



CANYON HILLS

COMMUNITY CHURCH

Series: Mark

December 3, 2017

The Eternal Majesty of Palm Sunday

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I'm going to ask you to open your Bibles to the gospel of Mark, chapter 11. That's where we are now. The passage today is all about the day we know in the Christian faith as Palm Sunday or the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. I have to confess it feels a little weird talking about Palm Sunday just a few weeks before Christmas.

It is a little strange to kind of wrap our minds around that, but that's where we land today as we're working our way through the Bible, now going through the gospel of Mark, verse by verse. It's a day in the life, church, that is so much more than a seasonal Sunday that comes one week before Easter. It's an amazing revelation of everything we need to know about the kingship of Jesus Christ. It's a revelation of what the ultimate mission of Christ was in his ministry in life here on the earth.

I don't expect many of you to know this, but I've been preaching here at Canyon Hills for 23 years now. When you add it all up, I've been preaching 8 1/2 of those 23 years in the Gospels alone. When we finish with the fourth gospel I've preached through, the gospel of Mark here... I'm not sure when we're going to get done. At this pace, it's probably going to be late next year. By the time we get done, it's going to be well over nine years of Sundays we have spent in the Gospels of Jesus Christ.

Here's what I'm realizing. I'm realizing most of the effective arguments for the truths of Christianity are not dependent on how well I explain or teach them. Praise God! That's my praise, and it should be yours as well. What I mean by that is I'm realizing the validation of the amazing things we believe about Jesus are not solely dependent on me to unpack that and convince you of that.

No. The most effective arguments for the amazing truths of Christianity in which we trust and hope are already validated by the historical events in biblical history. We come today to one of the more amazing events in the life of Jesus that validates a whole lot about what we believe about him and about what's to come as his followers. With that said, let's stand for the reading of God's Word. We come today to Mark, chapter 11, verse 1.

"Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples 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. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.'"

And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. And some of those standing there said to them, 'What are you doing, untying the colt?' And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it.

And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!' 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."

Father in heaven, we thank you for your Word. We pray, God, that you would use it now to equip us not only for what to believe and what we believe but how to live what we believe. God, have your way now. Speak to our hearts. Change us. Encourage us. Comfort us, God. Most of all, increase our faith. We ask this in the name of Jesus, amen.

I don't know about you, but I just saw the fingerprints of God all over this scene in the life of Christ. Every detail of it points to who he is. It points to why he came and it points to what is to come for those who believe in him as their Savior and King. In addition to all of that, it also points to a defining moment for every potential follower of Jesus.

This moment, this triumphal entry, this Palm Sunday, basically offers all people everywhere, for all time, an eternal choice. What are you going to do with Jesus? What are you going to decide? What are you going to determine your relationship to Jesus is going to be? This moment in history allows all of us to stop just long enough to answer that question. Here's what Palm Sunday tells us about Jesus. Here's what it reveals.

1. *Jesus is the final Lamb of God.* Palm Sunday glorifies Jesus as the final atoning sacrifice for all of our sins. In verse 1 you'll notice it says, "**...they drew near to Jerusalem...**" Don't overlook that, church. That is very key to everything we're about to talk about, because we know from the end of chapter 10, which we were in last week, to this chapter as well, there is a very large crowd.

There are huge crowds that are following Jesus now. Some estimate that it's over 100,000 people who are represented in this passage right here who are surrounding Jesus as he's going toward Jerusalem. All of these people are journeying on their way to Jerusalem. We know that because

when you scoot forward to chapter 14 in the gospel of Mark, what we see, what we find there, is that this day, in Mark 11, marks the beginning of the annual week-long Feast of the Passover.

Every year, the Jewish people would come to Jerusalem. The city of Jerusalem would swell to over 2 million people, from people coming from all over that part of the world. Historians have estimated that in remembrance and reenactment of God's deliverance of the Jewish people from 400 years of slavery in Egypt, close to 260,000 lambs are going to be slaughtered and sacrificed during this week and their blood poured out over the altar of the temple. Little did the crowd know that day that they were with the Passover Lamb of God.

You see, the prophets all prophesied about this moment many hundreds of years before it ever happened. In fact, the prophet Isaiah, 700 years before this moment happened in Mark 11, prophesied, "**He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.**" Isaiah is describing the beginning of this very moment in Mark, chapter 11, 700 years before it ever took place.

