

The Gospel According to Mark - Hail the King

"Hail the King" (Mark 11:1-11)

Andrew Ogea - 04/14/19

Good morning. I hope that you all have been experiencing growth in your relationship with Jesus. That you are putting hope in him in your circumstances, relying on him in your trials, and giving priority to him in your life.

For a few months now, we have been walking through the Gospel of Mark, verse by verse. Pastor Larry has been so faithful to study, prepare, and proclaim God's word each week and I am grateful for the opportunity today to share with you. So, if you would, please turn in your Bibles or your Bible app to Mark 11:1-11.

If you have been following along the past few months, you realize that we are skipping ahead a bit from where Pastor Larry left off last week. We did this because today is Palm Sunday, and we considered it fitting for us to look at the text which began the tradition of celebrating Palm Sunday.

This story is included in each of the four Gospels, and it is usually called "The Triumphal Entry" because it is at this point in his ministry that Jesus enters Jerusalem for the final few days of his life.

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of what we call the Passion week—a seven-day period beginning with Christ's triumphal entry, his death by crucifixion, and ending with his resurrection on Easter.

Prior to the triumphal entry, our Gospel writer, Mark, has building up to this point with incredible stories of Jesus' ministry in Galilee: his call to his disciples, his teachings, his parables, his miracles.

Right before his entry to Jerusalem, the legend has spread everywhere of the man who restores sight to the blind, feeds thousands with a few fish and loaves, commands and casts out demons, walks on water, and raises a dead man to life, just to name a few. The people wondered, could this be the long-awaited messiah?

I have been reflecting on this message for a couple of weeks. I've been reading through it over and over again. During that time, I watched a documentary about Ted Williams, a Hall of Fame baseball player. The film portrayed Williams as a hard, crude, and unforgiving man until his later years when he softened some.

Williams gained notoriety because of his relentless pursuit of perfecting the art of hitting a baseball. Throughout his career, Williams stated his goal in life was to have people point to him and remark, "There goes Ted Williams, the greatest hitter who ever lived."

In 1941, he earned a .406 batting average for the season. No player had ever before averaged over .400, and it is a record that has not been surpassed since. Think about that, for every 10 times he came up to the plate, he would get at least 4 hits.

And hitting a baseball is arguably the hardest thing to do in sports. And guess what, he got what he desired. When he made public appearances, he would be announced as "The greatest hitter of all time."

Funny enough though, at an all-star game in the 90's, he and fellow hall of famer Joe DiMaggio were announced back-to-back, with Williams being announced as "the greatest hitter of all time," but DiMaggio insisted that he be announced as "the greatest living player of all time."

The competitive nature of human beings is remarkable. It doesn't matter if it is a sport, genre of music, writer, leadership position, wealth, popularity, beauty, or a warrior; there will always be debate in any arena as to who is the greatest of all time, or the G.O.A.T., as that term is now called.

But, it is especially true in sports. From Mohammad Ali who claimed "I am the greatest," to Lebron James who recently declared publicly that he believes himself to be the G.O.A.T. in basketball. I think Michael Jordan is still the G.O.A.T., but the debate continues.

But what about the spiritual life? Who is the greatest spiritual leader of all time? No debate, right? Yet, there is. Search that online. The top site that comes up lists the fourteen of the greatest spiritual leaders of all time, and they have Jesus ranked as #10 behind the likes of Buddha, Mohammad, and Confucius.

When I considered the title for the message, I first wanted to title it, "The Red Carpet for the G.O.A.T.," because as our story will show, the crowd recognized the greatness of Jesus and ushered him into the

Jerusalem. But I felt the strong conviction in view of this passage that even the term “The Greatest of All Time” is beneath Jesus.

He is the KING over all, not just the greatest of all time in one area. And today we will look at three out of many reasons why Jesus is KING, and as a result, why he should be hailed as the King over everything, all creation, all kingdoms, all other kings, all people, and by us. Let's start by reading our text, Mark 1:1-6.

Mark 11:1 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples,

Mark 11:2 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.

