

JESUS' HUMBLE KINGSHIP

Mark 11:1-19

Key Verse: 11:10

"Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest heaven."

In chapters 1-10, Jesus revealed that he is the Messiah through his life and words and miracles, and he taught what kind of Messiah he came to be: he must suffer and die and rise again to save us from sin and death. Jesus often referred to himself as "the Son of Man." It was a messianic title for the key figure in God's redemptive history. Nevertheless, he humbled himself as a servant, saying, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (10:45). Jesus especially served his ambitious disciples with great patience. Jesus bore all their weaknesses until they became God's history makers. They learned Jesus' servant leadership and served people with Jesus' mindset. To be a leader in the Christian church, one must learn Jesus' servant leadership.

Now, in chapters 11-13, Jesus reveals another aspect of his identity: Jesus is Lord. During his last week on earth, he intentionally taught his Lordship. Why did he emphasize his Lordship at this time? He wanted people to have a full understanding of who he is. As Peter proclaimed, in Acts 2:36, Jesus is both Lord and Messiah. Many people emphasize that Jesus is the Messiah, who forgives our sins, heals our diseases, and bears all our weaknesses with unconditional love, and who is our Friend, Advocate, and Comforter. This is all true. And in the time of need, we can come to Jesus and receive his grace freely. But Jesus is more than that. Jesus is the Lord. After his death on the cross for our sins God raised Jesus from the dead and demonstrated with power that Jesus is the Son of God and the Lord of all (Ro 1:4). People need Jesus, not only as our Savior, but also as our Lord who reigns over us with peace and love. We should have a right attitude toward him. We should not think of Jesus only as a benefit giver. We should listen to Jesus and obey and worship him. Then we can live a truly blessed life and be fruitful. Let's learn Jesus' Lordship.

In today's passage we can learn Jesus' Lordship in three ways: First, Jesus claimed ownership of a colt on the basis of his Lordship (1-6); Second, Jesus demonstrated his kingship by entering Jerusalem in a way that fulfilled

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prophecy (7-11); Third, Jesus exercised his authority as Judge in cursing a fig tree and by clearing the temple (12-19).

First, “The Lord needs it” (1-6). Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem was not for the purpose of political conquest. It was to fulfill God’s will to die for the sins of the world as was prophesied, and so set us free from the power of sin and the devil. The essence of his victory was spiritual, not political. That is why we call this “the triumphal entry.” Jesus and his disciples came to Bethphage and Bethany on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, very near the city of Jerusalem (1). Here Jesus prepared his entry into Jerusalem by sending two of his disciples, saying, **“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”** (2). This is really strange. The disciples must have been surprised at Jesus’ words. It sounds like he was sending them to steal someone’s donkey. They could end their career as disciples in jail on the charge of grand theft. But right away Jesus explained, **“If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly’”** (3). Jesus revealed himself as the Lord.

What does “The Lord” mean? The Lord is the Creator God. Ironically, however, Jesus seemed to have nothing. Once, a disciple candidate said to Jesus, **“I will follow you wherever you go.”** Jesus replied, **“Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head”** (Lk 9:57-58). Jesus had no house, no donkey—ancient car—and no bank account. But in fact Jesus is the Creator God. John 1:3 says, **“Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”** Colossians 1:16 says, **“For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.”** Jesus is the owner of everything. The donkey’s human owner was just a steward; the real owner of the donkey was Jesus. So Jesus was not stealing the donkey; he was claiming what rightfully belonged to him. Jesus is the real owner not only of this donkey, but of all things, including our houses, lands, bank accounts, cars, and so on. Furthermore, Jesus is the real owner of our children, spouse, and even our very lives.

When God created heaven and earth, he gave us the mission to take care of the earth. God is the owner; we are just stewards. What is the

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steward's job? It is to take care of the master's property, and prosper the master's estate. While we are living in this world for a certain period—50, 70, or 90 years, we are free to manage and use the things God has entrusted to us. The time will come when God calls us to return to him, and then we will have to leave this world and go to him. At that time we will have to give an account to him. We don't know when this will happen. So we should develop a lifestyle of using our time, energy, money and even our lives for God's purpose and glory. Whenever the Lord needs something we should give it to him right away. The problem is that we sometimes feel a sense of loss. It is due to the illusion that we are owners. In truth, when we use things only for ourselves, they have no meaning. But whatever we give to God for his use becomes glorious. We should live with this attitude as stewards of our Lord Jesus. We can find many who do so.

