

April 2, 2023

What would you do if you knew you only had five days to live? And you knew with certainty that when those five days were over live on this planted as you knew it would be over. Question is, would you live any different? Would you change what you're doing?

Jesus knew when he came into the city, and we're going to unpack Palm Sunday, we're going to unpack what this look like. We're going to get into the scriptures.

Everything you just saw in the video is a progression of what's called the Synoptic Gospels, plus John. There's four Gospels. The first three, Matthew, Mark, and Luke are all synoptic. That means they harmonize. You can fit them together, and they have a lot of the same accounts.

Whereas John was written from a different perspective. The first three were written on the last year of Jesus ministry, John covers His whole ministry. So there's a different approach here in these gospels. But what you saw are excerpts from all four of the Gospels, there are a few things that all four of the Gospels cover similarly, where they almost look synoptic and the narrative of the Palm Sunday, or what we call the triumphal entry, entrance.

Those are actually the same, and they have great nuances that each of them carry, and we're going to look at those. But

Jesus knew when he entered into the city that day, that he had five days left. I mean, can you imagine what he was feeling? Remember, he's divinely human. He's both divine and human. He's both the Son of God and the Son of Man, as he was referred to.

So the blood he bled on the cross was real, just like yours and mine, the pain he felt when he received the lashes were just like yours and mine. He slept, he slept in, got up, he did life like we did. He suffered like we did. God through Jesus Christ needed to experience the whole gamut of what we experience, or he could not be the one who would atone for our sins. And he did.

Would you do anything different if you knew you had five days left?

We have done and had the privilege of hosting four funerals. We hosted three and I did another one since the beginning of the year, really since February. And it has, as I mentioned earlier, in another sermon, it's- it's thinned the veil.

The veil between heaven and earth has been very thin for me lately, as I've been thinking a lot about heaven, and a lot about what's coming. But can you imagine knowing you had five days? In some of those cases- some of those families had some time with their loved ones before they passed on. Some they did not. It was very sudden.

Another friend of ours just passed away recently, last few days. And we knew for about what, four days, five days. He came down with a lung infection. They were traveling, they attend here, they go here. And they're- they're our viewers, so they're all over the place.

But they told us that Fredericksburg was their favorite, and The Bridge was their favorite church. And they were actually going to come back on April 11 and be here with us. And he came down with a lung infection. And within a couple of days, we got a phone call. And we were told that he was dying.

And we're like, "Whoa, no, no, no, no, they're supposed to be here in a few days. We're going to hang out, we're going to, we're going to see them", and- and then they called the family in and we got to- We were sent a video of the family around his bed; it was a full room like 15, 12 or 15 people. And one of the younger girls had a phone. And they were playing a worship song. And the whole family was singing worship over Larry, as he was taking his final breaths.

And while he's laying there with all kinds of tubes and stuff, his hand comes up in worship while they're singing over him. I told him that that's how I want to go. If Jesus doesn't beat us to it and come back for us all. That's how I want to go out, in the context of worship.

But their family had a little time they were able to be with Larry and Rhonda, and be there for them. But that is not the case for everyone.

So five days Jesus knew. But in that five days, there were things to be done. See, Jesus, whether you know this or not, he was called the “Messiah”, the word Messiah. It means literally “the deliverer”, the one who's coming. He was going to come and deliver the Jewish people out of their bondage out of their slavery much like Moses did, who was a top and shadow of Jesus.

The Messiah was going to come and he was going to deliver them he was going to eradicate-

See Rome had been in power for over a century at this point. Rome was just dominating them. crushing them. They were overtaxed. They were brutalized, they were treated like animals. They were assigned, no value, as inhumane. It was chaos, it's corruption.

The Roman governors were in cahoots with the Jewish religious leaders, the Pharisees and the Sanhedrin, which was a council of 70 men who ruled.

And they work together and they, they coordinated and they contrived, and under the table, and through the back door and side door, they-they played these political games.

Sounds a little bit like today. See, it's interesting how technology advances but the human condition really doesn't. Have you ever noticed that?

And so there was this dance between the religious- I didn't say, Christian and I didn't say “godly”, I said religious.

The guardians of tradition, and between the political powers that be-

And the Jewish people for centuries had had 400 prophecies from Old Testament prophets saying that there is one coming: a savior, a deliverer, Messiah- who is going to come and deliver us.