Mark 11:3 If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.’”

Mark 11:4 They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it,

Mark 11:5 some people standing there asked, “What are you doing, untying that colt?”

Mark 11:6 They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go.

In verse one, we find out that Jesus has just returned to Bethpage and Bethany. Bethany was a little village about two miles from Jerusalem on the eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives which is the home-town of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, the man whom Jesus raised from dead. Bethany would be the home base of Jesus during the final days before his arrest.

It is from Bethany, that Jesus directs his disciples to accomplish a few tasks for him as he prepares for his entrance into Jerusalem. At a glance, you might read right over this, but these few directions of Christ reveal a powerful attribute of his kingship: He is the king of authority.

Hail the King:

1. Of Authority (v. 1-6)

Jesus has all authority, and he is calling the shots here. Jesus tells two of his disciples to go to a neighboring village, and there they will find a colt. “Untie it and bring it to me.”

I can just imagine the reaction of those disciples, if not verbally, then by the looks on their faces, was one of confusion. They probably looked at each other in disbelief: “is he really telling us to go steal some dude’s colt.” Maybe it was reassuring to them when Jesus said, “if someone asks, then just tell them the Lord needs it and that you’ll bring it back.” Who knows?

I suppose it would be a modern equivalent to going up to Picayune, and hopping on a farmer’s tractor, turning it on, and as your driving away, the farmer says, “What are you doing with my tractor?” It’s okay, everything is alright because the Lord needs it. Carry on.

But that is exactly what happens with they go there. They find everything just as Jesus said, and everything turns out just as he said. But, how does Jesus know this colt will be there? Some speculate he made arrangements with owner of the colt. Others may suggest that he had seen the colt before arrival.

But, it says he sent his disciples to the village “ahead of you,” which gives the impression that Jesus just knew. So here, Jesus is proving, he is the king of authority, first, because of his omniscience – his foreknowledge; he proves his ability to know something before it takes place.

Next, I want to show you something else about the authority of the king and it comes from his decision to ride on this colt. Now, we learn from Matthew’s gospel account that the colt is the offspring of a donkey.

Although Mark does not specifically provide a reference for this, this detail is actually included in a messianic prophecy from the prophet Zechariah. Matthew includes it in his account, and that is why we can be confident that Mark likely had it in mind. Let's read what the prophet Zechariah wrote over 500 years before this event.

Zech. 9:9 Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Isn't that incredible; written 500 years beforehand. And, then there is another important detail that Mark gives about this young donkey: he is tied up. This detail of the donkey being tethered alludes to another

messianic prophecy in Genesis 49:10-11, which says:

Gen. 49:10 The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his.

Gen. 49:11 He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch; he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes.

Jesus is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and with this detail, Mark is helping us to make this connection that Jesus is the fulfillment of the messianic prophecies.

And, then we find that Jesus even exceeded the prophecy with one additional detail about this donkey, which is that it had never been ridden before. You see, in Biblical culture, an animal devoted to a sacred task must be one that had not been put to ordinary use.

An animal used for sacrifice would not be put to ordinary use first. Nor, was an animal put to ordinary use whose purpose was to carry a king, just like this donkey, who was not fit for ordinary use, but to carry King Jesus.

The King of Authority is omniscient, in control of the future, but we recognize him as the fulfillment of the past. This redemption story written throughout the Old Testament is being fulfilled in Jesus Christ to the point that he is beginning to initiate the very things that will lead to his death. He said it himself in John 10:17-18:

Jn 10:17 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again.

Jn 10:18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

So, I want to ask you this, if Jesus is in control of the future, and he is the fulfillment of the past, do you hail him as King in the present? Do you submit to Jesus as your king? Do you allow his authority to cover your life, your relationships, fears, troubles, your finances, or your calling as his disciple?

Maybe he is calling you right now to do something bold for him right now. Do you submit to his authority? We should hail the King of Authority. Let's look further in our story, continuing on in verses 7:

Mark 11:7 When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it.

