

“The Triumphal Entry”

Mark 11:1-14, 20-25

Introduction

- Have you ever had a really good week?
 - I mean I know some of you will consider this carnal but the first week of football is a good week – I feel like it’s Christmas with college football starting last week and professional football starting this week – I love this week.
 - I love football so much - I had my 4 wisdom teeth all pulled this week and I still consider this a good week.

A much better week than even football for me was the first week of August in the year 2000.

- For that week, in the same week, I was blessed to marry Christy Apple, now Christy Duff and was ordained by Pastor Rob, Eddie, and Doug Martin and I took over the High School ministry here at this church – huge life changes all within seven days.
 - That was a really awesome week.

But nothing, not the first week of football, opening day of Baseball, black Friday for you shoppers, not even your wedding week, nothing compares to the final week of Jesus’ life.

- Where sin and death was conquered.
 - Where you are I were redeemed from our sin.
 - The week we are about to begin studying this morning is a week like no other.

We are going to spend the next few months on Sunday Mornings digging into the last week in Jesus’ life and all the important things that happened in greatest seven-day period of human history.

- And that week began as we read, with the triumphal entry – **Mark 11:1-10**

To set the scene for you – This was Passover week.

- One of the three celebrations that every Jewish male was to attend in the city of Jerusalem.
 - So the city would swell to a population of millions of people.
 - Even today it gets crowded at Passover time – **Jerusalem at Passover pic.**

Jesus’ route from Galilee to Jerusalem Mark tells us would have had him entering first into Bethpage and Bethany.

- These were small little towns on the hills that surrounded Jerusalem.
 - In Jesus’ day it would have looked something like this from above – **Jerusalem in Jesus’ day pic.**
- But this town was packed with people and excited, every street corner would have been filled with the news and speculation of Jesus coming to Jerusalem.
 - Was He coming to take over and be King?

At the same time because there were so many Jews, there was an increased presence of Roman soldiers.

- Some historian’s record that it would have been as much as 10 times the amount of soldiers stationed waiting for any insurrection by the Jewish people.

Then Jesus comes to this city, never to leave it again, until after He would be raised from the dead.

- Jesus sets up His entry into the city as Jesus had never set anything up before – Now why???

Jesus sets this scene up – most of His ministry, people would try to worship Him or set Him up as King and He would say – no, my time is not yet – yet this day, He sets up the worship.

- He sent two disciples into the city to find this donkey that had never been ridden before.
 - They go to the place where the donkeys are tied up, and ask to use this donkey, just as Jesus had commanded them.

Now this is a miracle.

- It is a miracle that Jesus tells them to go into the city, and describes what they will find.
 - He sees the future in advance.
- It is a miracle that this guy lets the disciples take the young donkey.
 - I mean how many of you would give your property to two guys you don't know, because they say, "The Master has need of it."
 - Two guys you don't know start to get into your car – hey what are doing? - "The master has need."
 - That's creepy, but tell "The master" to get his own." – you must be crazy, get out of there.
- It was a miracle that Jesus knew what they would find, it was a miracle that the people let the disciples take their donkey, it was a miracle that this donkey let Jesus ride on him.

Now for those of you who are not into horse riding...

- Those of you who had no experience with animals, other than ones you see on TV, let me help you.
 - Animals don't like to have you ride on them if they haven't been trained to.
 - I'm not so sure they like it when they have been trained.

I remember on our honeymoon, the greatest week of my life, Christy wanted to go ride horses. So we go to this farm where you can ride horses from there to a waterfall in Hawaii. So they introduce us to their horses and Christy's was named Sunshine or something bright and happy and she gets on hers, starts hugging it, "I'm going to call you Strawberry", and it was like the horse understood her, oh, I like you, it starts kissing her, strangest thing I have ever seen. Then they bring my horse out – this is "Dark Shadow", "Dark Shadow" you kidding me? **(We have a picture of this horse, so you can see what I am talking about – you see I should have known better – scary horse picture).** I don't remember the exact name but it was something morbid and this horse just looked at me like I canceled its day off. I tried to do what my wife had done, hey Dark Shadow, what a good horse you are, but it just looked at me like, "we are not doing this today". Christy's horse is prancing around all happy, and I get on mine and it starts growling. Some of you think horses don't growl, they do, and it was. Then as we were riding the horses for an hour mine kept turning around trying to bit my leg – it was a horrible experience.

