

**Mark 1:1-11  
March 25, '18  
Palm Sunday**

**“SPRING BREAK”**

**THE LAST VERSE OF THIS PASSAGE SOUNDS REMARKABLY SIMILAR TO A SPRING BREAK EXPERIENCE.**

**LISTEN TO IT AGAIN: “*THEN 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.*”**

**ISN'T THAT WHAT OFTEN HAPPENS ON A SPRING BREAK VACATION?**

**YOU CAN'T WAIT TO GET TO YOUR DESTINATION & AFTER A LONG DAY OF TRAVEL, YOU DECIDE TO JUST QUICKLY TAKE A LOOK AROUND & THEN HEAD BACK TO YOUR HOTEL, GET A GOOD NIGHT'S REST & GET READY FOR THE FUN TO BEGIN THE NEXT DAY.**

**DON'T THESE WORDS IN MARK SOUND VERY MUCH LIKE THE BEGINNING OF A TYPICAL SPRING BREAK VACATION?**

**FOR MANY – IN AND AROUND JERUSALEM - THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT *THIS* WAS.**

**NOT ONLY WAS THIS SPRINGTIME IN ISRAEL – IT WAS PASSOVER TIME.**

**THIS WAS A GREAT RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL & CELEBRATION.**

**ALL THE BOYS & GIRLS WOULD HAVE LOOKED FORWARD TO THIS TIME.**

**IT WAS AN 8-DAY SPRING BREAK – EIGHT DAYS OF NO WORK, NO SCHOOL.**

**EIGHT DAYS OF FEASTING & PARTYING & TAKING A TRIP TO THE BIG CITY.**

**YES, THIS WAS SPRING BREAK & EVERYONE WENT TO JERUSALEM ON SPRING BREAK.**

**THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN AS MANY AS TWO MILLION PEOPLE THERE AT SPRING BREAK TIME.**

**PEOPLE WERE PUSHING & SHOIVING & JOYOUSLY PREPARING FOR THE PASSOVER CELEBRATION.**

**THAT’S WHAT JESUS & THE DISCIPLES WOULD HAVE EXPERIENCED AS THEY ENTERED JERUSALEM.**

**FOR THEM, OF COURSE, THERE WAS AN ADDED DIMENSION.**

**IN THE VERSES IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING THE ONES WE READ THIS MORNING, WE FIND THE STORY OF THE HEALING OF BLIND BARTIMAEUS.**

**IN THAT STORY, WE FIND BARTIMAEUS SHOUTING, “*SON OF DAVID! HAVE MERCY ON ME!*”**

**NOW THIS WAS AN ODD THING FOR HIM TO BE SAYING.**

**“*SON OF DAVID.*”**

**IT’S THE ONE & ONLY TIME IN MARK’S GOSPEL WE HEAR THIS TITLE.**

**IT WAS A TITLE ASSOCIATED WITH NATIONALISTIC & MILITARISTIC VISIONS OF THE PEOPLE – THE OVERTHROW OF ROMAN RULE.**

**ANOTHER FASCINATING ELEMENT OF THE BARTIMAEUS STORY IS MARK TELLING US THAT HE THREW HIS CLOAK TO THE GROUND WHEN HE ENCOUNTERED JESUS.**

**THERE IS A VERY INTENTIONAL & CAREFUL ARRANGEMENT TO MARK’S GOSPEL.**

**THERE’S A REASON HE GIVES US THOSE DETAILS ABOUT THE BARTIMAEUS EVENT.**

**AS JESUS ENTERS JERUSALEM, THE PEOPLE ARE, IN ESSENCE, SHOUTING OUT THE SAME THING THAT BARTIMAEUS WAS SHOUTING – “HOSANNA” – “HAVE MERCY ON US!”**

**AND LIKE BARTIMAEUS, THOSE IN THE CROWD THREW THEIR CLOAKS TO THE GROUND IN REVERENCE.**

**IN TELLING THE STORY OF BARTIMAEUS, MARK WAS PREPARING US FOR THE PALM SUNDAY ENTRANCE OF JESUS INTO JERUSALEM.**

**BUT LET’S GO BACK TO THE SPRING BREAK PARALLELS.**

**WHEN YOU’RE TAKING A SPRING VACATION, PART OF THE FUN IS LOOKING FORWARD TO EVERYTHING THAT LIES BEFORE YOU IN THAT SPRING BREAK WEEK.**

**REMEMBER, YOU’VE GONE BACK TO YOUR HOTEL AFTER A QUICK LOOK AROUND AT THINGS.**

**YOU’RE ANTICIPATING THE EXCITEMENT THAT AWAITS YOU IN THE COMING DAYS.**

**FOR JESUS, THE COMING DAYS WERE ANYTHING *BUT* EXCITING. HIS SPRING VACATION WASN’T A VACATION AT ALL.**

**SPRING *BREAK* FOR HIM MEANT A BREAKING OF PROMISES BY HIS FOLLOWERS, A BREAKING OF LAWS BY THE AUTHORITIES & A BREAKING OF BONES BY HIS EXECUTIONERS.**

