

Main Idea: Jesus preached two powerful, wordless sermons in Mark 11:1-11, both of which teach us much about His true identity and mission.

- I. Jesus preached by riding a colt into Jerusalem (1-10).
  - A. Consider what He did.
    1. He told His disciples to bring a colt.
    2. He entered the city to the applause of the crowd.
    3. He fulfilled Zechariah 9:9.
  - B. Consider what His actions are saying.
    1. He is declaring that He is the Messiah.
    2. He is forcing people to make a decision about Him.
    3. He is bringing about His own cross.
- II. Jesus preached by visiting the temple (11).
  - A. Consider what He did.
    1. He went to the temple.
    2. He looked around at everything in the temple.
    3. He left the temple.
    4. He left the city of Jerusalem.
  - B. Consider what His actions say to us.
    1. Our greatest need isn't what we often think it is.
    2. Our greatest need is to be right with God.
    3. Jesus came to meet that need.

Take Inventory: Let's ask ourselves two vital questions...

1. Is He my King?
2. Is He my greatest treasure?

It's time. For many months now we have been following The Servant, listening to His teaching, marveling at His miracles, watching Him transform lives. But now it's time. It's time for Jesus of Nazareth to enter Jerusalem and fulfill the mission that His Father gave Him in eternity past. It's time for Jesus to rescue hell-bound sinners by dying in their place as a sacrificial lamb on a Roman cross. And that's what He will do in just five days. But on this particular day, this Sunday in AD 30 or so, it's time for Jesus to enter this important city, in a very special way. Let's read the account.

*Scripture Reading: Mark 11:1-11*

Words. We use words every day to communicate. Parents use words. Teenagers use words (in this smart phone age it's like a constant conversation). Coaches use words. Bosses use words. Of course, preachers use words (sometimes too many) to teach the precious truths of God's Word. Words are a good thing, a gift from our Creator who Himself used words to bring this universe into existence.

But sometimes words just can't say it as well as deeds. Sometimes, perhaps *many* times, we preach our most memorable sermons by what we *do* rather than what we *say*.

I don't remember the words he spoke, but I can still picture the sight of Pastor Fissel, fifty years ago now, the man who led me to Christ, weeping on the day he resigned from leading our church. The tears of this departing shepherd communicated quite clearly his love for us.

This church is filled with people who preach powerful messages through loving deeds. It happens every day. And the recipients see the love of Christ manifested in a very tangible way. It certainly is true that, “Actions speak louder than words.”

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<sup>\*\*</sup>Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

<sup>1</sup> For a previous look at this passage, see the Mark series in 2006.

Jesus, the Master Teacher, certainly understood this. It's significant how few words He spoke, at least recorded words, on one of the most important days in His earthly life.

We call it Palm Sunday. This was the day of His triumphal entry, the day The King of kings presented Himself to His subjects in the capital city of Jerusalem. On this Palm Sunday, the Lord Jesus preached two powerful, wordless sermons which are recorded in today's text, Mark 11:1-11. What were these sermons, and what do we learn from them? Let's find out together.

### I. Jesus preached by riding a colt into Jerusalem (1-10).

You know the story. Jesus rode a colt into Jerusalem. But what you may not know was that the colt was much more than a means of transportation. Jesus was sending an unspoken message to all who saw Him. What was it?

Let's set the stage. The Gospel of Mark is a gospel of action. One of the key words in the book is "immediately," which we see again in 10:52. Mark continually allows Jesus' actions, one after another after another, to teach us about the Savior's identity.

The first ten chapters of Mark tell the story of Jesus' life and public ministry up to His final week. But beginning in chapter 11 to the end of the book, Mark puts the spotlight on the events of Jesus' final week, what we call His *Passion week*. And the event that kicked off this final section and final week is the account we're about to consider. In fact, it's so significant that all four Gospel writers include it. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, all record the account of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

This is a significant day and event. Back in Mark 8, Jesus told His disciples that He would soon suffer, be killed, and rise again (8:31). In Mark 9, He repeated the same prediction (9:31). In Mark 10, He states it again, "We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles (10:33)."

