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Who is Your King?
Matthew 21:1-11
March 20, 2016, Palm Sunday, Adrian Moskal

Good morning. Let's pray.

We all make plans. We start making plans when we are still children. Plans to build forts, to have sleepovers, and plans for activities for Spring Break. As we get older, we make more concrete plans and take steps in accordance to those plans. After high school we plan to get a job, or go to trade school, college, or university. We make plans to get married, have kids, or focus on our career. As we get older, we make plans for our kids, our continuing education, or our retirement. We make plans.

Think about all of the things we decide on for those future plans. For retirement, how much money do I need to invest to retire, what job should I take (pension plan), what level of income am I going to need, where am I going to live. These are all questions we ask plus many more.

Think of the plans you have right now. Close your eyes. Now, think about what are you trusting in for those plans to come to fruition. Having and keeping a good job would be one of those things. Trusting in your abilities. Trusting in good health. Trusting on good relationships. What happens when one of those things gets pulled out from under you?

What do I mean? Let me explain. All of my plans that I make are based on all of those things, good health, job, positive relationships. What happens when one of those things fails. I suffer from Menieres Disease. The simple explanation is that sporadically I have an inner ear problem that affects my balance and causes me to get dizzy. Most often what happens is that I start to get dizzy, I take medication, I go to sleep and I wake up feeling better. No problem.

In the last several weeks it has been very regular and quite debilitating. It has affected work, family, and just daily routines. When not feeling well, I can't drive, read, etc. Now, whatever plans I may have made for the last few weeks, let me tell you, they were dependent on good health.

My plans were put on hold. We are a finite, frail, and interdependent people. All you have to do is take away one of those things- finances, job, health, relationship - and you will see how you are dependent on others. I relied on my wife, family, coworkers, and friends a lot in the last few weeks. This is what family is supposed to be about. Whether it be your immediate family, church family or our family of churches in FEB Pacific, we are interdependent. We need to rely on one another. Family.

In the last few weeks, my plans had to change. My guess is your plans are no different. They are subject to change.

How about God's plan? Does anything surprise him? Does he have to change his plans? We are going to answer that and hopefully much more today.

Today we are looking at the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, prior to Jesus' sacrifice, death and resurrection. Today is Palm Sunday. Everything in human history has been pointing this point. What do I mean by that?

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Ever since sin entered the world, we have had a sin problem. Sin is what separates us from God.

Ever since sin entered the world, when Adam and Eve bit into the fruit from tree of knowledge of good and evil, we have had a sin problem. Before that, Adam and Eve walked with God, in the cool of the day. They spent time with him. Adam and Eve did not know evil. Because of their rebellion against God, their sin, it separated them from Him. He is good, perfect, and holy. Therefore, God abhors sin. God's plan is all about our sin problem.

So how does God's plan play out, let's look at right after Adam and Eve sinned:

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Genesis 3:14,15 NLT

**¹⁴ Then the Lord God said to the serpent,
"Because you have done this, you are cursed
more than all animals, domestic and wild.
You will crawl on your belly,
groveling in the dust as long as you live.**

**¹⁵ And I will cause hostility between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring.
He will strike* your head,
and you will strike his heel."**

So, Satan (identified as the serpent), deceives Adam and Eve into believing in the lie and eating the fruit instead of trusting in the truth of God. For that, God curses the serpent and points to what is to come. The seed of the woman (Jesus), will strike your head and Satan will strike the seed of Eve's heel. The NIV says her (Jesus) seed will crush Satan's head and Satan will strike (bruise) his heel.

All the way back in Genesis 3- it is showing that Satan will continue to deceive us and yet it points to the cross, that Jesus will be bruised/struck but Jesus will win and crush Satan. It is pointing to this moment that we are talking about today on Palm Sunday.

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So many of the verses in the old testament point to how God is going to reconcile our sin? How

he will take on our sin but **Isaiah 53:5-6 (ESV)** one of my favourites.

**But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.
⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.**

We needed our sin to be dealt with and only Jesus can do it. Only God himself could be sacrificed for our sins to reconcile us to him. Hundreds of years before Christ, through the prophet Isaiah, God shared his plan with us.

And this is where we find our selves at this point as we finally get to our passage: Jesus comes, lives a sinless life, and as his ministry on Earth is coming to a close he is making his way to Jerusalem to fulfill his mission.

