

A story is told about a donkey that awakened, his mind still savoring the afterglow of the most exciting day of his life. Never before had he felt such a rush of pleasure and pride.

He walked into town and found a group of people by the well. "I'll show myself to them," he thought.

But they didn't notice him. They went on drawing their water and paid him no mind.

"Throw your garments down," he said crossly. "Don't you know who I am?"

They just looked at him in amazement. Someone slapped him across the tail and ordered him to move.

"Miserable heathens!" he muttered to himself. "I'll just go to the market where the good people are. They will remember me."

But the same thing happened. No one paid any attention to the donkey as he strutted down the main street in front of the market place.

"The palm branches! Where are the palm branches!" he shouted. "Yesterday, you threw palm branches!"

Hurt and confused, the donkey returned home to his mother.

"Foolish child," she said gently. "Don't you realize that without Him, you are just an ordinary donkey?"

Just like the donkey that carried Jesus in Jerusalem, we are most fulfilled when we are in the service of Jesus Christ. Without him, all our best efforts are like "filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6) and amount to nothing. When we lift up Christ, however, we are no longer ordinary people, but key players in God's plan to redeem the world.

Let's us pray

Sermon is entitled: Celebrate Jesus Christ

Scripture this morning comes from Mathew 21:1-11

Palm Sunday is a day which we recognize every year by purchasing palms and waving them in the air during our worship service. This Palm Sunday is different than any others we have ever experienced. We can't gather to wave our palms together within our worship service, but we can still celebrate this Sunday for the same reasons that Jesus followers and worshippers congregated on this particular day.

Jesus knew now was the time for his followers to assemble for this Palm Sunday festival. As we delve into this Matthew 21:1-11 scripture passages we understand that Jesus gives some specific and detailed instructions to his two disciples. They were asked to go into the village to find a donkey tied to her colt.

Jesus instructed his disciples to bring it to Him. Jesus gave explicit details in order for the disciples to obey him. Our Lord guided his faithful disciples so they could fulfill the Old Testament prophesy in Zechariah 9:9, “Say to the Daughter of Zion, see your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

They obtained the colt so Jesus could ride into Jerusalem as the crowd and the disciples celebrated and praised His holy name. Jesus riding on a donkey represented him being a Prince of Peace. If he rode on a horse, it would have meant that he was bent on war. Jesus came into this world in a humbling manner and his purpose was to bring people to some form of peace in their lives. Whether persons were healed physically, emotionally, mentally, many of them developed an inner peace as a result of an encounter with the Lord.

Many of the people in the crowd shouted “Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” This instant the people took the time to praise and worship the Lord. It was a praise and worship moment to sing and adore God as they stopped everything just to lie down the cloaks and palms to the Lord.

If it had been in today’s time, channel 12 news, CNN, Fox and CBS news would have been present. Jesus triumphal entry would have been breaking news

made the 12 noon, six o' clock and 11pm broadcasting times. He would have been featured on Instagram, Twitter and went live on Facebook. This entry was noteworthy and would have gone viral. As a matter of fact, Jesus' ministry has gone viral because here we are in 2020 and we still celebrating Palm Sunday. Today, many churches Protestant, Catholic, Non-denominational and other churches celebrate this Sunday with palms. Yes, it is truly a celebration, when we can stop the normal business as usual and acknowledge the King of King, Lord of Lords, the Messiah comes into town and we as Christians must recognize, salute and thank Him. Today, the palms would have been waved as a reminder of the triumphal entry of Jesus going into Jerusalem. The palm trees meant success and Jesus obtains total victory by the work he finished on the cross. We are victorious based on Jesus' death and triumph over death by the resurrection of our Savior.

In this moment, all kinds of people were present as he rode into this busy city. The crowd was loud, unashamedly willing to shout and give Jesus the glory for the miracles, the healings, the deliverances, the resurrections, the teaching, and the feeding of the 5000 and 4000. Surely, some of these people were in that crowd willingly acknowledging the goodness and the blessings they have experienced because of the one touch they encountered from Jesus Christ.