Now Jesus shows up on the scene. He gets outed by his mom who says, "Hey, I need you to perform a miracle real quick. We're out of wine at this wedding. And would you mind doing this?" He's like, "no, no, no, I'm- It's not my time." and she said, "If not now, when?"

And so he listens to his mama. He turns water to wine, his first miracle.

Another miracle was performed when he worked on the human heart of the woman at the well. And he says, "Look, I need- I need you to go and tell everybody what I just told you- that, that he's here. The deliver the Messiah is here." And she runs off screaming, going to tell everybody. She runs back to the village.

The first evangelists was a woman- you see a pattern here? Ladies, do you see a pattern here? Brothers, do you see a pattern here?

Then Jesus, buried in a tomb, which we're gonna talk about next week. Guess who shows up? Two women. He

reveals Himself first in his resurrection form, his resurrection body, to two ladies. And he sends them back to the disciples.

Because we all know if we're gonna get it done it's gonna take a woman- come on somebody. [Laughter]

He sends the ladies back to the disciples to say "I've risen" because the disciples probably wouldn't have believed it, and in fact they didn't at first anyway; slam the door on Mary of all people.

The Messiah, the deliverer has come.

Now, you would think if the deliverer who has been long awaited for centuries written about, prophesied about, prayed for, cried out for, is going to show up on the scene, that he's going to come back on a massive stallion. The way a king enters a city is with pomp and circumstance

A few years ago, and that and I had the privilege of going to Paris, we were down on the Louvre and we were enjoying everything. And at one point, at one point, the-these motorcycles, beautiful BMW, European motorcycle, come screaming down, all these police on wheels come down, and they're- and they're clear in the streets. And it's happening really fast. It's, it's like in an incident seems like there's no traffic and before there was just nonstop. All of a sudden it's clear, and it's quiet, and no one knows what's coming. And then down at the very end, you see, you see all these lights from police cars and motorcycles. And then a whole row of

limousines and turns out the Korean president was visiting France, was in Paris, and his whole entourage- they come down the street, and it's not- it's silent because no one knows who they are- what it is, but-but they just know this is big, whatever it is, that was an epic entrance.

And you would think Jesus would come on the scene with an epic entrance, wouldn't you? But no, in fact, I'm titling this today *Riding in on a Donkey*.

Not a stallion, but a donkey. And not just a donkey. But the foal, the cult of a mama donkey. It doesn't get much lower than that family.

And I want to show this to you. We're going to unpack this together.

I want to share a quote with you from Pastor Marty Bowler. This is so good.

*One of the scariest questions in the Palm Sunday story is this: "how will I respond when Jesus comes riding humbly into my life?"*

This is the practical question. We're going to unpack some things. But this is practical. Will I recognize the time of God's coming to me? Will I recognize and welcome God's personal visit?

So we're going to unpack the narrative. It's called "The Triumphal Entry". But it wasn't that triumphal. And you'll see why- Matthew chapter 21.

And I'm going to unpack this. I'm going to read it. And as we go, I'm going to unpack some things that will help bring clarity but really, I want to take you to this hillside. I want to take you to the Mount of Olives in your mind. So activate your sanctified imagination or like Mrs. Snow in the first grade at Wheelock Elementary in Lubbock, Texas, told us put on your thinking caps.

So let's put on our thinking caps and activate our sanctified imagination and go there with me in your mind.

Think about an old city, old city, Jerusalem was a walled city, it's still there. The walls are still there. But the city is blown out all over and overrun. And but it's now and it seems small. But it's a city that's actually fortified, still there. And when you come off over the hill of a Mount of Olives, you look down this very large slope. It's a hill that oversees the eastern side of Jerusalem.

So you're coming down the west slope, looking at East Jerusalem. And there when you come over the ridge, there's a large gate. See, there are city gates all over the city. And the large gate is called the Eastern Gate.

Guess what the Bible says? Guess where the Bible says Jesus is coming back? The Eastern Gate.

Interesting enough, the Muslims have bricked it over. So it's a closed gate. It's completely stoned up. And just to make



sure Jesus doesn't come through that gate, they put a full cemetery in front of it.

So surely a Messiah wouldn't defile himself by going through a cemetery. Little do they know that he can thump those bricks and stones with his pinkie and blow the thing up, right? So we know Jesus is gonna come back and No, no cemetery and no stones. But that's what you see when you come off the hill. That's the state of it right now. It's called the Temple Mount.

Now, as you come over the hill, you'll be down on the western slope. On the eastern slope, the other side of the hill, is two towns one is called Bethany. And that is where Lazarus and his family, Mary and Martha, lived. And it was one of Jesus favorite places to be, to hang out, and they were his friends.