Our passage is **Matthew 21:1-11 (NLT)**. We will take it verse by verse. As we discuss I have 5 takeaways from Palm Sunday.

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Matthew 21:1(a) NLT

As Jesus and the disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to the town of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives.

God wasn't surprised by anything along the way. Jesus finds himself on this Roman military road from Jericho to Jerusalem that is about 17 km long and about 3000 feet vertical as it winds its way through Bethany and Bethphage. Jerusalem stands out like a light on a hill. All of human time has pointed to this time in history and the backdrop is magnificent. It has come about just as God has said it would through his prophets through history.

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This is our first point.

1. God's Plan is perfect, magnificent and unchangeable.

Our plans and promises may change due to our health, finances, relationships, etc. But God's plans do not. He is perfect and so is his plan. He is faithful to do what he promises. His plans are also epic and ours are so much less. This walk up to Jerusalem is victorious and yet the tension mounts if you know what is coming. It is awesome. Let's continue on in our passage.

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Matthew 21:1(b)-6 NLT

Jesus sent two of them on ahead. ²“Go into the village over there,” he said. “As soon as you enter it, you will see a donkey tied there, with its colt beside it. Untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone asks what you are doing, just say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will immediately let you take them.”

⁴ This took place to fulfill the prophecy that said,

⁵ “Tell the people of Jerusalem,*
‘Look, your King is coming to you.
He is humble, riding on a donkey—
riding on a donkey’s colt.

So Jesus sends two disciples ahead to get a donkey and its colt. Why did he do it well it was part of the plan. The prophecy that was fulfilled was from Zechariah 9:9. (**reread it**) It was written over 500 years before Palm Sunday. It happened because Jesus is perfect and faithful to fulfill his promises.

What is most interesting, in verse 1b, is that he sends the two disciples to get the colt. Yet, his disciples were always letting him down, doubting themselves and doubting God and yet Jesus uses them to fulfill his mission. He gave them a job to do.

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2. Jesus uses imperfect people (you and I) to fulfill his mission.

Is this any different than you or me? I have doubts, sometimes about myself and sometimes about his plan. Most of the time, my doubt comes when I have a setback. Again, health, finances, or relationship or when I flat out fail. I question all sorts of things. Jesus disciples had struggles and failed as well.

Personally, when my wife and I closed our business, 11 years ago, let me tell you I had my doubts about lots of stuff. My world was upside down. But God had a plan for us and it was way better than I could have asked or imagined. God has a habit of doing that. Working our bad stuff out for good.

We need to remember that God uses us in spite of our weaknesses. It further shows his glory when he uses us. He is big enough for our doubts and failings because he is perfect, good, and faithful always. Always.

Let’s continue with our passage.

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Matt 21:6-7 (NLT)

⁶ The two disciples did as Jesus commanded. ⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt to him and threw their garments over the colt, and he sat on it.*

They did as he commanded. Let me say that again. They did as Jesus commanded. Such a simple statement but I think the most profound. How often do we know what Christ wants us to do and we don’t have the perseverance or just obedience to follow.

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Our 3rd point

3. Obedience to Christ is the only way to grow and mature.

-Are you listening and following Christ or believing and trusting in something else. These 2 disciples are part of the story not because it was prophesied 500 years before, not because they read it or heard Jesus say it. They followed his directions. They were obedient to him. They could have known their OT inside and out, but would have been left out of his story if they didn't heed his voice. Do we do this? Do you know a lot about God but don't know Him, because you refuse to walk with him and follow him? They did as he commanded.

Let's keep going.

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Matt 21: 8-9 NLT

⁸ Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting,

**“Praise God* for the Son of David!
Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the LORD!
Praise God in highest heaven!”***

So what is going on here? The people are throwing their garments on the road ahead of him. They are placing branches down on the road ahead of him. It is this epic procession up to Jerusalem. The people are yelling out Hosanna, Hosanna. Praise God. It is a massive moment in history.

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This is our 4th point:

4. Jesus is worthy of all praise.

Why? Because it is all about him. He includes us in his plan if we let him, but it is him who accomplishes it. We don't change hearts or transform lives. Jesus does!! He is worthy of our praise, our love, our adoration, our finances, and our lives.

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Let's see what the Apostle Paul says in his letter to the church in Ephesus about who is in charge and responsible for everything.

Ephesians 2:8-10 ESV

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. ¹

Our salvation is by grace given by God. We can't earn it. It is a free gift. He created us in Christ and he has prepared good works for us to do. That we should do. If we are obedient and

listening. This is why he is worthy of our praise and worship. He does it all.