**IT SEEMS AS THOUGH THE ONLY THING THAT DIDN’T BREAK THAT WEEK WAS HIS WILL & HIS COMMITMENT.**

**IT WAS A WEEK FILLED WITH TORTURE & TORMENT.**

**THEY WERE DAYS FILLED WITH AGONY, DENIAL & BETRAYAL.**

**THEY WERE DAYS IN THAT GLORIOUS VACATION SPOT OF JERUSALEM THAT LED TO HIS ARREST & EVENTUAL & INEVITABLE EXECUTION.**

**IN HIS ACCOUNT OF PALM SUNDAY, NOTICE THE LENGTHY EXPLANATION MARK OFFERS REGARDING THE COLT THAT WILL CARRY JESUS INTO JERUSALEM.**

**THERE'S A VERY IMPORTANT STATEMENT JESUS MAKES REGARDING THAT ANIMAL.**

**HE TELLS THE DISCIPLES WHO ARE SENT FOR IT THAT IT WILL BE "A COLT THAT HAS NEVER BEEN RIDDEN."**

**AGAIN, MARK'S GOSPEL IS VERY INTENTIONALLY & CAREFULLY ARRANGED.**

**NO ONE HAS EVER RIDDEN THIS COLT.**

**IN OTHER WORDS, NO ONE HAS EVER DONE THIS BEFORE.**

**NO ONE HAS EVER PAID SUCH A PRICE OR TAKEN SUCH A RISK.**

**LET'S LOOK A BIT MORE CLOSELY AT ALL OF THIS.**

**THE ENTIRE FIRST HALF OF THE PASSAGE IS DEVOTED TO DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS FROM JESUS ABOUT THAT DONKEY OR "COLT" AS MARK REFERS TO IT.**

**IT IS ON THIS DONKEY THAT THOSE LINING THE STREETS OF JERUSALEM HAVE THEIR EYES FIXED.**

**IT IS ON *HIM* THAT THEY HAVE SET THEIR GAZE.**

**IT IS *HIS* PATH ON WHICH THEY HAVE THROWN THEIR CLOAKS.**

**THOSE CLOAKS WILL BEAR THE IMPRINT OF *HIS* HOOVES AFTER HE STRIDES ACROSS THEM.**

**IT WOULD BE PRETTY FOOLISH OF THAT DONKEY, THOUGH, TO THINK THAT ALL OF THE ATTENTION IS CENTERED ON HIM.**

**IT WOULD BE FOOLISH OF HIM TO THINK *HE'S* THE REASON THOSE STREETS ARE LINED.**

**IT WOULD BE FOOLISH TO THINK THOSE CLOAKS HAVE BEEN SPREAD OUT IN *HIS* HONOR.**

**IT WOULD BE FOOLISH TO THINK THE PALM BRANCHES ARE BEING WAVED FOR *HIM*.**

**IT WOULD BE FOOLISH TO THINK THE “HOSANNAS” ARE MEANT TO PRAISE *HIM*.**

**WE CAN UNDERSTAND, THOUGH, WHY HE MAY HAVE FELT THIS WAY.**

**AFTER ALL, *HE* WAS THE ONE DOING ALL THE WORK, WASN'T HE?**

**HE WAS THE ONE CARRYING JESUS TO THE MULTITUDES.**

**DO YOU REMEMBER THE ANDY GRIFFITH EPISODE WHEN BARNEY FIFE HAS BEEN OUT OF TOWN & THEN COMES BACK HOME TO MAYBERRY?**

**AS THE TRAIN PULLS INTO THE STATION, HE LOOKS OUT AND SEES THROGS OF PEOPLE, JUMPING UP & DOWN, WHOOPING & HOLLERING & WAVING “WELCOME HOME” SIGNS AS THE TRAIN ARRIVES.**

**BARNEY IS OVERWHELMED AT THE CROWD THAT HAS GATHERED TO GREET HIM.**

**WHEN HE STEPS OFF THE TRAIN & BEGINS TO OFFER A “THANK YOU” SPEECH, THE CROWD RUSHES TOWARD HIM – BUT THEN MOVES RIGHT PAST.**

**THEY'RE RUSHING TOWARD A FORMER MAYBERRY GIRL-TURNED MOVIE STAR WHO HAPPENED TO BE ABOARD THE SAME TRAIN.**

***SHE'S* THE REASON THE CROWD HAS GATHERED.**

***SHE'S* THE ONE THEY'RE EXCITED TO SEE.**

***SHE'S* THE ONE THEY'RE WAVING AT AND WELCOMING.**

**BUT BARNEY – BEING BARNEY – COULDN'T UNDERSTAND THAT.**

**HE COULDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY IT WASN'T ALL ABOUT HIM.  
LIKE BARNEY, THE DONKEY WOULD BE FOOLISH FOR THAT  
KIND OF THINKING.**

**AND WHAT ABOUT US?**

**HOW MIGHT *WE* BE FOOLISH IN THE SAME WAY?**

**IF WE'RE THE ONES DOING ALL THE WORK, IF WE'RE THE ONES  
CARRYING JESUS INTO THE WORLD, SHOULDN'T AT LEAST *SOME* OF  
THE ATTENTION, ACCLAIM, APPLAUSE & ADMIRATION BE RESERVED  
FOR US?**