So that's on the other side, and also Bethpage, which is where they're going to find this donkey and her foal. And so we're going to unpack that.

Now, mind you, you can come down the western slope, which goes into the east side of the city, and it is a stunning view of the city of Jerusalem. If you ever look on- just Google Jerusalem, and you'll see pictures.

It's typically looking from the air down on the city in the Kidron Valley. That is what you're looking at, you're coming off of the Mount of Olives, which by the way, also has the Garden of Gethsemane. Where Jesus bled great drop-drops of blood.

So now we pick up the story.

Matthew 21, Verse One, *“As they approached Jerusalem-“*

Where from? They were coming from Bethpage over the hill, down the western slope into Jerusalem.

*“As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethpage on the Mount of Olives-“*

That's just on the other side of the ridge.

*“Jesus sent two disciples, [2] saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you'll find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them-“*

Someone say them. There were two, not one.

*“Untie them and bring them to me. [3] If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”*

How would Jesus know that? Because he's Jesus. And by the way, he's fulfilling a prophecy from Zechariah Chapter Nine, verse Nine.

If anyone says anything, he'll send them.

Verse Four.

*“This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet.”*

And here it is, verse Five.

*"Say to the daughter of Zion,  
'See your king comes to you,  
gentle and riding on a donkey  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey."*

All right, so the prophecy is this: that Jesus is going to come into Jerusalem for this triumphal entry, and it's going to be on the foal of a donkey.

I don't know if you've ever seen a baby donkey. They're not very big. I know that me at my age if I was to sit down on my on my grand nieces, bicycle that my feet would probably be dragging the ground. You know what I'm saying? And it would look ridiculous if I tried to ride this tiny little bicycle.

Imagine Jesus, a fully grown man, scrapping carpenter, Right? Or bricklayer, whichever he was depends on who you read.

Here he is getting on this tiny little foal. He didn't get on the mama donkey. He got on the little donkey. He got down as low as he possibly could. And here's why: Jesus is all about flipping the script on what we expect.

And I'm gonna use this phrase over and over. Jesus is flipping the script on our lives. They expected a king, a warrior,

a deliverer, the lion of the tribe of Judah. But what they got was the Lamb of God. What they got was the Prince of Peace.

See, they expected Jesus- Messiah to come, and with one fell swoop, eradicate Rome, eradicate the oppressor, eradicate the evil government with just a thump of his finger so that they could go back to living in comfort and peace. Like they always believed they should.

Listen to what happens now. Well, let me just share out of Zechariah 9:9, here's the prophecy:

*"Rejoice greatly, Oh daughter of Zion!*

*Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem!*

*See, your king comes to you,*

*righteous and having salvation,-"*

If there would have been a period there, he probably would have ridden in on a stallion. But there's not. The next sentence:

*"Gentle-"*

Another word for that in the Hebrew is humble,

*"Gentle (humble) and riding on a (what, family?) A donkey on a colt, the foal of a donkey."*

Verse six, we're back in our Matthew passage:

*“The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. [7] They brought the donkey and the colt. They placed their cloaks on them.”*

And Jesus sat on what, them? Well, they were tied together. He didn't sit on both of them, but they were tied together, walking together, where he could have ridden on mama; he wrote on the little colt.

Luke 19:41. Again, I talked about the Synoptic Gospels. They work together.

By the way, all that thunder you're hearing right now. It's a Harley or it's a motorcycle rally. So just enjoy the sounds of American motorcycles. Right? So don't let it distract you.

*“As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city.-“*

Look what happens.

*“He wept over the city.”*

There's only three times in the Bible that it records that Jesus wept. And this is one of the three. He came over the ridge, he's coming down the Mount of Olives, riding a colt.

He's not weeping because he looks ridiculous. He's not weeping because he wished he was on a stallion so he could come in with a Blazing Sword. He's weeping because he realizes the people do not understand the time of God's visitation. And he understands that there's trouble coming.

He understands that there's going to be a day when Rome comes in and they destroy the temple. And they don't leave one stone except for the foundation stones which are still there. They don't leave one stone on top of another. He knows it's coming because I didn't recognize God's return.

Verse 41:

*“As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city he wept over it, [42] and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day, what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes.”*

In other words, you don't see it. You don't see that the very thing you need is the very thing that's coming to you, and you don't see it. Why didn't they see it? Because they were looking for a warrior.