Now it's time. In Mark 11 Jesus arrives in Jerusalem to fulfill the plan of God. He will remain in Jerusalem essentially for the rest of Mark's Gospel.

From the reading of Mark's gospel (as well as the other synoptic Gospels penned by Matthew and Luke), we might assume that Jesus didn't go to Jerusalem very often. But in the fourth Gospel account, John makes it clear that Jesus regularly went to Jerusalem, to keep the Jewish feasts, as any obedient Jew would do.

Why don't we see this in the synoptics? It's because the gospel writers are selective, and present only a sampling of events from Jesus' life. The first three gospels focus on Jesus' ministry up north in Galilee, whereas the fourth gospel takes interest in what Jesus did down south in Judea.<sup>2</sup>

But they all tell us what happened on this day, this first day of the week, this significant Sunday when the Messiah entered Jerusalem on a colt. Passover is just days away. Thousands of devout Jews are making this trek to Jerusalem for Passover. The city's population would often triple during this feast, which prompted the occupying Romans to bring in backup troops. They certainly didn't want any revolutionary figure to stir up the crowd. Tensions were always high in Jerusalem at Passover time.

Into this setting, Jesus preached His first wordless sermon in Mark 11. He delivered this sermon for the people then, and for us now. Let's consider it from two perspectives.

**A. Consider what He did.** We begin in verse 1, which says, "Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples." Stop there for a moment and let's remind ourselves of some pertinent background information.

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<sup>2</sup> Barclay, p. 263

Bethany [which means ‘house of dates’] was where Lazarus lived. He’s the man Jesus raised from the dead, as we’re told in John 11. Jesus had performed this amazing miracle not long ago (perhaps a few weeks). The sensation from that dead man walking out of his tomb alive caused Jesus’ popularity to soar in Judea. It also incensed the religious leaders who were aggressively crafting a plot to kill the Lord (John 12:9-11).

Furthermore, it was only a short while ago and a few miles down the road in Jericho that Jesus had healed blind Bartimaeus with hundreds of witnesses present. Everybody was talking about Jesus. The crowds loved Him. The religious establishment hated Him out of jealousy. All eyes were on Him. What would He do next?

He did this.

1. *He told His disciples to bring a colt.* Here’s how it happened. Notice the end of verse 1. “Jesus sent two of his disciples.” Which two? Mark doesn’t give us their names. He does give us some geography.

He mentions Bethphage [which means ‘house of figs’] and Bethany. Both were located on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, just two miles from Jerusalem. The Mount of Olives at 2,700 hundred feet provides a magnificent view of the capital city and especially the temple. This would have been Jesus’ view on this important Sunday.

In verses 2-3, the Lord gave these instructions to the two unnamed disciples. “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it.”<sup>3</sup> If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.’”

The instructions seem kind of strange to our ears. Why does Jesus want a colt? Is He tired of walking? And if so, why doesn’t He just stop and rest? And why an untamed colt? Everyone knows you don’t ride an unriden animal if you’re interested in smooth transportation.

But again, this isn’t about mere transportation. This is a sermon without words, and every first century Jew who saw it or heard about it knew it.

Without question, and likely with great anticipation, the two disciples obeyed their Master’s orders. Mark tells us what happened next in verses 4-6. “And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it.”<sup>5</sup> And some of those standing there said to them, ‘What are you doing, untying the colt?’<sup>6</sup> And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go.”

I’ve wondered why Jesus told His disciples to take the colt without first asking for permission. Some suggest that Jesus Himself had already asked for permission from the unnamed owner, that He had even given him a previously arranged signal: *When I’m ready for the ride I’ll send two of my men who will say, “The Lord needs it,” to verify the legitimacy of the request.*

That’s possible. But there may be another explanation as to why Jesus took the animal without first asking for it.