**YOU CAN THINK OF THIS INDIVIDUALLY OR COLLECTIVELY –AS  
IN EASTMINSTER.**

**WE (EASTMINSTER) ARE DOING WORK.**

**WE (EASTMINSTER) ARE CARRYING JESUS INTO THE WORLD.**

**SHOULDN'T WE (EASTMINSTER) RECEIVE SOMETHING AS A  
RESULT?**

**SHOULDN'T WE BENEFIT IN SOME FASHION FROM WHAT WE DO?**

**I'M AFRAID THAT'S THE KIND OF THINKING THAT MAKES US AS  
FOOLISH AS THE DONKEY WHO RODE INTO JERUSALEM ON PALM  
SUNDAY, BECAUSE IT'S NOT ABOUT US ANY MORE THAN IT WAS  
ABOUT HIM.**

**EVERYTHING WE DO SHOULD ALWAYS BE ABOUT JESUS.**

**LIKE THE DONKEY, ALL THE WORK IS FOR JESUS.**

**LIKE THE DONKEY, WE ARE DOING NOTHING MORE THAN  
CARRYING JESUS INTO THE WORLD THAT THE WORLD MIGHT  
PROCLAIM HIM LORD.**

**IT'S NOT *ABOUT* US, NOR SHOULD IT EVER BE *FOR* US.**

**CORRIE TEN BOOM WAS A FAMOUS CHRISTIAN WHOSE TESTIMONY OF GOD'S GRACE IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING IN NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMPS TOUCHED MILLIONS OF LIVES.**

**YEARS AGO, IN A PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWING A CEREMONY IN WHICH SHE WAS GIVEN AN HONORARY DEGREE, ONE OF THE REPORTERS ASKED CORRIE IF IT WAS DIFFICULT REMAINING HUMBLE WHILE HEARING SO MUCH ACCLAIM.**

**SHE REPLIED IMMEDIATELY, "YOUNG MAN, WHEN JESUS CHRIST RODE INTO JERUSALEM ON PALM SUNDAY ON THE BACK OF A DONKEY, AND EVERYONE WAS WAVING PALM BRANCHES AND THROWING GARMENTS IN THE ROAD AND SINGING PRAISES, DO YOU THINK THAT FOR ONE MOMENT IT EVER ENTERED THE HEAD OF THAT DONKEY THAT ANY OF THAT WAS FOR HIM?"**

**SHE CONTINUED, "IF I CAN BE THE DONKEY ON WHICH JESUS CHRIST RIDES IN HIS GLORY, I GIVE HIM ALL THE PRAISE AND ALL THE HONOR."**

**THAT, I BELIEVE, IS A RECOGNITION ALL OF US NEED AS PART OF THIS CHURCH FAMILY.**

**EVERYTHING WE DO – THE PROGRAMS OF THE CHURCH, THE MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH, THE MISSIONS OF THE CHURCH – IT'S ALL SIMPLY A MATTER OF CARRYING THE MESSAGE.**

**WE'RE CARRYING THE MESSAGE OF JESUS INTO THE WORLD – A MESSAGE THE WORLD DESPERATELY NEEDS.**

**IT'S NOT ABOUT US & IT'S NOT FOR US.**

**WHEN JESUS WAS PREPARING TO ENTER JERUSALEM AT THE BEGINNING OF SPRING BREAK, HE DID SO WITH GREAT CARE.**

**HE HAD VERY CLEAR & SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING THE PARTICULAR VEHICLE THAT WOULD CARRY HIM TO THE PEOPLE.**

**HE STILL WORKS THAT WAY.**

**HE HAS TAKEN PARTICULAR CARE TO CHOOSE YOU – TO CHOOSE US – TO BE HIS VEHICLE TO CARRY HIM TO THE PEOPLE OF OUR COMMUNITY.**

**WE HAVE BEEN CHOSEN – NOT TO WIN ACCOLADES FOR OURSELVES OR OUR CHURCH,**

**-NOT TO GAIN THE APPROVAL OR APPLAUSE OF THE WORLD,  
- NOT TO IMPROVE OUR IMAGE OR EXPAND OUR NUMBERS OR INCREASE OUR BUDGET.**

**WE HAVE BEEN CHOSEN TO SIMPLY CARRY THE MESSAGE OF JESUS INTO THE WORLD AROUND US.**

**DON'T BE SO FOOLISH AS TO MISUNDERSTAND THAT.**

**DON'T BE A PROUD COLT, THINKING IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU OR ALL ABOUT US.**

**DON'T BE A BARNEY FIFE THINKING THE ACCOLADES & THE APPLAUSE ARE SUPPOSED TO BE FOR YOU.**

**BE A CORRIE TEN BOOM WHO KNOWS WHERE THE FOCUS REALLY BELONGS.**

**TOGETHER, LET'S JUST BE A HUMBLE DONKEY, A SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST, JOYFULLY & BOLDLY CARRYING HIM INTO THE WORLD WHERE HIS MESSAGE DESPERATELY NEEDS TO BE HEARD.**

**AMEN.**

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