They were looking for a king with a sword and a bow to come in. And he came in gentle and humble on a donkey.

[Matthew 21] Verse Eight. Here's what happens as he's coming down the Mount of Olives coming into the city. This happens:

*“A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches-“*

Palm branches, what what's significant about a palm branch? Well, in the first century in the east, the palm tree was actually held to be very sacred. In fact, it actually had meaning attached to it, palms rep- the prawns of palms, represented

peace, victory, triumph and eternal life. And so they were very precious.

In other words, it would be like you and I, if, if a president we were excited about- that's all I'm gonna say there-keeping that to myself. If we were excited about the president coming to visit our city, would we not line the roads and wave American flags? We would, that's what you do. It's like a parade coming into town.

Jesus is coming to town. As they wave their equivalent of a flag to say, “We are so excited about this, we're so happy- we're celebrating.”

*[Matthew 21:8-9] “And they spread those on the road, [9] the crowds that went ahead of him. And those that followed shouted this*

*“Hosanna to the Son of David!*

*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!*

*Hosanna in the highest!”*

If I were to ask you independently, what do you what do you think Hosanna means? What is the meaning of Hosanna? I think we'd get a lot of varied answers. But I think we get something similar to this: What- it's gotta mean “Glory to God in the highest.” It's gotta mean “Praise God”, or “We worship you” or “Yay God”, however you say it, but it actually doesn't mean that at all fact, it doesn't mean that at all. What Hosanna actually, literally means is “Save us now.”

Think about it. When he came in, they weren't praising Him. They were crying out to Him. Because they believe that Jesus was the Messiah, those strangely coming in on a on a donkey. But they're like, "Okay, he's already flipped the script here. But still, He's the Messiah. Because we know"

In fact, another one of the passages we're not going to read talks about how they knew, they saw what he did with Lazarus. So, many that were there that day were there when he raised Lazarus from the dead. They saw the miracles, they heard the teaching, and they believe that he was Messiah.

And so they're crying out "Hosanna!"

We've turned it into a word of praise. It's not, it's actually an outcry. And it's a cry of saving, saying, "God, save us now."

So as he's riding down the road, they're crying out, "Save us now, God, save us now!"

In other words, pull out that sword. Pull out those weapons, and blow these Romans away. It's time to do violence, it's time to take over. That's what they were expecting.

So they're crying out, "Save us now, save us now!"

Sounds so sweet. But really, they were saying "Come and slay these dirty Romans. Get rid of them." That's how dark it was in their time.



In John chapter 12, listen to this. How the book of John puts this.

*"[12] The next day, the great crowd that had come from the feast, heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem."*

So here we go. He's referring to them coming down the Mount of Olives, they're down the trail.

*"[13] They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting "Hosanna!"*

*"Save us now. Save us now."*

Actually added that word this morning into my prayers. I was saying, "Hosanna, save me now God. Save me now. Saved me from my flesh. Save me from myself. Save me from this world."

*"Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, blessed is the king of Israel."*

They're saying "The king, save us now."

Back to Matthew passage, verse 10.

*"When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked "Who is this?""*

The whole city. By the way the city was full that week because they were starting the feast of the Passover. And so hundreds of thousands of people were in Jerusalem. It was a larger crowd than normal.

It's kinda like Fredericksburg. On a weekend. We grow from 13,000 to 50,000, right? All of a sudden, every road's packed you don't dare go downtown. If you're a local- Can I get an amen? [Laughter] You just you find other ways around places. You do what you do. That's how we live it- and they do the same thing.

All of a sudden, their city was crowded and inundated. And they're asking "Who is this?" - the whole city was stirred.

*"[11] The crowds answered, 'This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.'"*

They announce Jesus as the King, which would have created no small stir among the Pharisees and the religious rulers. We're not reading that passage, but what happens was, is once they saw that the people were believing that this was the King, the Messiah. That's when the Pharisees and the Sanhedrin got together and said, "We've got to stop this. Because we're about to lose everything."

And what did they mean by that? They're about to lose their way of life. "We're about to lose control. And we're going to bring the hammer of Rome down on us. We've got to stop this because the people believe that he's the Messiah."

So I want to make this real for real life. Okay, man, what a story right? I mean, Jesus comes in on a donkey. He flips the script on everything, and all of a sudden now it- it's a death sentence for him. The people are stirred. The people are

excited that he's there. But what does that mean for you and me practically?