Yet, in the midst of the celebration and the shouting, someone in the city asked the question due to a big stirring caused by Jesus, "Who Is This?" Some of

the persons in the city hadn't heard about him. In addition, they hadn't been touched by the Lord. So, people in the city wanted to know an explanation of who was coming to town. This section of the crowd didn't have a clue. Tom Barnard writes, "Some of the crowd was clueless. They never got it right. They shouted praises. He wept. They looked for a warrior-king riding a white stallion. They got a carpenter riding a donkey. They wanted hype. They got a healer. They wanted a prophet. They got One who fulfilled prophecy. They wanted a scepter. They got a Savior. They got nothing they asked for but everything they needed. Only they never got it. They were clueless. Jesus was the only One there who really knew what was happening on that first Palm Sunday. It's so easy to become like those people in Jerusalem. We think we know what's going on, but we really don't have a clue. We have a bad week, and we blame God. Our kids act out, and we blame the school. We work two jobs and wonder why things aren't better at home. Jesus comes to our town, and He wants to help; but we don't recognize Him for who He is. We think He will be impressed with our boats and our businesses and our stuff. He is not. He wants our hearts. That's what Palm Sunday is all about." Even in the midst of the Coronavirus where people are out of work, sitting at home, watching TV, reading, looking at social media and the list continues, God still wants our hearts. He desires time spent with Him.

We have a reason to praise God now more than ever. Now we have the time to thank God for the smallest things like a warm home, food on our table, family and friends who checks on us, and for the ability to pray and sing praises to our Lord. Jesus even in this day is worthy of our praise.

In the Luke 19:28-44 there is a similar story about Palm Sunday. Jesus actually wept when he came into Jerusalem, maybe because they didn't completely accept or understand his total mission. But there were a group of persons who appreciated him and got an opportunity to express their gratitude and thanks to Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee. No matter how many bibles have been distributed by the Gideons and other organizations, we still have countries, cities, rural areas, etc. that don't know, trust or believe in God. Yet, we are the people who know Jesus as our Savior and healer. Since, this rings true for us, we must be prepared to share the good news and respond to him on all levels.

Once we truly understand all that Jesus gives to us, we can't be ashamed to share and praise God's holy name. On an emotional level God had delivered us from some emotional bondage and some mental challenges, yet we sometimes forget to acknowledge our Lord for everything he gives to us. On a physical sense many of us are aware that he healed so many people from their physical limitations, like the blind man, the woman with the issue of blood for 12 years, the paralytic that sat by the pool for over 30 years and the bent over woman. Each

person was healed in a variety of methods, but that doesn't matter, what matters the most on this Palm Sunday is taking the time to say thank you, I appreciate you Lord for changing my life.

All of our lives have been changed. We aren't the same person we were before we met Jesus Christ. As we continue to grow in the Lord, hopefully, we keep transitioning in our lives to become better Christians, closer to God and more obedient in our relationship to our Lord and Savior.

In many cases, not only did the healing change the lives of people in the crowd, people economically were blessed as well. In the past while persons dealt with their physical limitations, this status could have prohibited them from working and the ability to take care of themselves. Now, once their realities change, their mental, emotional and economical status has greatly improved. Transformational leadership could be described as one of Jesus's characteristics. Surely, he had a revolutionary ministry that ministered to people's greatest need. While, he addressed the physical need many other areas were addressed simultaneously to improve a person's entire lives.

Plenty good news can be gained from this passage that centers on the crowd's response to Jesus's entry into the city of Jerusalem. Our Lord is worthy of every bit of our praise. The word of God says in Luke's version of the triumphal

entry, But some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, rebuke Your disciples!” 40 “I tell you, “He said, “if they remain silent, the very stones will cry out.” , in essence Jesus says “if we don’t praise Him the rocks will cry out”. Let’s shout our loud Hosanna’s to the Lord, praise him for every little and big thing from God.

Now, as soon as this wonderful celebration is over, Jesus prepares for his final days on this earth. Soon, he will be in the upper room with his disciples sharing their last supper together, washing the feet of the disciples including Judas, knowing the religious leaders were plotting against him, tears like bloodshed in the Garden of Gethsemane, experiencing the betrayal of Judas, Peter denying his association with Jesus, the trial by Pilate, and soon the crucifixion.

This week let’s find all kinds of reasons to celebrate the goodness of the Lord. If you have been healed, delivered, fed, spoken to by the Holy Spirit, forgiven, and in His presence, we have a reason to celebrate. So, take this week to thank God for all things and to appreciate Jesus for all the blessing he has bestowed on us.

God Bless you and Amen