We find a second characteristic of the kingship of Jesus in these verses. He is the king of humility.

Hail the King:

1. Of Authority (v. 1-6)

2. Of Humility (v. 7)

I want to read that prophecy in Zechariah one more time.

Zech. 9:9 Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

See, your king comes lowly. This passage is typically named the triumphal entry, but Jesus' declaration as king seems to be the opposite of triumphant. In our narrative, Jesus is preparing to ride into Jerusalem on a donkey to let them know that King has arrived, but he comes in lowliness, meekness, and humility.

Listen to what the Apostle Paul writes about the King of Humility:

Phil. 2:6 [Jesus] Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

Phil. 2:7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

Phil. 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Jesus knew all of this when the disciples took off their cloaks and placed them on the donkey. He knew his destiny when he took his seat on the colt to begin his entry to the city. We have already talked about how

Jesus fulfilled the prophecies by riding on the donkey, but do you wonder why he chose a donkey in the first place?

I found it interesting and many of you may have already known that a donkey is also called a “beast of burden.” They are called that because of the incredible loads they haul on their backs, the burden that they carry for their master. It is their life, what many are bred to do. I think the symbolism here is simply amazing.

The fact that Jesus chose this donkey to ride on was to demonstrate his humility as a servant to follow the plans and the purpose of God. The lowly, humble servant came to Jerusalem to suffer and die.

He came as a king who would not wear a crown of jewels, but a crown of thorns. He came not to be seated on a golden throne, but to hang by his hands and feet, enthroned on a cross. When he came he knew he would not be hailed as hero, but hailed as the chief of fools.

Jesus is heading to the cross for all the sins of the world and I think his purpose is communicated perfectly by riding on the back of the beast of burden. Do you hail the king of humility? Do you humble yourself before him? Psalm 138:6 says,

Psalm 138:6 Though the Lord is great, he cares for the humble, but he keeps his distance from the proud. (NLT)

The prophet Isaiah also writes:

Isaiah 66:1 This is what the Lord says: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Could you build me a temple as good as that? Could you build me such a resting place?

Isaiah 66:2 My hands have made both heaven and earth; they and everything in them are mine. I, the Lord, have spoken! “I will bless those who have humble and contrite hearts, who tremble at my word.

The power of King Jesus is of one who has complete authority, but the character of King Jesus is also one of humility. We should respond with humble and contrite hearts, and hail the king of humility.

The final aspect of Jesus’s kingship in our passage today is found in verses 8-11.

Mark 11:8 Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields.

Mark 11:9 Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, “Hosanna!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Mark 11:10 “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!” “Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

Mark 11:11 Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

One final reason why we should hail Jesus as king is because he is the king of salvation.

Hail the King:

1. Of Authority (v. 1-6)

2. Of Humility (v. 7)

3. Of Salvation (v. 8-11)

Here, the crowd throws their cloaks on the ground. This is something that would have been done to symbolize the crowd’s submission to Jesus as king. The same type of homage was given to King Jehu when the Lord anointed him king of Israel in the book of 2 Kings.

2 Kings 9:12 ‘This is what the Lord says: I anoint you king over Israel.’”

2 Kings 9:13 They quickly took their cloaks and spread them under him on the bare steps. Then they blew the trumpet and shouted, “Jehu is king!”

The crowds grew. More and more people arrive to usher Jesus into Jerusalem. But why? We know from John’s gospel, that many of them came because they heard of him raising Lazarus from the dead. His fame was growing immensely.

And, in addition to spreading cloaks on the road, they also cut branches from the fields. It is also from John's gospel that we learn that they are in fact palm branches. Hence why we call it Palm Sunday.

The palm branch was symbolic for the Jews as well. It symbolized ruling power, Jewish nationalism, and victory. The branches were connected with prominent Jewish victories in previous wars that they had fought.

Just 150 years prior to this, Simon Maccabaeus delivered Jerusalem, and the palm branch became a symbol of the Second Maccabean Revolt. Therefore, in the Jewish culture, the palm branch was used as their way of rolling out the red carpet—which is a modern tradition that initially began as a grand welcome for royalty and has since become a glamorous treatment for celebrities.