Well, here's three points. Yes, Pastor Jimmy's gonna do three points. For you note takers, you're like “Hallelujah. Finally!”

Here it is, number one. If you're taking notes:

Jesus Flips the Script of Every Life He Touches.

Let me just get a show of hands. And I'm gonna raise my hand first. How many of you would say when Jesus came into my life, He didn't come like I thought he was going to come. And he totally flipped the script of my destiny, my future. Everything changed.

Yeah, look at that, wow.

I've said this when we were doing the series on the Holy Spirit, I said, “God often brings you what you need in a package you don't necessarily want or expect or like”, Can I get an amen? [Amen]

He rarely brings, he rarely answers a prayer in the way I ask it. Does that mean I'm a terrible prayer? It might mean I may be a little misguided in my prayers, because I tend to want to help him out. You know what I'm saying? Like, giving him some suggestions, or, “Hey, this would really be a good way to do this.”

And so I'm praying this, in the name of Jesus, "do it this way." And he rarely, if ever, does it that way.

Oh, he answers prayers. But rarely in the way I want him to.

See, Jesus flips the script on our lives. I think it's his MO. They wanted a king, they wanted a ruler, they wanted a warrior. They wanted him coming in on a war horse. And he comes in on the smallest donkey he could find. Humbly and gently, he flipped the script on all of their expectations.

And oh, wait till we get to the end of the week, next Sunday. Talk about flipping the script. On the disciples.

He delights and flipping the script. He rides into your life on a donkey, a symbol of peace, just as he rode into Jerusalem on that historic day. He comes in not like we think he is.

We want him to come in like a flood and he comes in like a trickle. We want an earthquake. We want a tornado. When a hurricane, and he comes in in a gentle whisper in a still small voice. He says "Come follow me."

We're prone to wanting the epic. Amen?

And he flips the script on us.

Isaiah 9:6, listen to this. You may have heard this during the Christmas season.

*“For to us, a child is born  
to us a son is given;  
and the government will be on his shoulders,  
and he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father,-“ (What does the last one say?) “Prince  
of Peace.”*

Jesus fulfilled this, this messianic prophecy by coming in as a Prince of Peace. He brings that to us.

Number two:

Jesus Weeps Where There is No Peace.

When he came over the hill, and he saw what he saw, and he realized, not only is there not going to be peace, it's actually going to get worse because he knew they were going to tear the temple apart, and decimate the heart of the city, and the heart of the Jewish people.

And he wept, it brought him to tears. He wept because he knew there would be no peace.

And I remember years ago thinking maybe, maybe if I could align myself to him, and learn to weep over what he weeps over, that maybe my heart would be more in alignment with his. And when I think about what he weeps over, he weeps over division.

Have you read the news lately in our country? We're weeping over it. I think he's weeping over it.

He weeps over desolation, desecration. He weeps over brokenness, darkness.

The thief comes to kill, steal, and there's another D, destroy. He weeps over it.

I want to learn to weep over what he's weeping over, that I may pray and intercede with him. So the Prince of Peace will come and show up. Amen?

And the last one? Well, let me read Luke 19.

*"[41] As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city he wept over it,[42] and said, 'If you, even you, had only known on this day, what would bring you peace, but now it is hidden from your eyes.'"*

Then the last point, we'll end with this.

The Crowds are Answering, "This is Jesus."

They're answering, "This is Jesus."

In Romans Chapter 10, verse eight, we read this, "who is this?" Here's what we read.

*"But what does it say? 'The word (The message, is what that means.) The message is near you, it's in your mouth, and in your heart.' That is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim."*

And then here it is. Verse Nine:

*“If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart, that God raised Him from the dead, you will be- (What, family?) saved”*

Delivered, freed. Verse 10:

*“For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.”*

The point of Palm Sunday was to introduce us to the Prince of Peace, not the mighty warrior, but the Prince of Peace, who wanted to bring peace to you, in the middle of a world of conflict.

I think the whole point of Jesus sleeping on a boat in the middle of a storm, was a metaphor for what he wants to do in our lives. That in the middle of a crazy world, where there's disruption and chaos, we can sleep in the storm.

He comes now as the Prince of Peace to say “I'm here. I'm here.” And by the way, this is a setup for what's about to happen at the end of this week.

It's called Holy Week, our passion week in the church is traditionally, but it is a setup for the greatest comeback you've ever seen.

Sometimes there's a setback, but a setback can be a setup for a comeback, amen? And for this, this is the ultimate comeback, which we will see next week.