



Series: The Person and Purpose
Title: Christ's Coming

Date: January 22, 2023
Preacher: James Forsyth

MARK 11:1-11
(OT: Zec 9:9-10; NT: Jn 12:12-16)

INTRODUCTION

- Sarita first spotted Simon in Freshman year of college:¹
 - Sitting in lunchroom with her girlfriends scoping out boys when saw him: Struck by his olive skin, thick hair, but most by fact was making intense eye contact.
 - Connected on/off, had great conversations, developed friendship.
- During this time Sarita discovered Simon has condition called Prosopagnosia/face blindness:
 - *Proso* = face; *Agnosia* = lack/inability.
 - Leaves person unable to recognize/remember faces due to developmental prob. in brain.
 - Simon describes it like going to park/examining bark on 1,000 trees:
 - Each one looks different – shape/color/texture – but you'd never be able to go back remember which one was which.
 - In same way, faces don't fix in his mind.
 - This explains intense eye contact – does this with everyone to determine if knows them.
- Simon/Sarita start to date → Relationship has its quirks:
 - When meet Sarita has to wave/wear distinctive backpack/speak so he'll recognize her.
 - Simon gets himself in awkward situations → smile/wave at wrong curly haired girl.
- Sarita fine with all this bc fallen in love → Graduate, move in together, start journey of life.
- But 18 months later, they split up.
 - Simon breaks it off – never major crisis/no particular reason given.
 - Left Sarita confused/heartbroken → she wanted to make this work.
 - In coming days they saw each other around – mutual friends, parties, etc.
 - But then there was gap – good clean break that's needed after intense relationship.
- Then one day, Sarita walked by restaurant Simon worked in.
 - He was on patio serving drinks → She saw him, caught eye with mix of warmth/sadness.
 - **But he just stared blankly, smiled vaguely, and moved on: didn't recognize her → her face had disappeared among the trees.**
- When Simon told of this encounter in documentary, says: *"I didn't know that. It's hard somehow; that I wouldn't see her. It's like she faded back into the crowd. Quickly. It's actually haunting to me to hear that."*

Love can look you in the eyes and you don't even see it.

Transition: Pick up imagination, elbow way into crowd gathered in V8...

[1. JESUS IS KING]

- **EXCITEMENT IN AIR:** People from over country descended on Jer. for Passover Feast.
 - RUMOR has rustled through pack that Jesus on way to join them.
 - WELL-KNOWN FIGURE: Some heard him **teach** with authority, others amazed by **miraculous signs**, all excited bc word on street is Jesus will be Israel's new **king**.

- People **PRESSED TOGETHER**: celebratory mood – loud/packed – anticipation in crowd → *like atmosphere before band comes on stage...*
- **[ACTIONS]**: As wait, someone has idea, **V8**: “Since king is coming, let’s make red carpet.”
 - Take off their **CLOAKS** → lay them on road.
 - Gather **BRANCHES** → lay them down too.
- **[WORDS]**: Excitement now **BUILDING** in crowd:
 - Some **RUN AHEAD**, spot Jesus in distance, start shouting **V9: Hosanna!** → praise/joy!
 - All **FOLLOWING** join chorus: **Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!**
- **WORDS/ACTIONS** tell us something important:
 - Not just welcoming him into Jerusalem → Extolling him as king!
 - Isn’t just a celebration → This is a coronation.
- **ON ONE HAND**: Could talk about fact didn’t really understand → more on that in moment.
- **FOR NOW**: Notice Jesus doesn’t rebuke them for treating him as royalty. **WHY?**
 - ***Bc Jesus IS our King!***
 - **All authority in heaven** belongs to him → **All authority on earth** belongs to him.
 - Not just the king → he’s the King of Kings!

Transition: But when he appears, things take a turn: 1) Jesus is King, but...

2. HE’S NOT THE KIND OF KING WE EXPECT

- As crowd hears Jesus on his way, begin to part:
 - Separate to either side of street → stretching to catch a glimpse of coming king.
 - But when he appears → Doesn’t exactly look like a King...
 - At first you might look past him, looking for someone else.
 - Not riding in carriage, like Cinderella before midnight.
 - Not being carried in by servants/slaves.
 - Instead, makes his royal entrance on... a donkey.
 - Not expecting motorcade – this is 1C! – but how about a war horse/camel.
 - Something – anything – grander than a donkey!
 - Imagine Inauguration Day: President down Pennsylvania Avenue on donkey?
- **MUST BE A MISTAKE! BUT NO!**
 - How Jesus planned it: **V1** told disciples: **Go into the village... and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it.**
 - Now hops on to make his entrance.
- **WHAT’S HAPPENING HERE?** Exactly what God had said:
 - 500 years earlier God promised great King would come: **Zec 9:9: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he...**
 - And look how he’d come: **humble and mounted on a donkey...**
- **THE POINT?** 1) Jesus is king; 2) But not kind of king we expect.
 - Powerful **BUT** Humble, Strong **BUT** Gentle, Majestic **BUT** Lowly.
 - Isn’t this the Jesus of the gospel?
 - Came not to be served → But to serve.
 - Came not to require things from us → But to give his life as ransom for many.
- **THAT’S WHY HE’S IN JERUSALEM:** So can be crucified/dead/buried on our behalf.
 - ***Jesus is king → but not the kind of king we expect.***

Transition: What do we do with this? Two things:

1. Don't be like the CROWD

- Saw Jesus, but they didn't *see* → **Looked love in the eye and missed it.**
 - At first, response seems promising → celebrate Jesus as makes way to Jerusalem.
 - But soon find out, only bc thought Jesus coming to **lead** political revolution/**end** foreign occupation/**bring** freedom to nation of Israel.

