

The Humble King

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[0 : 00] My name is Matthew Capone, and I'm the pastor here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church, and it's my joy to bring God's Word to you today. A special welcome if you're new or visiting with us.

We're glad that you're here, and we're glad that you're here not because we're trying to fill seats, but because we're following Jesus together. And as we follow Jesus together, we become convinced there's no one so good.

They don't need God's grace, and no one so bad that they can't have it, which is why we come back week after week to hear what God has to say to us in His Word. We're continuing our series in the Gospel of Mark.

You'll remember that the Gospels tell the story of Jesus and His life and His death and His resurrection, and we have kind of two movements to the Gospel. Chapters 1 through 8, we were asking this question of who is Jesus, which we saw definitively answered by Peter in the middle of chapter 8 when he said that you are the Christ.

And now we're in the second half, chapters 8 through 16, which answer this question of what it actually looks like to follow after Jesus. And so that's what we've been talking about over the last several weeks, that following Him looks like this upside-down nature of the kingdom.

[1 : 13] And I don't need to tell you that it's been a little bit intense. We've had some hard topics as we've tackled marriage and sex and children and money and power and success and glory and fame, how all of those things are different in the kingdom of God than they are in the kingdom of the world.

And then last week, we topped it off with this topic of desire. Jesus asks this question, What is it that you want me to do for you? And so this week, we're going to pause for a moment all of those questions and just look at, meditate on together who Jesus is.

Because we can talk about the upside-down nature of the kingdom all day, but it must have some sort of motivation. There has to be something great enough and glorious enough for us to want to live in a way that goes against our culture.

We actually have to see Jesus' beauty. And so the song that we just sang set us up perfectly. We sang, Captivated by His beauty, worthy tribute, haste to bring.

Crown Him now, unrivaled King. It's in seeing Jesus' beauty that we're able to live in His kingdom. And we also sang, It's not a sense of right or duty, but the sight of peerless worth.

[2 : 39] And that's why I'm so passionate about this song, because it reminds us that we have to see Jesus before anything else. And so we're just going to look at that this morning, the type of king that Jesus is, the fact that He has a greater beauty, a greater love than any earthly king.

Unless we put our eyes on Jesus, we're going to be tempted to put them on other saviors and rulers, saviors and rulers that will destroy us rather than save us.

And so that's why it's incredibly important for us to pause and look at Jesus this morning, the great and greater king. It's with that that I invite you to turn with me in your Bible.

You can turn in your worship guide. You can turn on your phone. You can turn in your Bible. No matter where you turn, remember that this is God's word. And in Proverbs chapter 30, verse 5, we read that every word of God proves true.

He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. And so that's why we're going to read now Mark chapter 11, starting at verse 1. Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethpage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of His disciples and said to them, 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.

[4 : 08] Untie it and bring it. Verse 3. If anyone says to you, Why are you doing this? Say, The Lord has need of it, and will send it back here immediately.

And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. Verse 5. And some of those standing there said to them, What are you doing untying the colt?

And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields.

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. Verse 11. 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.

[5 : 15] I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word. Father in heaven, we thank you again for giving us your word, and we ask that you would speak to us again.

We ask that as we look at the challenging nature of your kingdom, more than anything else, you would help us to have a clear and precise vision of Jesus, that you would show us his holiness and his love and his beauty and his glory this morning, that we would be captured by it more than anything else.

We thank you, that we don't have to worry about whether we've been good enough, whether we've done enough, whether we've earned enough, because we know that we haven't. But instead, we simply ask for these things in the mighty name of Jesus Christ.

Amen. Amen. I've been telling you for a while now that Jesus is heading on his path to Jerusalem, and that continues in this passage.

In fact, we see that he's practically arrived in verse 1. We're told they drew near to Jerusalem. If I told you that someone was driving, and first they passed by Briargate, and then they were in downtown Colorado Springs, and shortly thereafter, they were getting close to Shine Mountain, you would know that they're headed in what direction?

[6 : 40] You know that they're headed south. The Gospel writer is telling us here, in the order of locations, that Jesus is heading directly west. He is on a collision course with the city of Jerusalem.

