

**Palm Sunday**  
Pastor John Pickens  
March 24, 2024

**Opening Discussion**

- What thoughts, feelings, or impressions do you have about the sermon this week?

**Scripture**

**Matthew 21:6-11**

*The two disciples did as Jesus commanded. They brought the donkey and the colt to him and threw their garments over the colt, and he sat on it.*

*Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting, "Praise God for the Son of David! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Praise God in highest heaven!" The entire city of Jerusalem was in an uproar as he entered. "Who is this?" they asked. And the crowds replied, "It's Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."*

**Coat #1: The Work Coat**

Pastor John shared about this coat in his sermon. It represented a sense of "lack" and the feeling that your life was messy or embarrassing. Reflect on how you see yourself in this "identity" we put on and answer the questions below:

How do you personally relate to the concept of wearing a "shabby" identity like a coat? Have you ever experienced feelings of shame or unworthiness in your relationship with Jesus? If so, how did you handle those feelings?

Reflecting on the idea that Jesus cares deeply for us regardless of our mess, what does this tell us about His character? In what ways do societal pressures or expectations contribute to the feeling of being unworthy in our faith journey?

Pastor John reminded us that Jesus specializes in taking people who are broken, messy, and full of shame and restoring them gently over time. Jesus himself said, *"Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."* Matthew 11:29 (ESV)

Share a personal testimony or example of a time when you felt undeserving of Jesus' love, but profoundly experienced His grace and compassion.

How can we support and encourage one another as a faith community to bring our mess to Jesus, knowing that He meets us right where we are?

**Coat #2: The Good Deal Coat**

Pastor John shared about this coat and while the work coat we may be embarrassed of, this one we are often the opposite: proud! Reflect on how you see yourself in this "identity" we put on and answer the questions below:

Have you ever found yourself relying more on your own capabilities and successes rather than on Jesus? Reflecting on the "good deal coat," how do you think our reliance on our own abilities can hinder our relationship with Jesus?

In what ways can our successes and achievements become barriers to fully leaning into Jesus and His guidance in our

lives? Pastor John reminded us of the passage in Matthew 16:24-26:

*Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?"*

Share a personal experience where you felt challenged to give up your way (achievements and capabilities) to follow more closely to Jesus. What was the outcome? Discuss the difference between self-dependence and God-dependence. How can we discern when we are relying too much on ourselves instead of trusting in God's provision?

What practical steps can we take to shift our focus from our own abilities to relying more on Jesus in our daily lives? How can accountability within our faith community help us to recognize and address areas where we may be relying too much on ourselves rather than on Jesus?

### **Coat #3: The Classic Coat**

Pastor John shared about this coat and how it can often represent the ideas and beliefs we've built up about ourselves. Reflect on how you see yourself in this "identity" we put on and answer the questions below:

What are some common beliefs or labels that you have accumulated about yourself over time? These could be from other people or yourself. How do these beliefs influence your perception of your identity?

Reflecting on the concept of the "classic coat," how do you think clinging to our old identities or beliefs about ourselves can hinder our spiritual growth? In what ways do your ideas about yourself align or conflict with the identity that Christ offers us as His followers?

### **Read John 3:3**

*"Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God."*

Discuss the significance of Jesus' statement in this passage about being "born again" as it relates shedding to our old identities and embracing our identity in Christ. Share a personal experience where you felt challenged to let go of an old identity or belief about yourself to align more closely with Christ's vision for your life.

How can fear of change or discomfort with the unknown contribute to our reluctance to embrace the new identity that Christ offers us? How can we discern between the beliefs or labels that align with our identity in Christ and those that contradict it?

Discuss the importance of community and accountability in supporting one another as we strive to let go of our old identities and embrace our identity in Christ.

Questions for Pastor Todd Keller or Julie Burch regarding your REMIX group?

- Email: Todd [tkeller@collegechurch.com](mailto:tkeller@collegechurch.com)  
Julie [groups@collegechurch.com](mailto:groups@collegechurch.com)

\*\*\*Remember to record your attendance for the week. Thank you.

**How can we pray for each other this week?**

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