



Was Jesus Political?
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October 2, 2022

The Crossing Church
Las Vegas, Nevada

OPENING

This week we are beginning the 4th Section of Quest 52, The Passion of Jesus. During this year, we have studied the **Person, Power, Preaching** and now we are beginning the **Passion** of Jesus. This last section will lead us to the Cross and the Resurrection as we look at the events of the last week of Jesus' life.

SCRIPTURE¹

Matthew 21:1-10 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethpage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a *donkey* tied there, with her *colt* by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, say that *the Lord needs them*, and he will send them right away." This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: "Say to Daughter Zion, 'See, your *king* comes to you, gentle and *riding on a donkey*, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'" The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "*Hosanna to the Son of David!*" "*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!*" "*Hosanna in the highest heaven!*" When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was *stirred* and asked, "*Who is this?*"

Matthew 23:23 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.

1 John 3:17 If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the *love of God* be in that person?

OBSERVATION

Mark Moore speaks about four specific criteria which political figures must meet: **1) They must be public; 2) They must have an identifiable group of followers; 3) They have a social agenda; and 4) They exercise power** over people. Does Jesus fit this description? Let's see. It is the

¹ The NIV translation unless otherwise indicated.

Sunday before the crucifixion and resurrection and Jesus is spending the night in Bethany which is about two miles from Jerusalem. Most likely he stayed at the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus . As Jesus approached Jerusalem on Sunday morning, He sent two disciples to go and fetch a donkey and her colt. This is a prophecy from the Old Testament that was written five hundred years before to talk about the coming of the Messiah. **(Zechariah 9:9)** This triumphal entry was not unusual. Kings, governors, and Caesars all had them so that the townspeople could welcome them to their town. Even Pilate had one. He probably rode a horse to show he was ready for battle, but Jesus rode a lowly donkey which meant He was the King coming humbly in peace.

QUESTION: Jesus demonstrated His humble spirit. In what ways is your humble spirit evident in your life?

There were three groups of people who had different political agendas: **1) The Crowds.** The Jewish people were looking for a battle-ready king to rid them from the Romans. They were tired of being oppressed in their own country. They were overtaxed, killed for treason and religiously suppressed; **2) The Disciples.** They were enjoying the popularity of Jesus like an entourage and think that that was the moment Jesus would become King; **3) The Religious Leaders.** Their political agenda was to get rid of Jesus because He was a threat to their status and power.

QUESTION: What is your political agenda? How do you share your political opinions with others?

QUESTION: In what ways does Jesus meet the four criteria for politicians?

APPLICATION

Who is Jesus to each of us? Is He someone we will follow on our terms? Is He a threat because His Lordship requires something of us? Or, is it that we see Him as the true Son of God, but we are struggling to trust Him with something in our lives?

QUESTION: Which of the questions above describe your thoughts about Jesus' place in your life?

Once again, we find the word **MODGNIK**, which is **KINGDOM** spelled backwards, because Jesus doesn't follow the wisdom of the world, but that of His own world. Other politicians use political power for self-promotion and self-protection while He uses His power only for providing for the powerless.

QUESTION: If there are politicians you know who use their power for others and not themselves, how can you encourage them?

Jesus used His power only for providing for the powerless. We are given influence to be leveraged for others and God has given each of us a measure of influence for this purpose.

QUESTION: Where in your life do you have influence that can be used for others? What form does it take?

So, how can we use our influence for others? **1) Justice.** We see Jesus acting justly when He threw out the money-changers. As followers of Jesus, we are to confront injustice. We can't claim to love God if we don't meet the needs of the least of these and stand up when we encounter injustice; **2) Mercy.** The parable of the Good Samaritan speaks of mercy. Also the woman who anointed Jesus for burial by washing His feet with her ointment and hair, needed mercy and Jesus fulfilled her need; **3) Faithfulness.** Faithfulness in the Bible always has a relational dynamic attached to it. Faithfulness to God is what defines the way justice and mercy are lived out in our world.

QUESTION: Which one of these three do you need to pay attention to in your life?

QUESTION: Who needs you to show them justice or mercy or faithfulness today?

Leadership is measured by service and sacrifice. The endgame of leadership is not power but a legacy of love.²

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we want to represent Your mercy, justice and faithfulness as we minister to people in need around us. Protect us from sins of self-righteousness and critical spirits as we demonstrate Your Kingdom on earth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

QUESTIONS

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² Quest 52. Mark E. Moore. Waterbrook Publishing. 2021. Page 262.