That's what he's telling us here with Bethpage, and Bethany, and the Mount of Olives. Bethany is actually this suburb that's east of Jerusalem, and it appears to be where Jesus stays for a few days before Passion Week, and at the very beginning of Passion Week.

That's why at verse 11, we see him return there. Now, in the past, remember it was important for Jesus to keep his kingship a secret.

We talked before about the fact that he told various people who received healings not to tell too many people about him, not to spread the word, to keep what he knew under wraps.

The time for that has passed. Jesus is no longer interested in keeping his kingship a secret. In fact, he does the opposite in this passage.

[7 : 46] He starts to do king kind of things. He does the sort of things that the people of Israel are looking for. He's playing in, in some ways, to their expectations, their hopes that this Messiah is going to come once and for all and set things right.

Remember, that's why James and John were so eager to sit at his left and his right hand, because they knew that the moment of Jesus' kingship was drawing near as they approached Jerusalem.

In verses 2 through 6 here, as Jesus sends for this donkey to ride, he is commanding what belongs to him. The whole world, in fact, is his kingdom. And what he's doing here is an ancient tradition called Royal Angaria, which is where kings would be able to command whatever they needed.

In sending for this donkey, this colt, and just saying, the Lord has need of it, Jesus is saying clearly to everyone, I am behaving just like a king.

Even more than that, though, in verses 7 through 9, Jesus comes in riding on this colt, doing what we would not expect him to do when he left in our previous passage.

[8 : 59] Remember, he healed Bartimaeus. He was leaving with this crowd, and this would have been a crowd that was heading to Jerusalem for a pilgrimage. Well, what is it that pilgrims do as they enter Jerusalem?

Jerusalem. They walk on their feet. As one of my friends might say, they used their Lamberfittis to get into Jerusalem. And Jesus, in fact, does the opposite.

Who is it that's supposed to ride into Jerusalem? Well, it's supposed to be a king who is returning from a conquering, from a successful military campaign.

In fact, that's what would have happened over and over. There's a reason this is called the triumphal entry, which is that Roman generals would have a triumph. They would come in riding a war horse to show that they had been victorious.

They were the ones in charge. Even more than that, verse 8, what is it that these people do in response? Most likely, they've been traveling with Jesus this entire time.

[10:02] They're the ones who were with him when he healed blind Bartimaeus, and they begin to throw their cloaks on the ground, which is a sign of submission to the king. And so Jesus is doing everything we would expect a conquering king to do as he's approaching this city, except for one thing.

Jesus should not be riding a donkey. If he is a great and conquering king, he needs to be returning from war on a war horse.

And yet Jesus here is being incredibly subversive. We read earlier this morning, Zechariah chapter 9, which I'm going to refer to as well.

And what we read there is that there is going to be this king. You can turn back with me, page 3 of your worship guide. Your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Jesus is telling them, yes, I'm entering as a king, but heads up, I'm the Zechariah 9-9 king. I am not the king you expect.

[11:27] We see two things about this king as Jesus makes this reference from what we learn from Zechariah 9. The first one is that this king is a humble king. That's what we're told.

Behold, your king is coming to you, righteous and having salvation, as he humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. In other words, he's so humble, he's not just coming in on a donkey.

He's coming in on a baby donkey. That is how humble and lowly he is. Instead of experiencing comforts and pleasure in this life, he is going to experience suffering and poverty.

He is going to be born in a manger. He's going to be working class. He's going to be on the move. He's going to be going to people rather than demanding that they come to him.

That's why Jesus says in Matthew 8, foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head because he is the humble king.

[12:35] He is the king who comes in riding a donkey. He's the king that we were told about in Isaiah 53, despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

He's not greeted with praise and love and admiration throughout his story, but he's greeted with opposition, hatred, and those who wish to kill him.

The king on the donkey is the king who's going to bring salvation through humility. The story is told of Dan Cathy, who's the president and CEO of Chick-fil-A, and at one point he was in California visiting a construction site for a new franchise, and he became hungry, and of course the franchise wasn't open.

They weren't able to serve him any Christian chicken, and so he had to go and visit the Taco Bell next door.