But, here is the problem. The people are waving the palms because they believe Jesus is coming as a national figure, a king to defeat their enemies, free them bondage, and establish a new kingdom, free from the oppression of foreign empires, which at this time was the Roman government.

But, do you see the irony. Surely, a king like that would enter the city with a procession resembling other ancient kings on a horse with a sword in hand, with an entourage of war-horses and soldiers, along with the sounds of clanging chains of kings and princes that they had defeated.

It's of no surprise, therefore, that they are shouting, "Hosanna," which means "Save us." Hosanna was a term that was typically a greeting for all of the pilgrims coming for the Passover, which is the celebration of God freeing the Israelites from the tyranny, brutality, and the captivity while they were enslaved by the Egyptians.

They also yell, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord," which comes from Psalm 118, and was a song written to celebrate freedom from the Egyptians. They also shout, "Blessed is the coming kingdom of David," which is clearly a reference to the Messiah. They were expecting a messianic victory from Rome. They were hoping Jesus would purge them of foreign domination.

But, here comes Jesus, slowly riding on the donkey. Could it be that the people had showed up at the right place, placed their cloaks in submission to the right king, but waved the palm branches for all of the wrong reasons?

They didn't realize that the reason Jesus was coming was to purge his people from their own sin. He didn't come to be a temporary political, or military Savior only for the Jews like they were expecting. He came to save the whole world from themselves, from the war in the hearts of humanity caused by sin.

Do you hail the king of salvation? Do you hail King Jesus for the right reasons? Perhaps you have a misunderstanding of why Jesus came. Maybe you are the like the cheering crowd, and are open to the Lord Jesus Christ, but for the wrong reasons: health, wealth, prosperity, success.

As long as Jesus can do these things that I have for him to do, then I'll follow the Lord Jesus Christ. At our men's retreat this weekend we talked about this kind of faith that picks and chooses the things that we like from Christ, while disregarding the rest—similarly to the way we would pick and choose a house to buy. I like this, but I don't like that.

You see, the gospel is not about personal gain or personal prosperity. The gospel is about dying to self, taking up your cross, and following Christ. Jesus did not come into the world to die on a cross to defeat all of your enemies. He died on the cross because we are all enemies of God because of the sin in our hearts.

And, the gospel is about allowing God to reign and rule in your life and to conquer sin in your life. And that is only possible if you hail Jesus as the king of salvation in your life. Jesus is not just the G.O.A.T.—the Greatest of All Time. He is the King over all.

And while he may have died on the cross, next week we are going to celebrate that he rose again to defeat death. And guess what, he is coming again. The first time he came on a little donkey, the second time he will come on a warrior horse.

The first time he came in weakness, the second time he will come in power. The first time he came to save, the second time he is coming to judge. The first time he was given a crown of thorns, the second time he will receive a crown of royalty. The first time, he came with 12 disciples, the second time he will come with an army of angels.

The first time he came to die, the second time he will come to reign as the King of kings and the Lord of lord. That is why we should hail King Jesus. So, on this Palm Sunday, we are going to take the Lord's

Supper to Remember the purpose of Christ's coming into the world to bear the burden of our sins on the cross.

Believers in Christ are invited to visit the tables and eat the bread that represents his body which was given for us and drink the juice that represents his blood poured out for us so that we might become children of God.

Perhaps you are here today, and where you sit right now, you know you haven't rolled out the red carpet for Christ to come into your heart to save you from your sin. Would you have the courage to do so today. I would like to invite to come to the altar and profess your faith in Christ with one of our pastors or leaders here at the front. We would love to pray with you.

For all of you who believe in Christ, as you go to the table, hail the king of salvation in your heart, submit to the king of authority by trusting him with your present circumstances. Humble yourselves before the king of the humility and God will lift you up.

As the band plays this next song, I ask this to be a time of prayer and reflection as you to visit the tables and take of the Lord's Supper in remembrance of King Jesus.