Crowd want to use Jesus to gain political power of own → use him to further their agenda.

- Easy for us to make same mistake: **See Jesus as means to further our agenda...**
 - People still do this in **political** arena today (Xn Nationalism is an old heresy).
 - Do it **ourselves** more often than like to admit...
 - WHY only pray when we need something...
 - WHY get frustrated with God when things don't work out like we want:
 - I want to be... married but I'm single, single/married, healthy/sick.
 - I want... kids/kids to behave, work to be meaningful/less stressful.
 - I want **this** to work out this way/**that** to work out that way...
- Get disillusioned when whatever it is WE want to happen doesn't happen.***
- Nothing wrong with those desires themselves, but here's point:
Jesus did not come to serve anyone else's agenda → King has an agenda all of his own.
 - To live/die/rise that whole world might be saved through him.
 - To establish a new kingdom where God's will is done.
 - Notice that his agenda is so much better than what the crowd hoped for...
 - Wanted **temporal** freedom – freedom from Rome/foreign occupation.
 - Gave them **eternal** freedom – freedom from sin/shame, guilt/death.
 - Same is true for our lives... Jesus loves you.
 - The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness (**Lam 3:22-23**).
 - But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness (**Ps 86:15**).
 - For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed," says the Lord, who has compassion on you (**Isa 54:10**).
 - See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are (**1 Jn 3:1**).
 - My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand (**Jn 10:27-28**).
 - You can trust him and his agenda for your life.

Transition: Don't Be Like the Crowd... Instead focus your attention/energy on being a donkey:

2. Be the DONKEY

- D. A. Carson wrote a commentary on this passage → Highlights fascinating detail that we see in **V2**: Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey **on which no one has ever sat.**
- What happens when you sit on a donkey on which no one has ever sat?
 - Feel free to answer from knowledge of animal kingdom OR from binging *Yellowstone*.
 - Beast goes wild → bucks, kicks, leaps, rages!

- Animals have to be broken before anyone is able to ride them!
 - Can't just hop on and go for a stroll → especially through a raucous/noisy crowd.
- So how is it that Jesus does so?
 - Will the mountains and hills not sing?
 - Will the trees of the field not clap their hands?
 - Is Jesus not Lord of nature and Lord of all?
- **Carson:** "In the midst of all of this [noisy crowd] an unbroken young animal remains totally calm under the hands of the Messiah who controls nature, and stills the storm. Therefore, this event points to the peace of the consummated kingdom. Jesus didn't have to break the animal. He is Lord of nature – he is Lord of all – and under his hand nothing but harmony and peace comes about. The animal knows and loves its true master for who he is. This is a foreshadowing of the complete healing of all nature under the future kingship of Christ."²
Apparently, the donkey knew something the crowd didn't → looked love in eye/saw it.
- So friends, I want to be a donkey (that'll probably be our social media clip this week).
 - Wild, dumb, crazy creature who's struck by the love of Jesus.
 - Use whatever gifts I have to serve him.

THE CLOSE

- Will you do that this week?
 - Meditate on the verses I shared about his love.
 - We'll post them on social media today → read them every morning this week.
- Then ask: How can I respond to this love by serving Jesus?
 - Maybe it's in your own **home**.
 - Child you need to take to breakfast and find out how they're doing.
 - Spouse you need to love and show some affection.
 - Roommate who's withdrawn and you need to take to do something fun.
 - Maybe it's in your **neighborhood**.
 - Went to visit one of our members who just turned 100 last week.
 - I went to see her but the encouragement was all mine.
 - Someone you need to check on?
 - Maybe it's at **work**:
 - Important decision you've been delaying but now is the time to act.
 - New colleague you need to invite for a drink.
 - **[Various]:**
 - Maybe it's in your kid's school, homeless person you pass at gas station, service opportunity here at church.
 - Everywhere we look there's need – loved by the King we get to be his hands/feet.

Where can you be a donkey today?

CONCLUSION

You can look love in the eye and not even see it...

- Are you like Simon?
 - Do you have spiritual prosopagnosia?!?!?
 - Do you see Jesus, but not really *see* him.
- He still sees you → he remembers your face and looks upon with love.
- As followers of the unexpected king, let's an unexpected church.

- Use whatever gifts we have to serve him.
- Let's be humble community of love.

RESOURCES AND ENDNOTES

Resources

This list contains some of the resources that were used to prepare this sermon series. Check them out if you want to dig a little deeper.

- John Mark Comer, *Gospel of Mark*.
- William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Mark*.
- Tim Keller, *The Decline and Renewal of the American Church*.
- Tim Keller, *Jesus the King: Understanding the Life and Death of the Son of God*.
- Logos Bible Software.
- William Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*.
- Donald MacLeod, *Christ Crucified: Understanding the Atonement*.
- Herman Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom*.
- Mark L. Strauss, *Mark*.
- Ben Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*.
- N. T. Wright, *How God Became King*.

Endnotes

¹ I heard this story on Radiolab, *Falling*, accessed [here](#) 1/21/23.

² D. A. Carson, quoted in Tim Keller, *Into Jerusalem*.