke tells us that the Pharisees protested as to how the people were praising Jesus and wanted him to rebuke the crowd. What does Jesus say?

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.*”
Luke 19: 39-40

You see, Jesus does not stop this praise of him.

Jesus fully knows that these crowds were anticipating a political or a military leader of sorts. Someone who will remove them from the rule of the Romans over them. Jesus also knows the crowds are so erratic. They will change their mood and their allegiance in a heartbeat. They cry “Hosanna” now, and tomorrow they will surely cry out “Crucify him” and demand a robber be released than an innocent man.

Sometimes, I wonder if we are any better than these fickle crowds. People look for political leaders, some guru, some program. Yet none of them can offer a ray of hope beyond the grave.

Jesus wants to offer something better and sure to unstable, fickle and erratic hearts. His death as forgiveness for rebellious and treacherous hearts. His resurrection as a sure hope in this life and beyond the grave.

Only Jesus has come back from the grave.

You see a soul that is saved by Jesus Christ cannot but praise and glorify Jesus.

The early disciples were of full praise and adoration for Jesus after the day of Pentecost.

Everywhere they went they could not keep quiet but tell others about Jesus.

In Acts 4, the elders and scribes tried to threaten the disciples and warned them not to talk about Jesus. What did they say? “*..we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard*”

Acts 4:20

Jesus doesn’t need us to promote his Gospel. Jesus has the whole nature at his disposal to declare his gospel but Jesus wants to use us for his glory and for our joy. It is a privilege to declare how good Jesus is. It’s not just singing Hosanna on a Sunday. It’s telling this perishing and dark world that Jesus is the “Hosanna” fulfilled.

Has Jesus saved you? Then what keeps you from singing Hosanna?

What follows is Jesus inspecting the temple.

Verse 11.

¹¹And 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.

It's late in the evening. Everyone had gone home. And Jesus is there looking around. Why? Not as a visitor. Not as a spectator. But as the only High Priest who will die and live forever. And Jesus knows what he needs to do next. He will come back in the morning and render his righteous judgment with indignation. He will tell the temple stewards that they had made the temple the house of prayer a den of thieves. But that is for next week Lord willing.

This lowly animal received a great honor by being used the Lord Jesus when he rode into Jerusalem.

This world wants to tell you be a self-made man or woman. But the Bible tells us that you are God's workmanship.

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" Ephesians 2:10

"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

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

MESSAGE SUMMARY: The Lord Has Need. Mark 11:1-11

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

1. What does this passage reveal to us about the Lord Jesus Christ?
2. HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.
 - Do you believe Jesus Christ has want of you? Why or why not? Do you believe Jesus Christ can be made much through you? Titus 2:14
 - 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 change in order to be more like Christ?