- And that was a trained one – I think.
 - Jesus rides in on this donkey that had never been broken in - It was a miracle.

But that is who Jesus is.

- He made all of the people, He knows the end from the beginning, and He created the donkeys.
 - He can do with it what He wants.

And Jesus uses all of these miracles to set up this one event – But the question is why???

Why did Jesus set up the Triumphal Entry?

#1 – Because it was His time.

- Multiple times in the gospels, people would try to make Jesus the king.

He would silence them, He would tell them not to tell anyone what He had done in their lives.

- And each time He would make the statement, “My time is not yet.”
 - When he was feeding the 5,000 – the people cried out to enthrone Him.
 - He would say my time is not yet.
- When he raised Lazarus from the dead – the people wanted to make Him king.
 - But Jesus said, “My time is not yet.”
- Over and over and over again.
 - As the people would want to make Him king, He would say, “My time is not yet come.”

But on this day...

- He invited the worship.
 - In fact He set up the whole event.
 - And the reason????
- Because His time had come!!!

This was why He had come to earth.

- Not to be an earthly king.
 - Not to overthrow Rome.
 - Not simply to heal the sick and the lame.
 - But He came to die for the sins of the world.
- And this was His time!!!
 - He set up these events because it was His time.

Why did Jesus set up the Triumphal Entry?

#1 – Because it was His time

#2 – Because prophecy was being fulfilled

Two in particular

Prophecy #1 – Zechariah 9

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He *is* just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.” – Zechariah 9:9

Here Zechariah foresees when Israel would have her king. And he describes this Messiah, not charging in royally, but humbly coming to Jerusalem on the back of a donkey.

- King David was known to ride of the back of a donkey; at one time the donkey was the symbol of royalty.
 - But in the years after King David, the horse replaced the donkey, and the donkey was seen as too lowly to carry a king.
- And yet Zechariah, living in those times when a king would be carried by a great horse, he says, Israel you King is coming, humble, riding on a donkey.
 - It was a radical prophecy.
 - The religious leaders should have known and should have seen.

But not only was Jesus fulfilling Zech 9, but Daniel 9 as well.

Prophecy #2 – Daniel 9:24-27

- The point of today’s message is not to explore or explain Daniel chapter 9, but for us to see the importance of the triumphal entry – so I am going to leave you to read Daniel 9 on your own.
 - But so you understand, it is know as Daniel’s 70th week prophesy.
 - Daniel is given a prophecy that would cover the rest of Jewish history as it concerned the Lord
- Daniel is told 70 weeks of years or...

- 70 – 7 year periods of time were determined left in their history, prophetically – 490 year.
- And Daniel is basically told – 483 of those 490 years will be from the time the command goes to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the prince arrives.

➤ The exact day of Jesus' coming is given to Daniel!!!!

So when do we start counting – Daniel 9 says, you start counting when the command is given to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.

- Remember when Daniel is writing, Jerusalem is in ruins.
 - Nebuchadnezzar destroyed it almost 70 years before the book of Daniel.
 - So Daniel was to start counting when the command was given to rebuild Jerusalem.

Now when did that happen? – There have been 3 different commands.

#1 – The Decree of King Cyrus – which gave the command to rebuild the temple in the book of Ezra – but it, was the temple only.

#2 – The Decree of King Darius – which simply reaffirmed King Cyrus command as they were facing persecution in Jerusalem.

#3 – The Decree of King Artaxerxes – in the book of Nehemiah - his command was not to only build the temple but also the city and the wall as well – this is the command Daniel was to look for.

(New slide)

Now the next question is when did that command take place, when do we start counting these 483 years?

