

## CIRCLE 03/04: BE THE DONKEY

“Be the ball.”

This is a small sliver of bizarre advice my tee-ball coach used to shout at me during practice. For context, I would always awkwardly swing, just to miss the ball and usually strike the tall, white stick while making the tee-ball drop onto the dirt. I would miss. He'd encourage me to “be the ball.” Then, I'd miss again. Once his irritation began to escalate, I would joke, “Why do you want me to be the ball? I don't want to get hit by a bat.” He didn't laugh.

Why do coaches say this? I get what they're saying: you need to put yourself in the place of whatever projectile you wish to hit. Coaches want you to concentrate. From football to frisbee, you always see coaches encouraging their athletes to embody inanimate objects. It's strange. However, it's a valid thought exercise— what can you embody to be your best Self?

When it comes to our spiritual lives, I have some strange coach-style advice for you. I am not saying to “be the ball” or “be the frisbee.” Instead, I am encouraging you to “be the Donkey.”

READ: Zechariah 9:9

“Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” Zechariah was an Old Testament prophet who helped Israel contextualize their conflict by offering them hope found in a series of oracles. These are brief visions given by God to help him better understand what the future holds for His people. After a series of dark visions, the tone turns to hope as He discusses the coming King, riding on a donkey into Jerusalem. This is a prophecy of Jesus, specifically His Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem. This does not only reveal powerful prophecy. It's also evidence of powerful humility. Jesus was the God of the universe wrapped in human skin. He could have literally levitated into the city, but God didn't design it that way. He rode into town atop one of the most unappealing animals— a donkey. I imagine that donkeys are humble farm animals in the first place. They're just ugly horses. People don't imagine a unicorn as a donkey with a horn. That's reserved for horses. You never see drawings of donkeys with wings. No King or military leader in the history of the world had a painting of them riding a donkey. It's almost embarrassing that Jesus chose this animal to be His vehicle into the most significant week of human history.

We need to be the donkey. Jesus preached that He was preparing a new Kingdom. One that was built on humility, service, and love. We have the opportunity to carry the Kingdom wherever we go. It is our responsibility to carry Jesus into our school, city, community, and workplace. We get to be the donkey.

Never once did this donkey ever think this celebration was about him. The donkey is

certainly important here, but he must have known that Jesus was the star of the show. He was just a willing vessel and vehicle.

Whenever you do some good in this world, make sure it's all about Jesus. Do not help someone in the community and look around awaiting praise for yourself: it's all about Jesus. Do not drop \$100 in the plate and hope someone noticed: it's all about Jesus. Don't read your Bible for the first time in two months and spend half the time taking a good Instagram photo: it's all about Jesus. Do not go on a mission trip and make your whole emphasis getting a good picture: it's all about Jesus. It's not about you.

When we decide to be the donkey, we are deciding to carry Jesus into our city and focus on making Him famous.

### TALK IT OUT

Go through these questions with your circle. Be honest. Be open. Talk through the tough stuff.

Q1: What's your favorite animal and why?

Q2: What does it mean to "be the donkey?"

Q3: Why is humility such an important quality for Christians?

Q4: How can you make your good deeds about glorifying God instead of yourself?

Q5: What can you do this week to carry Jesus into your conversations, home, school, or community?

### READING PLAN

READ THESE PASSAGES IN ORDER EVERY DAY

Matthew 3:1—4:11

John 2:1—11

John 4:1—26

Luke 4:14—30

Luke 5:1—11

Do the following with each passage:

ASK— God to connect with you here. In prayer, start by slowing down and inviting God to be present.

Begin with focus and openness to see what God has for you today.

READ— the selected section of Scripture slowly. Take note of the words and phrases that intrigue you,

reading them a second time if necessary.

REFLECT— on what grabs you. How does this passage personally relate to your own life and experiences?

RESPOND— to the Scripture. Speak directly to God about what's on your mind and heart. Look for ways

to live out what you've uncovered.