A little farther forward, you'll remember in the gospel of John, chapter 1, when John the Baptist introduced and announced the beginning of the three years of public ministry of Jesus on the earth, he said, "**The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'**" There we are. Three years before this Palm Sunday, this triumphal entry, we hear it again: The Lamb of God has come.

What would happen to Jesus next is the undeniable evidence of how much God loves you and me. It would be the final sacrifice for sin, only this time it would be God's innocent, spotless Lamb whose shed blood would pay the price for all of our sin. Luke 9:51 says Jesus set his face toward Jerusalem that day.

In other words, he was resolute to go there and die. You think of that beautiful moment on the cross, right before he took his last breath. Jesus said, "**It is finished.**" Wow! Palm Sunday reveals that Jesus is the final Lamb that ever had to be in Jerusalem and sacrificed.

2. *Jesus is the omniscient, humble Savior King.* Palm Sunday glorifies Jesus, not on a stallion, not in a royal chariot, but instead, Jesus is glorified in the righteousness of divine meekness. That's what we see here going on in Mark, chapter 11, starting at the end of verse 1 through verse 7. Before he ever enters into Jerusalem, Jesus sends two disciples into a nearby village to get a donkey.

Now, none of the gospel writers identify who these two disciples are, so we could assume they're probably not of the Twelve. They're probably of the larger band of disciples who have been following Jesus up until now. This whole scene of these two being sent into a city shows Jesus is completely in control of the events of his life as well as the divine plan of redemption for our souls.

You see, it's in his omniscience... The omniscient one, the all-knowing one, already knew where the donkey would be. He already knew they would be questioned, and he gave them the answer to the question before they ever heard it. Matthew writes that all of this about the donkey and going into the nearby village took place exactly as the prophet said it would. That prophet would be Zechariah.

This time, 400 to 500 years before this moment, the prophet Zechariah wrote, "**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.**" Those two metaphors there ("**...O daughter of Zion!**" and "**...O daughter of Jerusalem!**") are just descriptions of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the city of God.

Why didn't Jesus enter into the city on a stallion or a chariot? Why not enter into the city with a military made up of his all-too-willing followers and supporters right then? The answer to that is pretty simple. It wasn't his time to come in earthly splendor. That is saved for his second coming, when he comes upon the clouds.

You see, Jesus didn't come clothed in wealth and pomp and circumstance. He came in a stable, poor. He didn't come to condemn. He didn't come to conquer. He didn't come to kill. He came to be killed. The time of his crucifixion was not the time of his glorification. It was the time of his humiliation. Jesus had been saying all along that there were two reasons for his earthly ministry.

First, *to humbly obey and do his Father's will*. In John 4, "**Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.'**" That work would be the work of the final sacrifice for the sins of man.

Secondly, he also said, leading up to this point, that part of the reason he had come was *to fulfill all the Old Testament prophecies that pointed to him*. In Matthew, chapter 5, Jesus said, "**Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.**" You see, this was God's plan from the very beginning. No human being would plan the coronation of their King on a donkey.

The whole scene just bears the fingerprints of God, doesn't it? Despite what we are constantly being accused of, left to mankind, we would never invent a religion like this. We would never come up with a religion whose King rides in on a borrowed donkey. That is not man. We would make it way greater than that. So, is it any wonder that Jesus, the one on the donkey, said, "**Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth**"? Wow!

3. *Jesus will be praised forever*. Don't miss it. Look at what's going on here in verse 7 and following. They bring the donkey to Jesus. They throw their cloaks, their outer coats or robes, on the donkey as a pad for Jesus to sit on, and then this crowd just spontaneously starts taking off their outer coats and they're throwing them on the ground for Jesus and the donkey to walk on.

Folks, this was kind of the ancient version of the red-carpet treatment. You only have to go back in your Old Testament to 2 Kings, chapter 9, where you see the coronation of one of Israel's new

kings. They did it all the way back then in ancient Israel. When they did that, it symbolized the people's respect and submission to his authority. It was a gesture that said, "We place ourselves at your feet." That's what was happening right then as they were taking off their robes and coats and putting them on the path for Jesus and the donkey to walk on.

Then, it says right here that they went and cut leafy branches. We kind of know through a little research, I guess, that those were palm branches, hence Palm Sunday. These branches were very symbolic of royalty.