- Well we are told in Nehemiah Chapter Two, verse one...

“It came to pass in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes...” – Nehemiah 2:1

- In the 20th year of King Artaxerxes?

We know from history that King Artaxerxes reigned from 464 BC to 424 BC – making the 20th year of King Artaxerxes – 444 BC.

We also know that when the Bible does not indicate the day of the month, as it does not in Nehemiah 2:1, it is referring to the first day of the month.

So we can clearly prove that the Decree of Artaxerxes to go and rebuild and restore Jerusalem happened on the 1st of Nisan, 444BC.

- **Now the equivalent of the 1st of Nisan, 444 BC on our Gregorian calendar is March 5th 444BC.**
 - That is the date to start counting.
 - 483 years – they used a 360 calendar at the time, giving you 173,880 days to be counted.

You start counting – March 5th 444BC.

And you arrive, 173, 880 days later at March 30th 33 AD.

The exact day, Jesus rode into Jerusalem, riding on a donkey, the one day that Jesus not only allowed Himself to be worship as God, He arranged it.

Wait a second, how do you know Jesus rode into the temple on March 30th 33 AD, my Bible does say that – did you just start counting on March 5th 444 BC and whatever date was 173,880 days later you declared to be the day Jesus entered Jerusalem?

- Of course is there another way.
 - No – listen, listen, and stay with me...
 - John Chapter 12, verse one...

“Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead..... The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! The King of Israel!" – John 12:1, 12-13

John indicates that Jesus rode into Jerusalem five days before the Passover.

- John 12 starts out with Jesus in Bethany six days before the Passover.
 - And then in verse 12 we are told the next day was what we would call the Triumphal Entry, the Day Jesus presented Himself to the city of Jerusalem and to the Jewish people.
- The only year this works out mathematically in Jesus’ ministry was 33 AD.

According to Luke (3:1), John the Baptist began his ministry in the 15th year of Tiberius’ reign (29 AD). Jesus began His ministry shortly thereafter at the age of thirty.

We have the dates Passover fell during that period of history...

Passover of 29 AD fell on a Sunday (April 17th)

Passover of 30 AD fell on a Thursday (April 6th)

Passover of 31 AD fell on a Tuesday (March 27th)

Passover of 32 AD fell on a Monday (April 14th)

Passover of 33 AD fell on a Friday (April 3rd)

Passover of 34 AD fell on a Tuesday (March 23rd)

Passover of 35 AD fell on a Monday (April 11th)

(dates provided by Sir Robert Anderson in his book – “The Coming Prince” (Kregel: Grand Rapids, p. 104)

The date that works with everything we know about Jesus’ Last Week fits with Passover being on Friday April 3rd 33 AD.

- And if you take five days before, you arrive at March 30th 33 AD.
 - 173,880 days after a gentile King Artaxerxes gave his command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem in the book of Nehemiah, just like the prophet Daniel foretold.

You see the Jews are still waiting for their Messiah, but no one living today or next year or ten years from now can be him.

- For the day Messiah would be presented to the Jewish people was March 30th 33 AD – and guess what, that day there was a Carpenter from Galilee riding into Jerusalem on a donkey – just as the Bible said he would.

This was His time and this was His day.

- Spoken of by the prophets.
 - Set aside before the foundation of the world.
 - People in the streets declaring Him the coming King.

And if the story would have amazing if it ended there – it would be a glorious one.

- The people have received their King – He is here, on the exact day He is supposed to be arriving.
 - Let's crown him King and rejoice.
 - But the story doesn't end with the triumphal entry.
- For later that week, many of the same crowds that cried out – Hosanna, will cry out crucify him.
 - Many were caught up in the moment; many were hoping Jesus would free them from Roman oppression.
 - Only a few saw Him as Lord and Christ.

And because so many missed it, even with all the pomp and circumstance, which is why Luke's account of this story tells us, Jesus wept.

“Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things *that make for your peace!* But now they are hidden from your eyes.” – Luke 19:41-42.

