

We wanted Jesus to come into town on a warhorse; Jesus rode in on a donkey. We wanted Jesus to go up to the statehouse and fix the political problem; he went to the temple to pray. We wanted Jesus to get organized, mobilize his forces, get the revolution going, and set things right; Jesus gathered with his friends in an upper room.



Mark 11:1-11(NIV) As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.'" They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "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!" Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

Reflections

What do we expect God to do, and when he does something else, what does it say... about us?

The story is simple, one many will have known since childhood. Jesus comes to Jerusalem. He mounts a donkey, rides up the hill and through the gate. A procession forms. Branches and cloaks on the road. Cries of "Hosanna." And so begins the week that will culminate his ministry.

But this is not just any city, or any "parade." This is Messiah, come to his city, and there were plenty there who would not miss the point. In prophecy and Psalm, they knew it would be like this. The donkey, the branches, the cries of "Blessed is he..." This is an event they understand, and it is surrounded with towering expectations...

...Which were not met at all. Messiah will throw off the yoke of Rome, re-establish the throne of

David, rule in justice and mercy. But this procession doesn't end in the reign of a king; it culminates on a cross, and for many, apparently, in no change at all.

At one level, we're all familiar with a God who doesn't do what we want. ("I prayed for a Porsche and all I got was a '94 Beetle.") But what's here is so much more. It isn't that they didn't get anything. They (and

***"..we know
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we) clearly got something, and the more we look at it (the more the writers of our New Testament looked at it), the clearer it is that it must have been God's supreme gift. The most important, profound, powerful gift of all. How do we know? Not from doctrine about sin and death and all that. That follows. At its simplest, at its source, we know

because it cost him so much. We can be assured – Jesus' agony in Gethsemane assures us – that this is absolutely God's best.

God's best, yet it was a surprise. Here is where it turns to understanding ourselves. At its heart, to understand what God brings is to understand what we need. The Church gives it a name: the problem is Sin, the need is Redemption. Yet how deep the need must be.

Maybe, for this week, we might look past the technical terms and just watch...and let the watching speak to our hearts. Watch as he prays with his disciples, as he celebrates a Last Supper, as he groans in Gethsemane, as he dies on a cross. Perhaps we can never fully understand. But we can know, in our hearts, I needed this, I need this now. *This* is his desire to bring us home. And in the end, kneel in awe, and thank him.

—Bob Henderson

Readings

Sunday, April 5

Mark 8:31-33

Jesus tells his disciples about His suffering and death to come, and of His resurrection. He even gets angry when Peter rebuked Him. Why was it important for Christ to suffer and die?

Monday, April 6

Mark 9:30-32

Jesus tells his disciples a second time of His suffering, death and resurrection. Again, His disciples didn't understand, and were afraid to ask Him. What do you hesitate to ask the Lord about your life? Ask the Holy Spirit to hear your deepest concerns.

Tuesday, April 7

Mark 10:32-34

On the road to Jerusalem, Jesus speaks a third time about his death. The disciples and other followers were very afraid. How does fear of the future affect your ability to stand strong?

Wednesday, April 8

Matthew 26:14-16

Judas agrees to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. Have you ever felt betrayed? What would it take for you to forgive as Jesus did?

Maundy Thursday, April 9

Luke 22:14-23

Jesus prepares the Lord's Supper as part of the Passover feast. What does it mean to you to take part in the Lord's Supper?

Good Friday, April 10

John 19:8-16

So that God's purpose is fulfilled, Jesus is falsely accused and convicted. What were the different perspectives on "power" as seen by Jesus and Pilate? How do you draw on the ultimate power of God to face the challenges in your life?

Holy Saturday, April 11

John 19:28-30

Consider the cost of our salvation to Jesus; to the Father. What response does it evoke from you today?

Don't have a Bible? Access these scriptures at biblegateway.com.