Now, more profound than all the coats being laid on the road and the branches being waved and laid on the road was what the people were saying and singing. Look at that in verse 9. **"And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'"** That word, *hosanna*... Some of your Bibles have some really cool notes at the bottom. It's basically the Hebrew word that can be translated as save now or save us now.

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" What this massive crowd was doing was singing, quoting from their Hebrew songbook, the Psalms. They were quoting Psalm 118, which said just that: **"Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!"** This messianic praise chorus is being sung right now at the top of their lungs and applied to Jesus Christ riding on a donkey.

This is the first time he actually allows his followers to do what he's been forbidding them to do for over three years now. Luke's gospel tells us that as Jesus is allowing the people to sing that psalm to him, the Pharisees are livid, and they tell Jesus to rebuke this choir of praise to him as their Deliverer and Messiah.

Jesus rebukes the Pharisees with those famous words. Do you remember? **"I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."** Don't you just wish Jesus would have let that happen? Every time I read that, I think, "Wouldn't it have been cool if Jesus had looked at the Pharisees and said, 'Oh, you want them to be quiet? All right.'"

You can picture Jesus just whistling really loud. "Hey! Let's quiet it down here. Let's quiet it down. Shush!" Then, all of a sudden, the rocks just start screaming out from the ground. I mean, that's what I would have done if I was Jesus, just for my sheer entertainment and pleasure. That's why I'm not Jesus, thank God. I just wish he would have just let that happen.

No, Jesus gives this massive choir permission to exalt him and worship him. It's a small peek into eternity. The apostle John, who is there in this moment, later, years after Jesus resurrected and ascended into heaven, was given a vision by Jesus of what is going on in heaven right now. We see that vision in Revelation 7. John wrote it down. He said,

"After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before

the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'"

Palm Sunday glorifies Jesus as the one who is to be worshiped forever. It's already happening. Yet that's not all.

4. *Jesus came to establish an eternal kingdom.* He is not only the one who is to be worshiped forever, but he is the one who will rule and reign forever. Verse 10 is very revealing. The Jewish people always were confused and had a problem with this idea of an eternal kingdom. In verse 10, it also says they were shouting, "**Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!**" They wanted Jesus to be their King.

It had been so long since they had had a king. The Romans had overcome that part of the world and they were under the heavy hand of Roman rule. They wanted a king again because kings protect the people, defending against the enemies. They wanted a king because kings provide for the people prosperity and peace. They wanted a king because kings rule with justice and fairness. They wanted a king something terrible, but they completely misunderstood the nature of the kingdom Jesus had come to establish.

This confusion had been going on years earlier in the life and ministry of Jesus. We read, back in John, chapter 6, "**Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.**" They wanted him to be king so bad.

Yet here's the deal. The crowds were never interested in Jesus saving their souls. They wanted him to save their nation. Remember he just came from Jericho after healing a blind man. Remember? That's what we talked about last Sunday. He was on his way to Jerusalem. He's going through Jericho. He heals a blind man.

Right now, in chapter 11, as they're getting ready to enter Jerusalem, the whole scene feels like they're trying to force him to exert his miraculous power over the Romans. If you think about it, if we're honest, we probably would have wanted him to do the same thing. If we were Jewish and there that day, this would have been perfect timing, being the Feast of the Passover, the celebration of God's miraculous deliverance of his people from the bondage of Egyptian slavery over 1,500 years ago.

Here we are, 2 million people strong, mostly men. We have our King propped up on a donkey. We're coronating him on the way into the city of God. This would have been perfect timing for God to deliver them from the tyranny of Rome. We probably all would have wanted the same thing. We would have been swept up in it.

This is why I believe, when he was arrested, this same crowd so quickly turned on him. He could not ascend a throne or command an army when he was in jail, so when the Jewish religious leaders whipped up the mob they were all too happy to get rid of him and start looking for the next candidate to be their king.

All of this was written about in Daniel, chapter 2, another prophet reminding us that it was never his intention to set up an earthly kingdom. It says, **"And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever..."**

The prophet Daniel was looking forward to all the kingdoms of the Babylonians, Persians, Medes, and now Rome, and he's looking forward hundreds of years, saying there is going to come a day where all those all those kingdoms are going to be leveled. There's going to be another kingdom that will stand forever. In Daniel, chapter 7, he talks about the King again.

It says, **"And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."** How is this possible? How is it possible to have a kingdom that will last forever? It's only possible if you have a King who will live forever. Jesus confirms the prophecies of Daniel just five days from this very moment we're reading about.

"Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.' Then Pilate said to him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth.'"

What truth? The truth that he is the omniscient, humble Savior King. **"Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."** Palm Sunday, church, was confirmation that mankind was so broken and blinded by sin that they refused to recognize that Jesus didn't come to save their country. He came to establish his eternal kingdom for the souls he came to save.

5. Jesus is going to create a New Jerusalem for his true followers. Palm Sunday glorifies Jesus by pointing to another Jerusalem with another temple, one that will be pure, holy, and forever. It all points, really, to the eternal Palm Sunday to come.

Again, John the apostle, who's there in this moment with the hundreds of thousands of people singing the praising of Jesus, marching in toward Jerusalem, was given a vision of what is to come by Jesus in the book of Revelation. Jesus told him to write it down. It's in Revelation 21. I want all of you to turn there in your Bibles right now. John writes,

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with

them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.' And he who was seated on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.'"

Wow! Jesus told John and showed him, "This is what's coming. There's going to be a new Jerusalem, and it's going to be adorned for the bride." That would be us, a bride for our husband, who would be Christ. We would dwell with God forever in this new city of God that lasts forever, and we won't need a man-made temple to go in and find God. His presence will be with us in person. The whole scene reveals everything we need to know about Jesus.

Yet here is my concern. My concern, church, is that some have the wrong idea of who Jesus really is and what he came to do. My concern is that there are people sitting in churches all over, including this one right now in this service, people who want Jesus to be their King. They want Jesus to protect them from harm, to provide for them, and to treat them fairly.

Yet here's the problem, I think. Sometimes these people have never turned from their sin. They haven't placed themselves at the feet of Jesus, completely submissive to his authority over every part of their lives. Some of you believe in Jesus as a King, *your* King, and your expectations of him are to protect, provide, and be fair to you, but you have never walked away from your sin. You have never fallen at his feet and given him absolute authority over every area of your life.

Jesus is not interested in being our divine bellhop who takes care of us when we need him to. He came to save our souls from the coming wrath of God upon the sins of mankind. Those who will trust him and what he accomplished in Jerusalem that week, who put all of our faith in him, who decide today that he's not just King, but also Savior, will be saved forever. That is the glorious ultimate decision. What are you going to do with Jesus?

I know for a lot of you in this room, Jesus is your Savior and your King and we have so much to be grateful for, but I want to say to some of you in this room, it is by no accident you're sitting here right now. God knew you would be here. God wanted you to understand he's not interested in just making your life here in this world a little easier or better. He's here to save you from the coming eternal wrath, judgment, and condemnation upon all those who will die in their sin without it forgiven and removed by the blood of Jesus Christ through faith in him.

I'm going to ask us all to just bow our heads and close our eyes now. If Jesus is your Savior and your King, this is your moment to just say, "Thank you, Jesus," again. Worship him and adore him in this moment just as your heart desires.

For the rest, this is also your moment. This is your moment to finally just say, "Okay, enough. Jesus, I need you to be my Savior. Jesus, I place myself at your feet and I ask you to be the absolute and total authority over every area of my life. Jesus, I turn from my sin and I ask you to forgive me, cleanse me, and make me new." If those words describe the desires of your heart, then I would just give you just a minute to say them in your own words, just you and Jesus, right now.

God in heaven, again, I praise you that there are no coincidences or accidents in your economy. God, every step we take is under your sovereign control, and so I praise you for every person who is sitting in here today, being reminded of the glory of your Son, Jesus, in this moment.

I thank you for those today, God, where today was the time, the moment that some in this room have placed themselves at the feet of your Son, Jesus. God, be pleased. Be blessed by that. Encourage them now with the gift of greater faith and greater desire to live for you forever. In his name we pray, amen.

If that was you and you determined, "You know what? That's it. I'm stepping over the line," it may be in rededication of your life. It has just been too long. You've just been playing around with Jesus. For some of you, it's for the first time. There are some people standing up here who would love to give you something to go home with today to help you get started and encouraged in a new personal walk with Christ.

All you need to do before you walk out of this room is walk up here and just say, "Hey, I believe. I made that decision." They want to give you something to go home with. I hope you'll do that. Also, if there's anything we could be praying with you about... Maybe you're about to face something this week that's a little heavy or frightening. We want to also pray for you before you go home. We'd love that privilege.

God bless you. Have a great rest of your day.