The man who was with him reported that he and Dan had to go to the bathroom together afterwards, and he saw something very strange. After Dan had finished washing his hands, he pulled out some extra paper towels and began also cleaning the sinks of the Taco Bell bathroom.

[14:07] Now, maybe Dan Cathy is that much of a neat freak, but there's a certain humility, there's a certain service that characterizes him in that moment, right?

He is so humble, he's cleaning the bathroom of his competitors. Jesus cleans the bathroom, not of his competitors, but of his enemies.

Jesus came to clean up the mess left by you and me. He is not characterized by one moment of service in a life filled with wealth and power and privilege, he's characterized by an entire existence. Dan Cathy for a moment, Jesus for his life. When Jesus rides in on the donkey, he is telling us he is the king who is with us.

He knows the pains of life like we do, and I would say in some ways even more. Jesus experienced a standard of living, a type of poverty that I would imagine most of us here today have no concept of.

[15 : 38] Jesus knows more of suffering than we do. Most kings are insulated from the pains of life. Jesus instead runs into them. Many earthly rulers lack integrity.

They say one thing and do another. And even the best earthly rulers are imperfect and flawed. And Jesus is the king, the ruler who has lived differently than us because he lived worse than us. He's the king who takes on more suffering than us. He is the humble king. That's why Hebrews chapter 4 tells us we don't have a high priest who's unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are yet without sin. captivated by his beauty, tribute to him bring. Not right or duty, but the sight of peerless worth. Why do we follow Jesus? Because he is the great but also humble king. He is worth following much more than Dan, Kathy, or any other inspirational human leader.

[17 : 08] Compared to Jesus, they are selfish idiots. Jesus is greater and more glorious and more loving.

Jesus is more sacrificial than any other king we could follow. He is the humble king. And so look at him. Meditate on him. See his beauty. Let it captivate your heart more than any other beauty.

Because that's the kind of king he is. We don't just find out in Zechariah chapter 9 that he is going to be the humble king, but we also find out that Jesus is going to be the peaceful king.

The donkey is not just a sign of Jesus' humility, but also a sign of peace. If you look again at Zechariah chapter 9, page 3 of your worship guide, we see in verse 10 he is going to end war and bring peace.

[18 : 17] I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem. The battle bow shall be cut off and he shall speak peace to the nations. His rule shall be from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth.

Jesus will rule the entire world. That's what the king on the donkey is going to do. Verse 9, we're told he is righteous and having salvation.

If he's righteous, it means he's going to right every wrong. There is going to be complete and total world peace and those who need to be brought to justice will be. There are all types of visions that people have today for how the world is going to be made right.

We live by the values of the kingdom. We embrace the upside down nature of the kingdom because we believe in the future of the kingdom.

Because we believe that Jesus is the Zechariah 9, 9 through 10 king who is actually going to speak peace to all the nations. The one who is going to rule over the entire world.

[19 : 32] The one who is righteous and has salvation and so he's going to be able to right every wrong and wipe away every tear. It's because we know and embrace and believe in that future that future kingdom that's coming because of this Jesus here that we see in this passage riding in on the donkey that we live according to the kingdom right now.

He is the peaceful kingdom. The peaceful king. Imagine for a second if this vision were not true. It would not simply be zeroed out.

In fact, the human heart has this longing within it to see the world made right. The option is not Jesus returning or nothing. The option is not Jesus bringing peace to the nations or nothing. The option is Jesus bringing peace or someone else bringing peace. We cannot escape visions of a world with restored justice.

We cannot escape narratives that tell us if we do X, Y, or Z finally everything will be made right. The only question for us is which vision we will choose.

[20 : 48] There are politicians and activists who would present you with all sorts of paths as their vision to the way to heal the world. The only problem is this that outside of Jesus justice is up to us goodness is within us.

justice is up to us goodness is within us. If Jesus is not going to speak peace to the nations then we will and must.

In other words if we lose this vision of Jesus we will replace it with a vision that leaves bodies in its wake.

because the visions that the world gives us are visions in which we are the good guys. And so these world views always lead to injustice and oppression.