- The scene is dramatic, as Jesus is riding on this donkey, people lining the streets, waving palm branches, crying out Hosanna.
 - It looks really good.

But Jesus is not rejoicing, He is weeping!!!

- For He sees their hearts and He knows that although this looks like Israel has understood, Jesus knew it wasn't real.
 - They wanted him to free them from the Romans, but not to be Lord of their lives.
- And so Jesus weeps, you missed it; you missed your day Israel.

And understanding what was in Jesus' heart during the Triumphal entry, helps us understand the second part of the story – Mark 11:11-14, 20-25.

- You see both the cursing of the fig tree and the cleansing of the temple, that Pastor Rob will go into more important detail on next week, were symbolic pictures of the spiritual state of Israel.

We will focus on the cursing of the fig tree.

- Some use the cursing of the fig tree to come against the character of Jesus.
 - As if He was a spoiled child who did not get His snack and so He is throwing a tantrum.
 - But is that what is really going on?

We know Jesus could go long times without eating – He fasted for 40 days – and when tempted to use a miracle to turn stones into bread He did not do it just to satisfy His hunger.

- Jesus would forego rest to minister to the lost soul – I don't think He is acting like a spoiled child.
 - I believe He is teaching a deep spiritual principal.

Oh but he cursed a poor defenseless tree.

- So this tree that was fruitless, which means it would eventually be cut down and used for firewood so we would have no problem with that natural progression.
 - But because God wanted to use it to teach a deep spiritual principal, do we find fault?

I believe Jesus actually honored the tree giving it one of the highest purposes a tree has ever had.

- For many have picked up on the spiritual lesson and turned back to the Lord.
 - What lesson????

We understand what was really happening.

- Jesus first comes to this fig tree and sees that the tree had leaves, which you need to understand for the context is the outward show that fruit should have been present.

- This was the spring and in the spring when a fig tree was full of leaves, it should have been full of fruit as well.

Just as the nation of Israel who was also full of leaves, they are full of the signs that there should have been spiritual fruit.

- They are lining the streets to cry out “Hosanna” they are laying out palm branches.
 - They had a full set of leaves, showing there should have been fruit in their lives.

But upon further examination of the fig tree Jesus found that even though all the signs were there, that there should have been fruit - there was nothing there.

- And Jesus cursed it not to hurt this tree, but as a picture to Israel – they appeared to be religious, but there was no reality.
 - They are giving the outward show to the world, with their shiny temple and their sacrificial systems.
 - Even when they were lining the streets as Jesus came to town – they looked very deeply spiritual.
 - But we will see as this greatest week in history progresses - there was no reality there.
- The same crowd that was shouting Hosanna, will shout out just days later, crucify Him, we will not have this man to rule over us.
 - Despite every advantage of prophesy, of the clear teachings of Jesus and John the Baptist, and the myriad of prophets that went before them, they still didn't see.
 - Israel was as spiritually fruitless as the fig tree was physically fruitless.
 - They appeared fine on the outside, but inwardly there was corruption.

When Jesus saw this fig tree in full leaf, meaning it should have had fruit, but it did not, He realized it was the perfect picture of what He was trying to teach.

- That Israel as a nation was like this barren fig tree.
 - It had all the leaves looking as if it should have fruit.
 - It had the temple; it has the ceremonies and the sacrifices.
 - But their hearts were far from God.

Now what is the take away lesson for us?

- Well, we too can be just like Israel and the fig tree.
 - We too can have all the signs that we should be deeply spiritual people.
 - We come to church.
 - We bring our bibles.
 - We know the songs – at least we can pretend like we do – “Jesus... sacrifice... Amen”...
- We have all the outward signs.
 - But church, church – is there an inward reality?

This past Wednesday Night we were looking at the offerings in the first few chapters of Leviticus.

- And for the Meal offering, God was very specific, that offering was not to have any honey in it.
 - Now, why not – honey is so pure and natural.
 - If God had said, no saccharine, no aspartame – well you diet coke haters would say, of course, God doesn't want anything artificial in His people.
 - But honey??? – What is wrong with honey?