Listen again to the instructions. *Go into the village. You will find a colt. Untie it. Bring it. If anyone objects, tell them, “The Lord has need of it.”*

What does that sound like? It sounds like something that a person with authority (like a king) would say to His subjects, doesn’t it? These are commands, *orders*, to be precise.

Today’s equivalent would be a man walking out into traffic, holding up his hand, showing his badge, stopping oncoming traffic, then pointing to one particular car and saying, “Get out of your car immediately. I need this vehicle for official business.”

This is a person of authority speaking. This is a king. He is not asking for permission, for a king does not need permission from his subjects. He already owns what he requests.

But this is a king unlike any other king. Most kings use their authority and take what they want. And they don't return what they take either. But not this king. This king takes, yes. It's his right to take. But then he says he will give it back.

What kind of king is this, a king who gives orders, and then promises to give back to his people? This is King Jesus.

We have here a good picture of what happens when Jesus enters our lives. When the Lord comes to us, He doesn't ask for permission to use what we think is ours. He is the king, and He owns all and deserves our all. His reign is not a democracy. It's a monarchy. Jesus is the King and everything exists for Him. We exist for Him. Everything we have is rightfully His.

But He is unlike any other king. Yes, He takes (whatever He wants). But He also gives back to us, far more than we deserve, and everything we truly need.

And as we'll see in a moment, this wordless sermon says much to us about what people thought of this king. Jesus requested the colt, and the owner said yes, indicating he trusted Jesus, that He would do precisely what He said He would do. Which of course, He always does.

There's something else we must see in these instructions. They reveal Jesus' omniscience, don't they? Look again at Jesus' words to the two disciples. They're not just instructions, but predictions. *There will be a colt. You will find it just after you enter the village. It will be tied. It will be an unriden colt.* And, of course, everything Jesus predicted, the disciples found to be true. Everything.

You say, "I thought there were two animals in the story."

There were. Apparently, Mark is giving the abbreviated version of the account. In Matthew's account, Jesus told them to bring a donkey as well as her colt (Matt. 21:2).

So what's the significance of a donkey? It may seem strange to us, but once again to first century Jews, it made perfect sense. In first century Israel, unlike today, a donkey was an important animal, often connected with nobility, even royalty. King David rode a donkey. So did King Solomon. Remember Absalom, and his choice of animal when he tried to usurp his father's throne? He rode a mule<sup>3</sup> (2 Samuel 18:9).

So, what's Jesus doing? I'll say it now and support it from Scripture momentarily. *Jesus is purposefully going public.* Until now, He who is the King of kings has gone out of His way to conceal His true identity from the public. Now He reveals it. This ride on a colt was an intentional, compelling action, and as we'll soon see, the crowd got the message.

Another significant detail. Note that the chosen colt had never been ridden. According to Old Testament guidelines, for an animal to be used for a sacred purpose, it must never have been used for any other purpose (for instance, the *red heifer* in Num. 19:2; Deut. 21:3). This colt was certainly selected to fulfill a sacred purpose, hence, the Lord chose an unriden colt.

This brings us to part two of the first wordless sermon. Notice verses 7, "And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it."

2. *He entered the city to the applause of the crowd.* Why did the people throw their cloaks on this animal? It's not just to pad the ride. They're getting the message.

Indeed, they know what Jesus is saying by riding this donkey, and they like what they are hearing. They are sick and tired of the Roman occupation. They've been waiting for a very special God-sent king for centuries, a Jewish king who would deliver them and establish the kingdom of God.

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<sup>3</sup> A mule is the offspring of a male donkey and a female horse. A mule cannot reproduce.

In verse 8 we're told, "And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields." Again, that sounds strange to us, to throw your cloak on a dirty, manure-spotted road. Unlike us, most first century Jews did not have closets full of clothing. Many had only one cloak. This was BIG. To throw your clothing on the ground so that a donkey could step on it indicated that you believed this rider to be quite important.

Others placed branches on the ground. The word for "branches" (*stibadas*) means "leaves" or "leafy branches." Only John's Gospel mentions these were palm branches (which were not native to Jerusalem and probably came from Jericho). Hence, we call it "Palm Sunday."