They have to because if you believe the problem is always outside of you then there is a culprit that you have to deal with and you never face your own failings and sin.

[21 : 57] So Jesus here presents a vision that is more realistic more just more peaceful of all of these visions. Jesus is the only one who sacrifices himself to save his enemies.

He is the only one who cleans the bathrooms of the people who hate him. Jesus is the only one who is going to be able to take us back to Eden.

The only one that allows us to be human and recognize we're not strong enough we're not good enough we're not powerful enough to make this world right. That's why Jesus tells us his yoke is easy and his burden is light.

Because he takes responsibility for healing the world. And so what do we do?

if this vision of Jesus is true if he is the donkey king who is coming to bring peace to the nations we can wait with patience.

[23 : 11] We can wait with longing. Our hope does not hang on the thread of one political party or person or leader or technology or success of a movement.

We can choose peace over violence. We can turn the other cheek because we know that Jesus one day will make all things right. It is only the king on a donkey who allows us to love our enemies. We know that he will make all things right so that we don't have to. Jesus is the great king for which our hearts long.

We see him coming into Jerusalem. We look forward to him coming again to this earth. finally this humility and this peace that Jesus shows us are humility and peace that come ultimately through his death on the cross.

I had a conversation recently with a woman whose husband is exploring Christianity. He is reading mere Christianity. She considers herself spiritual but not religious.

[24 : 34] I was explaining to her what it is that Christianity believes and I told her every religion every worldview believes there is something wrong with the world. Everyone agrees the world is sick.

You can't find someone who would deny that. So Christianity is not unique actually in that claim. It agrees with every other worldview and saying something is wrong. It disagrees though on two things.

What's the problem and what's the solution? Christianity disagrees with other worldviews because it says the problem includes us.

the problem is not just people out there. The problem is the person in here. The problem is so deep and so great and so severe that we cannot fix ourselves.

The gospel is the news to us that we must radically change and we are incapable of changing ourselves. the second thing the gospel has that's unique comes from the first one.

[25 : 39] The problem is so great that we can't fix it. A politician is not going to be able to heal the world. A movement is not going to be able to heal the world.

We need someone much greater, much more powerful. Now we could long for, we could want a king on a war horse. There's only one problem with that. If a king came on a war horse, he would bring peace, he would fix the world, but he would crush us because we are part of the problem. And so we need, we must have the king on the donkey, the king who brings peace by taking the punishment that we deserve. We need the king who comes and dies the death that we deserve to take the punishment that should have fallen on us.

That's the only way we get to have healing on the one hand and still be breathing and alive on the other. It is the king who rides in with humility in order to bring peace by bringing justice and taking it on to himself.

In other words, Jesus needed to be both God and on a donkey to bring justice by receiving punishment rather than doling it out.

[27 : 08] Righteous in having salvation is he, the humble king dies for his people so that his death can bring peace.

Now, I told you we would not be able to handle a king on a war horse because he would bring peace but crush us. the reality is that since Jesus has come as the king on a donkey, he will one day come as the king on the war horse.

Revelation chapter 19 gives us this image of Jesus second coming to the earth when he returns on a horse and tramples his enemies under him.

the king who receives punishment, who brings justice by suffering for us, will one day bring full and final justice to this earth.

And so that while they don't know the timetable, they don't understand the details, we can agree with the people in this passage, verse 10, verse 9, Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

[28 : 21] Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David. Hosanna in the highest. What's the vision that we need for Jesus to be more beautiful and more glorious than everything else?

What is the upside down kingdom with the upside down king? It is the king who is with us. And the king who brings peace.

And so we look to him for healing and justice rather than looking to ourselves. That's why we serve him, worship him, love him, follow him, obey him.

Let's pray. Our father in heaven, we praise you and thank you that in Jesus' first coming, he didn't come on a war horse. Because we know that if he did, we would be crushed.

We thank you instead that he came to receive the punishment that we deserve. We ask that you would grow our vision of Jesus, our love for him, and our longing for his kingdom, that we would be moved, not by right or duty, but by a vision of his peerless worth.

[29 : 40] We ask these things in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen.