

Sermon Series: “Intentional Disciples—Purposeful Service”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—4/9/2006

Title: “Would you let him use your donkey?”

Text: Mark 11: 1-10

Intro.: Ills.: Psalm for Palm Sunday

Theme: Comprehending what Jesus came to accomplish for us in his death, we are moved by his great love to surrender our lives and possessions to his service so that others might receive him as Savior and King of their lives.

Don't miss the Lord who is asking

- Things that blind us
 1. Jesus in the guise of one he sends to ask
 - a. Sometimes, we might think, “If Jesus would come to me and ask, of course I would give him whatever he wants.”
 - b. *“They, too, will ask, ‘Lord, when did we see you. . .?’ ‘He will answer them, ‘I can guarantee this truth: Whatever you failed to do for one of my brothers or sisters, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you failed to do for me.’” Matt 25:44-45*
 - c. The disciples were Jesus’ emissaries that day (*sent out — apostolos – vs. 1*)
 - d. Sometimes the one asking for our time, money, honor, power has been sent by the King for us to serve
 - e. Jesus is not looking for pretenders of the faith but for those who surrender all to him when he calls for it
 2. Jesus in the cost or inconvenience of **the “ask”** (vs. 5)
 - a. **Ills.: Setting our upper limit**
 - b. Such an animal in Jesus day would be the equivalent of asking to take our vehicle with no guarantee of return
 - c. Is Jesus in your life and what he has done for you the most valuable possession you have?
 - d. *“This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.” Luke 12: 21*
 3. Jesus in the uninspiring guise of the common place
 - a. The procession of Jesus was really meant for the High Priest and the “perfect lamb” for the Passover
 - b. Jesus came in under the “*save us*” and “*blessed is the one coming in the name of the Lord*”—Lamb to be offered
 - c. Sometimes the sacrifice of service to which Jesus calls us seems beneath us — so “**go lower**”
- Seeing Jesus and his life and love before we see anything else
 1. For the unnamed “owners”(Luke’s record in 19:33) Jesus’ word was good enough
 - a. Is Jesus’ word good enough to lead me to service?
 2. Jesus has demonstrated in his Word the “*first-love*” motivation for our surrender
 - a. **Ills.: Unconditional love for strangers**
 - b. *This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 1 John 4: 10-11*

Honor in surrender

- Jesus was willing to surrender to the Father’s will
 1. Regardless if it came with “*Hosannas*” or “*Crucify him*” (vs. 8-10)
 - a. *For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Phil 2: 9-11*
 2. Jesus laid down the path that we should follow.
 - a. *Therefore, Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come. Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Heb.13:12-16*
- When we surrender ourselves to be at the disposal of the King, we receive it all back, redeemed
 1. **Ills.: Wearing a gold star for a stranger**
 2. *“For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. Mark8:35*
 3. It takes faith, confirmed by what the King did for us, that moves us to serve his kingdom

Psalm for Palm Sunday

King Jesus, why did you choose a lowly *donkey* (ass) to carry you to ride in your parade?

Had you no friend who owned a horse--a royal mount with spirit for a king to ride?

Why choose an *donkey* (ass), small, unassuming beast of burden trained to plow not carry kings?

King Jesus, why did you choose me, a lowly unimportant person to bear you in my world today?

I'm poor and unimportant, trained to work not carry kings--let alone the King of kings, and yet you've chosen me to carry you in triumph in this world's parade.

King Jesus, keep me small so all may see how great you are; keep me humble, so all may say,

"Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord," not what a great *donkey* (ass) he rides.

Joseph Bayly in Psalms of My Life. Christianity Today, Vol. 33, no. 5.

Setting our upper limit

The first rule of thumb at an auction sale might be, "Don't scratch your nose at the wrong time." Also, sage advice to those who attend is, "Always remember this: Whenever you go to an auction sale, make sure you know your upper limit price." The great danger for us is that we walk into the Christian life knowing clearly our upper limit price. **Colin Smith, pastor of Arlington Heights Evangelical Free Church, Arlington Heights, Illinois; Preaching Today #204**

Unconditional Love

Ten days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, a group of citizens in North Platte, Nebraska, heard a rumor that soldiers from their town, part of the Nebraska National Guard Company D, would be coming through on a troop train on their way to the West Coast. Five hundred people showed up at the train depot with food, cigarettes, letters, and love to give the boys. When the train showed up, it was not the Nebraska National Guard Company D boys on board; it was the soldiers from the Kansas National Guard Company D. After a few awkward moments, a woman handed a young man she'd never seen the gifts intended for her own son. Everyone else followed that lead, and there were hugs and prayers and love shared all around. It was a spontaneous act of genuine devotion that touched both the soldiers and the people who came to the depot that day. That alone would have been a beautiful illustration of the willingness to "sacrifice for one another." But the story continues. A few days later, a 26-year-old woman named Rae Wilson wrote a letter to the editor of the local paper recounting the profound experience they'd shared that night. She then suggested the town organize a canteen, so they could do something similar for every troop train that came through. She offered to lead the effort as a volunteer. For the next four and a half years, the people of North Platte and the surrounding communities met every troop train that came through their town. Every day, they prepared sandwiches, cookies, cold drinks, and hot coffee. They had baskets of magazines and books to give away to the soldiers, and snacks for the train. There were even birthday cakes for anyone having a special day. And they did this, some days, for as many as 8,000 soldiers and sailors. The statistics are staggering. By the time the last train arrived on April 1, 1946, six million soldiers had been blessed by the North Platte Canteen. Forty-five thousand volunteers had served faithfully until the war was over and most of the troops had been transported home. Most of the troops had only ten minutes to sprint from the train, grab some food, and sprint back before the train left without them. But in those ten minutes, they got more than a meal. They received a dose of unconditional love that they remembered decades later as many returned to thank the town folk.

Willing to wear the gold star

In April of 1940, German tanks rumbled across the borders of yet another peaceful European country, Denmark. As part of their systematic method of intimidation and oppression, the Germans announced that every Dane of Jewish descent would be required to wear a yellow Star of David. Any Jew who failed to comply would be put to death. The Star of David, a symbol of their faith, would be used to mark them so they could be robbed of their possessions, their dignity, and even their lives. The Danish government and its people were in no position to do battle against the powerful German army. But their leader, King Christian the 10th, made a bold move to prevent the Nazis from persecuting the Jewish people among them, one that risked his own life. After the proclamation was made by the occupying army, the Danish monarch called for every one of his country's citizens to wear the Star of David. What would you have done had you lived in Denmark in 1940? Tremendous fear must have gripped the hearts of those first Gentile citizens to venture from their homes the morning after the king's announcement. Would they be the only ones who had heeded the call? Would they be singled out? Would they be scooped up along with the Jews and executed? What they saw was nothing short of a miracle. There were Stars of David everywhere. The Jews among them wept when they saw the people's love and support. And because the people stood together, the Nazi's full plan of persecution against the Jews was never carried out in that country. **John Maxwell, The Power of Partnership in the Church (J. Countryman, 1999)**

Mark 11:1-10

¹As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, ²saying 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. ³If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.' "

⁴They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, ⁵some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" ⁶They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. ⁷When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. ⁸Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. ⁹Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" ¹⁰"Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!" "Hosanna in the highest!" [NIV]