David Green is the founder and owner of Hobby Lobby, an arts and crafts chain in the United States, worth about three billion dollars. He learned Christian faith from his parents. Mr. Green said, "If you have anything or if I have anything, it's because it's been given to us by our Creator...So I have learned to say, 'Look, this is yours, God. It's all yours. I'm going to give it to you.'" In this way he has given over 350 million dollars to advance God's kingdom in various ways. Though a billionaire, he still flies economy class. He believes that using his life and property in this way will bear fruit throughout eternity. He is a good steward. We are stewards not only of our property, but also of our time, energy, youth, talents, and so on. In terms of youth, for the last 34 years I have offered my life to God in spite of all my weaknesses and shortcomings. I confess that being used by God is my true glory. As C.T. Studd said in his famous poem, "Only one life, 'twill soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last."

How did the disciples carry out their mission? Usually, when we do not understand an instruction, it is hard to obey. Rather, we become rebellious. In the disciples' case, there was a danger of this. But they trusted and simply obeyed Jesus. They were like well-trained soldiers. They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway (4). Some people asked, "**What are you doing, untying that colt?**" (5) They answered as Jesus had told them to. Surprisingly the people said, "Okay. Please take it and use it as the Lord needs." And they let them go (6). When the Lord used the donkey, it became a most glorious donkey down through history. Likewise, when we offer

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anything to be used by God, it becomes most glorious. Through this event, Jesus revealed that he is the omniscient God. He knew from afar where the donkey was, and the mind of its owner, and how to get the donkey. God knows everything. David said, “**You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways**” (Ps 139:2-3). The disciples could experience Jesus’ omniscience and the power of his words when they obeyed him. We too can experience this when we trust and obey Jesus. Jesus is the real owner of American college campuses. As we proclaim his name, he works to plant the gospel and advance his kingdom through us. Recently, we have seen an increase of Muslim influence on American campuses. Last week, Duke University, which has a Christian heritage, nearly allowed the Muslim call to prayer to ring out from their chapel. It was stopped by the strong protest of alumni. It is time for Jesus’ people to proclaim his Lordship on our campuses. As we do, he will win the victory and advance his reign. Let’s stand for Christ.

Second, Jesus is King (7-11). When the disciples brought the colt to Jesus, they threw their cloaks over it, and he sat on it (7). Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields (8). It was like “rolling out the red carpet” in our times. It signified welcoming Jesus as their king. People were very excited. They went ahead of Jesus and followed behind him. What were they saying? Let’s read verses 9b-10: “**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 heaven!**” Jesus entered Jerusalem as a king, receiving praise, honor and worship from the people. He is a king, but his entry was not typical. Usually kings enter a city in a way that demonstrates their power and glory and establishes their authority through intimidation. People tremble before them and bow in submission. In contrast, Jesus entered on a donkey’s colt. His feet may have touched the ground. The donkey was joyful, but really struggling hard to bear Jesus’ weight. Jesus’ entourage was not made up of sharply dressed soldiers, but ordinary, country disciples, poor people and children. Nobody felt intimidated by Jesus, but everyone could approach him freely as a friend. They really welcomed Jesus as king from their hearts with a joyful, celebratory spirit. What a coronation it was! This coronation reveals Jesus’ humble kingship. Jesus entered Jerusalem in this way to fulfill God’s prophecy. Some 500 years before this, Zechariah prophesied: “**Rejoice**

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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” (Zech 9:9, ESV). Americans have a kind of allergic reaction to kings. In fact, most people don’t like kings. It is because they experienced the brutality of evil rulers. But Jesus is quite different. He is a humble, gentle, righteous king who gives us salvation. This Jesus is coming to us as our king. Praise Jesus!

“Hosanna!” means “Save us now!” Why did people welcome Jesus with this expression? They desperately longed for a king like David to rule over them. David was a shepherd king who took care of his people with God’s heart, but his kingdom did not last. It was a shadow of the messianic kingdom which God promised would come. Now Jesus came as the Messiah, fulfilling God’s promise (Lk 1:32-33). When the people shouted “Hosanna!” they may have been hoping for freedom from Roman oppression. But the deeper cry of their hearts was for freedom from the power of sin and death, which Satan uses to torment people night and day (Heb 2:14-15). This is the real heart cry of many in our times. Many college students look fine outwardly. But inwardly they experience meaninglessness and have no direction; they suffer from fear, anxiety, sorrow and depression. They are shouting, “Hosanna! Save us now!” Who can save them? Politicians? Soldiers? Entertainers? Professors? Psychologists? Entrepreneurs? Only Jesus can save us from sin and Satan. This is why Jesus entered Jerusalem. In Jerusalem he would die for our sins and rise from the dead to rescue us from sin and Satan. He humbly rules over us with love and peace. Jesus is the king of peace, love and justice. We really need this king, Jesus. Let’s accept Jesus as our king!

Third, Jesus is Judge (12-19). When we see Jesus entering Jerusalem, riding on a donkey’s colt, he is so humble and gentle. But in this part, we see another side of Jesus, as Judge. The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry (12). Maybe no one was concerned about Jesus’ breakfast, so he decided to solve the problem by himself. Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. It was not the season for figs. However, the appearance of leaves indicated the possibility of fruit. But Jesus did not find any fruit. Then he said, **“May no one ever eat fruit from you again”** (14a). Why did Jesus curse this fig tree? Was he angry because he was hungry? That could be my case, but not Jesus’ case. The words, **“And his**

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disciples heard him say it” (14b), give us a clue. He wanted to teach them a lesson through an audiovisual demonstration. Though the tree looked healthy and fruitful outwardly, it was fruitless. So Jesus cursed it. Jesus’ criterion for judging is fruit (Mt 7:19-20). The same applies to any individual, community or nation. Verses 15-18 indicate that when Jesus cursed the fig tree, he must have had in mind the temple and the Jewish religious leaders.

On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts (15a). Instead of hearing the sound of prayer, hymn singing, and Bible teaching, he heard the sound of animals, “baaaa,” “cooooo,” and the shouts of merchants, “Two doves for a shekel!” When Jesus saw this scene, he was consumed with zeal for God’s house (Jn 2:17). He began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts (15b-16). Humble and gentle Jesus suddenly became fiery. It was righteous anger against the greed and worldliness of those who should be shepherds. It was a preview of God’s impending judgment upon Jerusalem. Jesus is the God of love and peace. At the same time, Jesus is the God of righteousness and justice.

Jesus’ main issue with the religious leaders was that as stewards of God’s temple, they had not fulfilled his purpose for it. Let’s read verse 17, **“And as he taught them, he said, ‘Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it a ‘den of robbers.’”** At the center of the temple was the Ark of the Covenant, which held the Ten Commandments. The temple was the place to hear the words of God, repent, receive forgiveness of sins, and pray to God. The temple court should have been accessible to people of all nations. That is why Jesus called it “a house of prayer for all nations.” Jesus had God’s vision in his heart, as Isaiah 2:3 foretells, that people of all nations would stream into the Jerusalem temple to hear the words of God and worship him. The religious leaders totally ignored God’s vision and took advantage of their privilege with a business mind. So Jesus judged them, and the temple was later destroyed in A.D. 70. But the function of the temple was fulfilled by Jesus through his suffering, death and resurrection. Now Jesus is the temple. He is the head of the church and all who believe in him are members of his body. God’s vision and purpose for the church is to proclaim the gospel to all nations. We Christians must share this vision and pray for all nations.

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Furthermore, the Bible tells us that our bodies are now the temples of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 say, “**Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.**” If Jesus is not at the center of our hearts, and instead something else is there—such as money or worldly pleasures or selfish ambition—Jesus will be angry. Jesus should be the center of our personal lives and our community. Whatever we do should be for Jesus’ glory and purpose. The religious leaders should have repented. Instead they began looking for a way to kill Jesus. But they were afraid of the people, who were amazed by Jesus’ teaching. So they could do nothing (18). When evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city (19).

Jesus is Lord! Jesus is the Creator God. He is the owner of our lives and all that we have. Though he is Lord of all, he came to this world as a humble king who died for our sins. Through his resurrection Jesus became King of kings. Let’s accept Jesus as our king, taking off our cloaks and spreading them before him so that Jesus may rule our hearts with love and peace. As Jesus needs, let’s offer our lives and possessions and everything to Jesus. And let’s pray for the people of all nations, especially young college students.