



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: Triumph and a Donkey
Speaker: Helen Kim Nowalk, Pastor of Small Groups & Community Life
Scripture: Matthew 21:1-11

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage 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[b] to the Son of David!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"[c]

"Hosanna[d] in the highest heaven!"

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?"

The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

Matthew 21:1-11 (NIV)

Sermon Outline:

In this passage, we see Jesus as he enters Jerusalem on a slow-moving baby donkey. Jesus starts his travel from the Mount of Olives down to Jerusalem, a downward move towards where people are, out of freedom towards his death. His followers celebrate Jesus as he enters, but just five days later the people will call to have him crucified.

We want to pay attention to three aspects of this passage:

- Jesus' ride of choice: Jesus enters Jerusalem on a baby donkey. A slow-moving, stubborn, animal that is not very impressive. He didn't arrive on a stallion, as was the normal custom for leaders. Jesus arrives on a donkey because he doesn't want any barriers for people to approach him.
- The road Jesus took: He did not take the upward road but took the downward road. He moves downward towards the hands that were looking for him, the very people who were looking to kill him. Jesus takes the downward road that leads to His death.
- Crowds: The crowds and his followers were all around him, making noise, celebrating and praising Him but in five days they would cry out for him to be crucified. Jesus didn't use his voice to bring attention to himself or try and get out of the situation he was in, instead he was silent.

Jesus is the unexpected king and moves in unexpected ways. He comes down because sometimes we can't come to Him, or even know to go to Him, we are stuck. He moves to be with us wherever we are, so we can be with him. At certain times in our life, we can become disillusioned and wonder if God is with us. Often in life we cannot control things: employment, relationships, financial strain, health--because we are full of limits. At the heart of our relationship with God is remembering that we have a good God, even in the midst of our brokenness and times of anxiety and stress.

How do we hold on to the truth that God is a good God?

- Reflect - take time to reflect in scripture.
- Release - turn your palms down in order to release where you are feeling glad/sad/anxious/happy and give that to God.
- Receive - turn your palms upward in a posture of receiving the love of God.

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday, Helen Kim Nowalk, Pastor of Small Groups & Communities, offers words of encouragement and hope to help keep us grounded in the love of Jesus, remembering that he is a good God.

Sermon Questions:

1. How does this scripture connect for you the topic that was discussed today? What words resonate with you? Why?
2. In your family of origin, what qualities were admirable in leadership? Are they the same values or ideas we see in Christ?
3. What times in your life can you recall celebrating Christ versus times you feel and wonder if He is absent? What questions arise on who Jesus is?
4. Today we are all facing some sort of limits in our life. What limits are you facing today? What reaction do those limits cause inside of you? Accepting those limits and recognizing that you are not in control, how can you draw near to Christ this week? Look for him to move in unexpected ways in your life.