But it's not just what the people *did* that indicates they were paying attention to Jesus' wordless sermon. It's what they *said*, too.

We're told in verses 9-10, "And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, '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!'"

Hosanna is Hebrew and literally means "*Save now!*" Barclay points out it occurs in the same form in 2 Samuel 14:4 and 2 Kings 6:26 where it is used by people seeking help and protection from the hands of the king. When the crowd here shouts "Hosanna!" the people are asking God to fulfill His long-standing promise, to *save now!* by the hands of the One who is riding on the back of the colt.

Mark specifically says there were two sets of voices shouting that day. He says there were those in *front* of Jesus and those following *behind* Him. Some suggest this is an antiphonal chant between the people who went before Jesus and those following Him.

*First group:* "Hosanna!"

*Second group:* "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!"

*First group:* "Hosanna in the highest!"<sup>4</sup>

The shout from the crowd is a quotation of Psalm 118:25-26, one of the Hallel ('Praise') psalms. The psalm predicts that someone is coming in the Lord's name, that is, someone who will demonstrate the Lord's authority and power. That special someone deserves to be *blessed*. And that's what they are doing, blessing Him with their voices and actions.

Don't miss this. When the crowds spread their branches and shouted "Hosanna!", it was not a cry of praise to Jesus, as much as it was a cry to God to save His people from Roman oppression. They believe the Messiah has come. They believe God's king has come to establish His kingdom.

Of course, He had come, but not as they thought. Jesus had not come to save Jerusalem from the Romans. He had come to save them (and us) from our sins.

"How did the Jews know Jesus was presenting Himself as King?" you ask.

They knew it because they knew their Bibles. As soon as the Jewish pilgrims saw Jesus riding down the Mount of Olives on a donkey's colt, their minds raced to a prophecy they'd heard all their lives. It was the hope of every devout Jewish person, this prophecy in Zechariah 9:9. This is precisely what Jesus did on that Palm Sunday.

3. *He fulfilled Zechariah 9:9.* Think carefully now. A thousand years before Jesus rode that donkey, God established a covenant with King David, declaring that a descendant of David would rule forever. But four hundred years later, in 586 BC, one of David's offspring, King Zedekiah, was taken into captivity. And God's people waited

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<sup>4</sup> Kent Hughes, p. 82.

and waited. Then around 500 BC, the prophet Zechariah gave a message of hope to his hurting people, found in Zechariah 9:9.<sup>5</sup>

“Your King is coming!” said the prophet. “He will bring salvation!”

“How will we recognize this king?” the people must have wondered.

And Zechariah gave this response. “He will be riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

For the next five hundred years, the Jews waited. They had a glimmer of hope a hundred and fifty years before this. That’s when Simon Maccabaeus entered Jerusalem after defeating Jewish enemies, a story that the crowd in Jesus’ day knew very well.

It’s the story of Simon Maccabaeus which is recorded in the Jewish book of 1 Maccabees, which states, “And he entered into it the three and twentieth day of the seventh month, in the hundred, seventy, and first year, with thanksgiving and branches of palm trees, and with harps, and cymbals, and viols, and hymns and songs, because there was destroyed a great enemy of Israel (13:51).”<sup>6</sup>

But Simon Maccabaeus died, unable to deliver the ultimate hope his people craved. And so, they continued to wait, and wait, and wait. Until this day, when they saw someone else come riding into their city.

Now, let’s consider even more carefully, not just what Jesus did, but what His actions are saying.

**B. Consider what His actions are saying.** To put it plainly, by riding into Jerusalem in this fashion, Jesus is making it plain to all who He is.

1. *He is declaring that He is the Messiah.* He is the One the prophets foretold. He is the Deliverer of Israel. He is Anointed One whom God sent to establish a world-wide eternal kingdom. That was Jesus’ declaration on Palm Sunday. “I am the Messiah,” He said in this sermon without words.

Yet there’s something else He has in mind. By taking this action...

2. *He is forcing people to make a decision about Him.* In fact, He’s forcing them to admit their expectations regarding Him.

The truth is, the people shouting ‘Hosanna’ expected Jesus to be a king like Caesar. But Jesus had come to be a different kind of king. And this He made clear by His choice of animal. We see Him riding, not on a white stallion, but a donkey, with his subjects carrying, not swords but palm branches.

“Conquering by gentleness, that is the Lord’s plan,” as J. D. Jones observes.<sup>7</sup>

It wouldn’t be the last time people came to Jesus with mixed expectations. It’s still happening, even this morning.

Perhaps right now we’re crying out to God, “Hosanna! Save now!” or something like that. That’s good. But what do we want Jesus to save us from? From the difficulties of life? From a physical ailment, or a financial crunch? Or perhaps the anxiety and fear these challenges are revealing in us? Again, it’s always good to bring our problems to the Lord, but in doing so, we must realize that King Jesus has a different agenda. He didn’t come merely to save us from life’s difficulties, and we all have them. He has something else in mind, something far more important.

What is it? Do you remember what He told Pilate the night before He was crucified? He stated clearly, “My kingdom is not of this world.” Let that sink in. If you merely want *this* world, my friend, then you will not be pleased with King Jesus. He didn’t come

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<sup>5</sup> “Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

<sup>6</sup> Taken from W. Barclay, p. 266.

<sup>7</sup> J. D. Jones, p. 400.

to give us more of this world. He came to bring another kingdom *into* this world, the kingdom of God Himself.

Jesus is not a Genie. He is the Son of God Almighty, the King of kings. When He came two thousand years ago, He came to rescue us from five sets of shackles. Bondage to sin. Bondage to self. Bondage to this world system. Bondage to the devil. And bondage to death itself.

This is our predicament as we enter this world. All of us. We are in bondage. But King Jesus came to set us free, so we can freely serve the God who gave us life, as He intended when He made us.

And how would Jesus accomplish this mission to deliver a people from their bondage to sin, self, this world system, the devil, and death? Jesus is giving us the answer right here in this wordless sermon. Do you hear it? Don't miss this. By preaching this wordless sermon, He is answering the question for us.

3. *He is bringing about His own cross.* It's true. By riding into Jerusalem on this donkey, Jesus is setting in motion what we need most. He knows the scribes and Pharisees are there. He knows what they want to do to Him. He knows that what He is doing this day will seal His fate with them. He knows.

But this is why He came. Just as He has been telling His disciples, again and again, "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* (Mark 10:45)."

The apostle John puts it this way, in John 1:11-12. "He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.<sup>12</sup> But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."

His sermon, of course, worked, just as planned. His sermon in motion the events that led Him to a cross outside of this very city, where He made the final ransom payment for sinners, in fulfillment of God's eternal plan.

My non-Christian friend, do you see how much the Savior loves you? He preached this sermon without words because He loves sinners, then and now. He loves you. He provided a ransom payment sufficient to save you from your bondage to sin, self, this world system, the devil, and death itself.

The question is, do you want to be set free? Not free to do your own thing. That's the bondage you've been living in since birth. But free to serve the purposes God Almighty has for you, good purposes, joy-producing purposes. Do you want to be set free so you can serve God with your life?

Then call upon King Jesus. Repent and place your faith in Him, and in so doing, give Him your life. And He will set you free.

So ends Jesus' first wordless sermon in Mark 11. He rode a colt into Jerusalem, presenting Himself as King, a very special King, on a very special mission.

But He's not done preaching. He preached a second wordless sermon that day. It's just one verse, and while it's so unassuming we might be inclined to miss it, we must not.

## II. Jesus preached by visiting the temple (11).

Verse 11 says simply, "And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve."

I've pondered this for some time. Why did Jesus ride into the city, go to the temple, and *leave* without doing anything? Mark says He left because it was late, but does that mean that Jesus ran out of time and failed to do what He intended? That's not possible. Jesus never failed to do anything He intended to do. We can be sure that He did what He did with complete intentionality.

No, there's another sermon here, another wordless sermon. Let's take a closer look.

**A. Consider what He did.** Mark indicates that Jesus accomplished four actions.

1. *He went to the temple.* That's significant. Think of where else Jesus could have gone but didn't. Jesus did NOT enter Jerusalem and head for Herod's palace. Nor did He look for a Roman barracks. Instead, He went into the temple.

This action speaks volumes about what is on the heart of this King. Matthew's account states that once in the temple, the blind and the lame came to Jesus, and He healed them (Matt. 21:14). Matthew also records the response of the chief priests and scribes, stating, "They became indignant (Matt. 22:15)."

So Jesus went to the temple. Then came a second action.

2. *He looked around at everything in the temple.* Chew on that word "everything." There was a lot to see in the temple. The altar was there. So were the animals. And of course, the holy of holies was there. And so too were the money-changers.

My friend, this was not the look of a tourist (this wasn't the first time Jesus had been in the Temple). This was the look of investigation, the look of a King inspecting the worship of His people.

And what was His assessment? Mark doesn't tell us in this verse. It's not insignificant, however, that the first thing Jesus did when He returned to the temple the next day was to throw the merchandisers out of the temple. And He said this, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers (Mark 11:17)."

3. *He left the temple.* Oh, ponder the sadness in this. He looked around and then left the temple without saying a recorded word. We know from verse 15 that what He saw displeased Him greatly. God intended this temple to be a *house of prayer*, a place where sinners could come and experience cleansing. But not just experience cleansing, but share it with the nations too. This was to be a house of prayer *for all the nations*.

Does that mean that God intended His house to be a place where the nations would come and pray? Of course, it was, but that seldom happened. Perhaps it means that His people, Israel, were to come to this place, experience cleansing through sacrifice, and then pray for all the nations, and then after that, live in such a way that the nations would want to come to this place and get to know their God, the God who forgives sinners.

But, of course, this did not happen. There were exceptions, godly Jews who made their God attractive to the onlooking world, people like David, Solomon (particularly in his early life), Josiah, and others. But for the most part, Israel, God's chosen people, became proud and ingrown. They misinterpreted and misused this holy place, viewing it in a very clannish, self-absorbed, holy-huddle way.

And God patiently worked with them, waited on them to repent. For centuries He looked at this temple with favor, extending mercy on the basis of the blood-sacrifices offered there, and pardoned sinners who cried out to Him there. But it was clear that this altar, and these countless animal sacrifices, could never fix the problem of a people in bondage to sin, self, this world system, the devil, and death.

And this is why, in just a matter of days, the necessity of this temple will end. The form is about to give way to fulfillment. In five days, God Himself will tear the temple veil in two, from top to bottom, and in a few years the temple itself will be torn down.

Yes, indeed, Jesus left the temple that day. Why? Because it was *late*, says Mark, likely indicating more than the loss of daylight. Time has run out for this place. It has fulfilled its purpose. From this time forward and into eternity future, God's people will have a new temple, the very Person who is standing in their midst. And by faith in Him, the sinners He saves actually *become* the very temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16).



Jesus takes one final action in verse 11.

4. *He left the city of Jerusalem.* He retraced His steps and headed back to Bethany where He would spend the night.

There may be another piece of symbolism here. He who found no room in the inn at His birth now finds no place for rest in the city of Jerusalem, and so He goes elsewhere to find a home. This is the story of His life. He came to His own, the Jewish people, but His own received Him not.

Praise God, they *will* receive Him. It started with a remnant, these apostles and others who became the foundation of the early church, before the church launched into its Gentile mission, reaching non-Jews worldwide. But the Lord is not finished with the Jews (see Romans 11). The day is coming when the nation of Israel will receive Him, when Messiah Jesus returns the second time. That's a story for another time.

Let's talk about the implications of Jesus' second wordless sermon.

**B. Consider what His actions say to us.** I see three implications.

1. *Our greatest need isn't what we often think it is.* Let this sink in. He entered Jerusalem and went *to the temple*. That's the first clue that Jesus had not come to Jerusalem to do what the Jews expected. What's on His mind is not Rome. It's the temple. Jesus did not come to give sinners what they wanted, but what they needed.

And what is that?

2. *Our greatest need is to be right with God.* That's what the temple was all about. Our greatest need isn't for political reform, but for God's forgiveness. We are sinners, cut off from God, who need to be reconciled to God. That's what this temple was supposed to have provided for people, not just Jews but all people.

Again, "My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations," Jesus would say the very next day. But sadly, the very people who should have known better, the religious leaders, turned this house of worship into a religious relic.

God forbid that we should do the same with this church building, or anything else. God forbid that we should let something else become a substitute for Him. *He* is our greatest need. Not what He does for us, and certainly not what we do for Him. We need *Him*. And thankfully...

3. *Jesus came to meet that need.* Jesus came to earth so we can have God! It's why He entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. It's why He allowed wicked men to nail Him to the cross. It's why He conquered the grave the following Sunday. He came to meet our greatest need. He came so we can know and enjoy God personally forever.

Take Inventory: Let's ask ourselves two vital questions...

1. *Is He my King?* It's worth noting that Luke tells us something else that occurred when Jesus came to Jerusalem that day. With the city before Him, the Messiah *began to weep* (Luke 19:41). These were not silent sobs either, but the loud expression of a deep sorrow. Why did He weep on this day? Because He was afraid? No. Because He was stumped that His plan didn't work? No. He wept for the sake of the people He saw, for He knew their hearts. He knew they would reject Him. And He knew the consequences they would experience for their fateful decision.

It's a tragic reality that a city that shouted "Hosanna!" to Jesus on Sunday yelled "Crucify Him!" just five days later. Sadly, it still happens, as J. D. Jones observes:

"These people confessed Him, and crucified Him within a week. Is it an ancient crime? Do we never act in similar fashion? Do we not pay homage to Him on the Sunday and then crucify Him during the week? We sing in church, 'Thou art the

King of glory, O Christ'; but do we not by our actions outside often say, 'We will not have this man to reign over us?' ...Are we then loyal subjects?"<sup>8</sup>

Yes, it's much easier to applaud Christ on Sunday than to obey Him during the week. But this is what He asks of us, and makes possible for us, by His grace.

Is Jesus your king, my friend? Be honest with yourself. Is Jesus truly *your* king?

2. *Is He my greatest treasure?* It's easy to say we love Jesus on Sunday, like the crowd did in our story. It's another thing to treasure Him on Friday when the world mocks Him and seeks to eliminate Him. This is the real test. Is Jesus *our* greatest treasure? Are we showing we value Him above all else?

See Him, dear friend. See Him on the colt. See Him walking in silence in the temple. See Him, and listen to the sermons He is preaching to us today. Then bow before Him and own Him as your king.

**Closing Song:** #173 "*All Glory, Laud, and Honor*" (all three verses)

**Benediction for March:** Numbers 6:24-26 (NIV84)

### Community Group Discussion:

1. In today's message from Mark 11:1-11, we listened as Jesus preached two wordless sermons. Take time now to re-read the passage. What stands out most to you from this?
2. Mark 11 is a pivotal point in Mark's presentation of The Servant. How so? How does this chapter fit into the message of the entire gospel of Mark?
3. What instructions did Jesus give His disciples in verses 2-3, and how did they respond to them? What's the significance of the colt? How did the people respond when they saw the disciples taking the colt in verses 4-6?
4. How did the people respond when they saw Jesus riding on the colt in verses 7-10, and why? What do we learn about Jesus from this event?
5. At first glance, Jesus' actions in verse 11 seem odd. Why so? What's the point of what Jesus did in verse 11? What do we learn about Jesus from this verse that ought to encourage us? That ought to challenge us?

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<sup>8</sup>J. D. Jones, p. 401.