**WHAT THE COMING KING DESERVES**

**(Matthew 21:1-11)**

His name was Bruce McIver. He pastored the Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas for 30 years. After his retirement, and that is an important point, **after** he retired, he wrote a wonderful book entitled, *Stories I Couldn’t Tell While I Was a Pastor.* I read the book as a young pastor. My favorite chapter was “Pulpit Bloopers,” in which McIver shared some of the times he really blew it from the pulpit.

The first story took place on a Palm Sunday. That is the Sunday before Easter. It commemorates the time that Jesus entered Jerusalem for the last time, just days before His death on the cross. It just so happens that we are going to be looking at the very passage McIver preached from when he infamously blooped from the pulpit.

He said the church was full that morning. It was one of those Sundays when everybody decided to come on the same day. Ushers placed chairs in the aisles and up in the balcony so as to accommodate the people. There was an obvious sense of excitement in the air that morning.

After a rousing fanfare by the organist, the choir members processed down the aisles toward the choir loft led by children who were waving palm branches, and they sang a festive hymn. The church members stood and joined the choir in singing the last stanza. It was a great start to the service.

When McIver stood to preach, he got off to a great start, too. He read his text from Matthew 21 how Jesus road into Jerusalem upon a donkey. The congregation was with him as he told a moving story in his introduction. Then, he smoothly transitioned into telling the biblical background of the story recounting Jesus’ triumphal journey into the city. Having recently returned from a trip to the Holy Land, he was able to describe the narrow gates and cobbled streets.

McIver wrote:

This was a preacher’s paradise. Words flowed quickly and freely. Spontaneous phrases found nowhere in my sermon notes were delivered in the inspiration of the moment and embellished every step of the journey. I described the cheering crowd, the waving of the palm branches, and the jubilant celebration of the disciples. I was on a roll, caught up in the excitement of the moment.

At the peak of this part of the message, I even had Jesus stopping the procession, getting off the [donkey], and ministering to the people in the streets!

Then, it happened.

McIver made the mistake of using the KJV word for **donkey** at the wrong time. He said, “Ladies and gentlemen, if we’re going to do anything for God in this city, we’re going to have to get off our *ass* and minister to the people in the streets!”

At the moment he said those words, he instantly realized what he had just said, and he froze momentarily. Quickly thinking, he remembered what he calls, “McIver’s Rules for Those Who Bloop.” **Rule #1: Keep Talking.** He explained that if you just keep talking, some people will miss the blooper. **Rule #2: Never Apologize.** He wrote, “If you’ve dug a hole and fallen in, apologies and explanations usually serve only to dig a deeper hole.” **Rule #3: Never Look at Anyone**. He said you should find a fixed point on the wall above the heads of the congregation and focus on that point.

McIver employed all three rules that morning, but they didn’t work. The people in the pews bowed their heads and scratched their eyebrows. The turned their heads from side-to-side and smirked those on either side of them. Squelched snickers and muffled laughter began to rise to a rumble. When the music minister sitting behind him lost it, so did the choir and everybody else.

McIver reported:

When I recovered enough to assess the damage, I decided that it was time to halt the journey through the cobbled streets and tie up the donkey, or colt, or “whatever.”

For that one Palm Sunday at Wilshire Baptist Church, the triumphal journey ended in near chaos.

McIver consoled himself with the thought that Easter was coming. Regardless what happens this morning, I want you to know that Easter is coming. The even better news is that Easter has already come. While the people that day were welcoming the coming of the King, we are looking forward to the coming return of our King.

As we move through our text—Matthew 21:1-11—we are going to take note of what our coming King deserves.

1. **OUR COMING KING DESERVES NOTHING LESS THAN OUR COMPLETE OBEDIENCE.**

In vv. 1-3, Jesus sent two of His disciples on a rather odd mission. He wants them to go to the nearest town and take something that doesn’t belong to them. It sounds an awful lot like stealing to me. He tells them, “If you get caught red-handed, just give them the excuse, ‘The Lord needs these,’ and they will let you go.” And that is what happened. Mark 11 tells us that some bystanders asked the two, “What are you doing.” Luke 19 informs us that it was the owners who said, “Why are you untying the colt?” The disciples say, “The Lord has need of it,” and they let them go.

Notice what the disciples did not say when Jesus gave them this sketchy mission.

* They did not say, “You gotta be kidding me.”
* They did not say, “Whaaat?! Are You crazy?”
* They did not say, “I’m not about to do that!”
* They did not say, “Just a minute, Lord. I don’t think that’s such a good idea. Let’s think this thing over.”