Well I'll tell you what is wrong.

- Honey is sweet and good and amazing.
 - But under high temperatures, as would be present in the sacrifices it begins to break down.
 - And God was saying, I don't want that in the worship of my name.

- I don't want your worship to be like honey.
 - All sweet on the outside.
 - "Oh praise the Lord sugar plum – how was your week – oh blessed" – we can be so syrupy.
- But what happens when the heat gets turned up.
 - What happens when things occur in our lives we have no answer for, when the days get difficult.
- Do we have the heart of Job? – The Lord gives; the Lord takes away – blessed be the name of the Lord.

Or do we break down like honey.

- All the sweetness goes away, and a corruption begins to occur.
 - Friend Jesus wants your love for Him to be real.
 - Not emotional only.
 - Not intellectual only.
 - But real, genuine – a tree with not just the signs of a relationship with Him, but real fruit, a real relationship with Him.

The Lord says very soberly in Amos chapter 5.

"I hate all your show and your pretense, the hypocrisy of your religious festivals and solemn assemblies. Away with your noisy worship and praise. I will not listen to the music of your harps. Instead I want to see a mighty flood of justice and an endless river of righteous living." Amos 5:21-24 (NLT)

Pretty harsh!

- Away with your noisy worship, I'm sure that wasn't you taking about you Joe.
 - God says – "Away with your show!"
 - Why? Why is God being this way – is He just being super critical??

No, no, no – listen to me, please listen to me.

- God wasn't tired of their show, and God wasn't cursing the fig tree as a lesson to Israel because He was being super critical.
 - It was because God understands the dangers that if we play a part so long it is possible that we begin to fool ourselves.
 - We begin to think that we are okay, when we are not – and God is trying to wake us up and show us an important truth.
- That our relationship with Him must be more than a show, it must be real, not for His sake but for ours!

Jesus said of the people in His day in Matthew 15:8

"These people draw near to me with their mouth, and honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. And in vain they worship Me." – Matthew 15:8

- Jesus was saying they have fooled themselves.
 - They think they are honoring me.
 - They think they are saying the right thing.
 - But their worship is vanity; it doesn't count, because it's not real.

Jesus said again in the Sermon on the Mount

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" – Matthew 7:21-23

- Heavy stuff.
 - Consider that passage carefully – there will be people someday standing before the Lord, who are convinced they had a real genuine relationship with God.

- They had played the part for so long, they had put on a show for so long – they had fooled themselves!
- But not the Lord.
- Heavy – so what do we do?
 - Jesus ends by telling His disciples. – [Verse 22-25](#)

What is Jesus saying? I can cast mountains into the ocean and whatever I want is going to happen?

- No – you can't take a verse out of context and make it teach whatever you want.

The context is this fruitless tree, a fruitless nation and a group of disciples that are like, "I'm kind of scared Jesus, what do you mean by all of this?"

- Jesus says you must have faith in God.
 - You must depend not on your pomp and circumstance, and not on your show – you must depend on me.
- When things are good and when things are out of control – the answer to fruitlessness is for you to depend on me.
 - A mountain was a Jewish idiom for something immovable – a problem for which there was no answer, the only answer was depending and believing in Jesus.
- Cling to Jesus, depend on Jesus – receive forgiveness from Jesus which will be evidenced in your life because you are forgiving toward others, [verse 25](#)
 - These are the signs that you are not just one who is good at putting on a show.
 - So good that maybe even you have fooled yourself – what a great danger.
- But depending and clinging to Jesus, receiving forgiveness from Jesus – these are the evidences that there is really something there.

So we must be honest with ourselves precious church.

- We don't want to fool our own hearts.
 - We don't want to be like Israel – using Jesus for what we think He can give us, but not really knowing Jesus.
 - We don't want to be like that fig tree that has all the signs that fruit should be there, but it isn't.

We want to be those who as Paul says in Romans 2, "by patience continuance", continue on with Jesus Christ – by His Grace and by the Power of His Spirit.