The truth is that we don’t know what they said. For all we know, they might have said nothing. They may have just nodded their heads *yes.* We are not told what the disciples said, but we are told what they did. Look at v. 6.

These two disciples illustrate for us the truth that when the Lord says, “Go,” you go. When He says, “Speak,” you speak. When He says, “Do this,” you do that very thing. He deserves our complete obedience.

In vv. 4-5, Matthew tells us why Jesus told them to go fetch a donkey. I don’t Jesus told them why. I think they figured out why sometime after Jesus’ resurrection when they had time to sit down and reflect on what they had seen Jesus do and what they had heard Jesus say. It was at that point that they realized, “Well, this is why Jesus told us to do that.”

Jesus is under no obligation to explain to you why He wants you to do whatever He tells you to do. You will likely realize the wisdom of it and the necessity of it after, and only after, you have done what He directed.

Jesus deserves our complete and unquestioned obedience.

The disciples were to tell the owners the donkey the message, “The Lord needs it.” That seems to be an oxymoron like “plastic glasses” and “jumbo shrimp.: It seems odd to say “the Lord needs,” but Jesus did need a donkey to fulfill a prophecy that was made by Zechariah some 500 years before Jesus was born.

In the ancient world, when a King came into a city riding on a donkey, it was a sign that he was coming in peace. If he came into a city riding upon a horse, he was coming to make war. Not quite 2000 years ago, Jesus, the Prince of Peace road into Jerusalem upon a donkey to make peace. He achieved his goal through His death and resurrection. We read in Romans 5:1, “. . . We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

It is worth noting that Jesus is coming in a different manner when He returns. We read in Revelation 19:11, “Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.”

That day long ago, however, Jesus needed a donkey to fulfill a prophecy about Him and to convey the message He wanted to send. The owners of the donkey provided what Jesus needed.

In the ancient world, a king’s subjects were required to give to him any item or service that either he or his emissaries might request. As the King, Jesus laid claim upon a donkey. Whether you realize it or not, Jesus is the rightful owner of everything you have and everything you are.

Throughout Scripture, God laid claim to something that someone had. God came to Moses and said, “What’s that in your had, Moses?” It was a staff. Moses made himself and his staff available to God, and God worked miracles.

Rahab, the prostitute, had an apartment. She gave it to hide Jewish spies who came to scout out the City of Jericho.

David had a sling and a courageous heart. God used both to conquer a giant and give victory to His people.

A boy had a meager lunch of 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish that he gave to Jesus. Jesus took that lunchable and used it to feed a multitude.

Matthew had a pen, and because he offered it to the Lord, we were able to read today’s text.

What has God given you? What “donkey” do you have that the Lord needs to accomplish what He wishes? Do you have a voice to sing His praises or to tell your friends of what He has done for you?

Do you have a checkbook and a giving heart to support the Lord’s work through this church and to send the good news of Jesus throughout the world?

Do you have hands and a little know-how to help do things around the building that need to be done?

Do you have a vehicle and a compassionate heart to give somebody who needs it a ride to church?

What do you have that the Lord can use? Know this: The Lord will never ask you for something that He hasn’t already placed in your hand.

Give to Him your complete obedience.

1. **OUR COMING KING DESERVES SOMETHING MORE THAN OUR INCOMPLETE WITNESS.**

When Jesus was entering Jerusalem who was coming in with Him? The answer is Jews from Galilee. The Jews in Jerusalem viewed the Jews in Galilee as country bumpkins. We have jokes about the aggies or the hillbillies. They probably had jokes about the Galileans.

People wonder how the people could welcome Jesus as the King on Sunday and then on Friday morning cry, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” It is not that the people were fickle. It is that we are dealing with two different groups.

Jesus had spent most of His ministry in Galilee. The people there knew Jesus was someone special. They knew He was a miracle worker and great teacher, and they had concluded that He was the Messiah, the promised Son of David. They portrayed Him as such as Jesus entered the City of Jerusalem.

While the Galileans were using exclamation points, the Jerusalem Jews had question marks. Look at vv. 10. It is interesting that Jesus’ arrival at His birth and at His triumphal entry caused an uproar in Jerusalem. Look back at Matthew 2:3 to see the reaction of the city when the Wiseman came looking for the newborn King. At his birth, all of Jerusalem was troubled, and now that He comes to them at the end of His ministry the whole city is stirred up.

They needed a clear and accurate witness as to the true identity of Jesus. What they get, however, is an incomplete witness as to whom Jesus is. The ones who should have known Him best, the Galileans say, “This is the prophet Jesus.” Their message was true, but it was far from being the whole story. Jesus was and is so much more than a prophet.

* Jesus is more than a religious figure.
* Jesus is more than a respected teacher.
* Jesus is more than a doer of good deeds.
* Jesus is more than a fine example.
* Jesus is even more than the long-awaited Messiah because the people thought of the Messiah as a human, political Deliver like as unto King David.

Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of all who will trust in Him. Let your message about Jesus be clear, and accurate, and consistent with who and all that He really is.

Last weekend I went to OKC for the wedding of my nephew, Justin Miles. I saw family I haven’t seen in years. Among them was three of my cousins from my mom’s side of the family. At 71, Johnny is the youngest of the three. He retired from the Air Force. He did his flight training at Vance in 1971. In attendance at the wedding was his two older sisters Kathy and Mary. Mary is the oldest. She is 75 and is still teaching high school biology in College Station. This is her last year to teach. She is going to retire and run for the school board. I’ll bet she wins.

She came to my mom this past weekend. My mother’s name is Dora, but her side of the family calls her “Doozy.” As far as I know, Mary has never been religious, but quite surprisingly, she said, “Doozy, I didn’t find Jesus, but He found me.”

Friend, you can play hide-and-seek with Jesus if you want to, but He is a whole lot better at finding than you are at hiding. I suggest that you just let Him find you. Let Him find you where you are and as you are, and let Him clean you up and take you where He wants you to be, which is into the very presence of His Father.

Then, as you have opportunity, tell others about this Jesus, and hold nothing back. Our coming King is deserving of that.

1. **OUR COMING KING DESERVES OUR FULL-HEARTED AND FULL-**

**THROATED WORSHIP.**

While their understanding of Jesus and their witness of Him may have been somewhat lacking, nothing was lacking in the traveler’s praise of Jesus. Look at vv. 8-9. They rolled out the red-carpet in 1st Century, Jewish style. The people threw their coats on the road, and they threw palm branches on the road for the donkey to step on as he took Jesus into the City of Jerusalem.

This was not the first time such a thing had happened. Just about 200 years before, Judas Maccabeus journeyed into Jerusalem riding upon a donkey. He entered the city victorious after throwing off the wicked rule of Antiochus Epiphanes who had desecrated the temple by sacrificing a pig to the Greek god Zeus. As he entered the city, people threw palm branches into the road and celebrated his victory. After arriving, the temple was cleansed, and the worship of God was resumed.

Jesus entered Jerusalem in much the same way, and it is worth noting that after arriving, He cleansed the temple. Such details were not lost on those Jews who knew their history.

As Jesus entered the holy city, the Jews gave voice to what was in their heart, adoration of Jesus. They made much of Him. Hosanna is as much a prayer as it is a word of praise. It means, “God save now.” That was their hope and prayer that through Jesus, God would save the nation. The salvation for which they looked was not a salvation from sin. It was not a spiritual salvation that they were wanting. They were fully expecting a military salvation. They were under the boot of Rome. They wanted to be delivered from this oppression from the Roman Empire. They thought the Messiah was going to be military Deliverer just as Moses had delivered the people from their bondage in Egypt and how King David had delivered the people from their surrounding enemies.

While their understanding of what Jesus was to be about was mistaken, their praise of Jesus was not. He deserves the devotion of our hearts and the praise of our lips.

It was 36 years ago, the movie Footloose was released. Kevin Bacon, the star of the movie, recounted the conversation he had with his 6-year-old son after he saw the movie for first time:

“Hey, Dad, you know that thing in the movie where you swing from the rafters of that building? That’s really cool, how did you do that?”

“Well, I didn’t do that part—it was a stunt man.”

“What’s a stunt man?” he asked.

“That’s someone who dresses like me and does things I can’t do.”

“Oh,” he replied and walked out of the room looking a little confused.

A little later he said, “Hey, Dad, you know that thing in the movie where you spin around on that gym bar and land on your feet? How did you do that?”

I said, “Well, I didn’t do that. It was a gymnastics double.”

“What’s a gymnastics double?” he asked.

“That’s a guy who dresses in my clothes and does things I can’t do.”

There was silence from my son, then he asked in a concerned voice, “Dad, what did you do?”

“I got all the glory,” I sheepishly replied.

That is where you and I find ourselves. Jesus took our sin upon Himself and did what we couldn’t do. You and I stand forgiven, and we bask in the triumphant glory of Jesus. Don’t try to hold on to the glory. Throw it back upon Jesus because He is worthy. He is worthy of all our devotion and all our praise. Let’s join the heavenly host of Revelation 5 and cry out, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” (5:12).

Don’t hold back anything you have or anything you are. Jesus deserves it all, and He deserves all of you.