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Our last part of our passage:

Matt 21:10-11 NLT

¹⁰ **The entire city of Jerusalem was in an uproar as he entered. “Who is this?” they asked.**

¹¹ **And the crowds replied, “It’s Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”**

The disciples are cheering and the people are excited. They know their bibles. The Messiah is here. He is riding on a donkey. They know it is prophetic. People are yelling Hosanna. Praise God. They think Jesus has come to restore Israel as this powerful military juggernaut. They are tired of being under the thumb of the Romans. They see Jesus is going to change this.

Someone asks, “Who is this?” It is Jesus the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

But... they missed the point. Jesus isn't coming for that. Restoring the Israelites to military dominance is much smaller than his plan.

You see, they don't know their King. He is coming on a donkey because in that time, it was customary for kings to do that in times of peace. In the Luke narrative of this passage it talks of Jesus weeping as he comes into Jerusalem. He is weeping because he knows what's ahead of him. He knows what he will have to go through. How he is going to take the sins of the world on himself and he knew no sin. He knows that these same cheers in a few days will be changed to cries of “Crucify him”. He is prepared for it, but also knows that it is going to be hard and the people don't get it.

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This leads us to our 5th and final point.

5. Who is your King? If you don't know him, then you can't follow him.

If you don't know him, he can't save you. If you are not trusting in Christ and what he has done to save you, then you are without hope. What are you trusting in? Beauty, finances, health, abilities, and relationships, etc. If you are trusting in these things instead of Christ, then what happens when your health fails or the financial markets plunge and your retirement savings disappear?

Or what are you trusting in Jesus for. Is he your personal Genie that you make a wish and hope he fulfills it? Is your relationship with Jesus based on when you get into trouble, you cry out to him to save you and then you forget him when times are comfortable?

Jesus did not come so we can be comfortable.

So what does this mean for us? What is God's plan? He created us, loves us and pursues us.

He sent his son Jesus, so that we can be reconciled to him. Why, because our sin separates us from Him and Jesus came to die, to pay the perfect sacrifice for our sins because he wants to have a relationship with you. And it does not end there!!

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Ephesians 2:8-10 ESV

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

It says we are his workmanship and created in Christ for Good works.

I Cor 7:23 ESV

²³ You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants of men.

Therefore, you were created for good works and you were bought with a price. God paid a heavy price for you. That is how serious our sin is to God. Jesus, your king went to the cross for you to pay the price for your sin because he has plans for you.

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Matt 28:19-20 ESV

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

These are our marching orders. At CRBC we say “Leading people to become committed followers of Jesus Christ” but in essence it is the great commission that Jesus gave us. He gave it to each one of us, if he is your lord, your savior, and your king.

So what does this mean for you? I know when my role changed here at CRBC, one of the things that I was to oversee was outreach. I had no idea what that might look like but I prayed. I brought some people together and we met and prayed. As we met and prayed we felt that God was calling us to our first nations and to low income people of Campbell River.

I had been thinking about a soccer camp but had become paralyzed with waiting on a sign or more concrete direction. Pastor Jeff would not solve the issue for me but he did share that sometimes you just have to go and take that step of faith. You have to put your self into the fray.

I had to ask myself, Who is my King? Is he in control of all things? Did he speak creation into existence? Did he come and die for my salvation? Is he calling me to make disciples and share the good news? Is he calling me to be part of his story? Will he lead me through it? YES!!!

So, the long and short of it is, Pastor Steve and I organized a soccer camp last summer. 120 kids came. We walked into low income neighborhoods and handed out flyers. If they couldn't pay the entrance fee of \$20 we said, we would cover it. If they didn't have transportation, we said we

would pick them up with our bus. For 5 days the kids learned some soccer skills, had a blast, and heard about Jesus. It was a fantastic week for the kids and the leaders.

But, it didn't end there. It led to our Riverkids Sidewalk ministry. In September, we started a Sunday School Sunday afternoons in one of the areas we handed out soccer camp flyers. Youth and adult leaders share the gospel, play games, sing songs about Jesus and build relationships with up to 20 kids each week and connect with parents.

Before Christmas, Brody Naknakim, one of our supported missionaries with NAIM, asked if we wanted to come and do the same for the kids of the Wei Wai Kum and Wei Wai Kai First Nations. We just started this 2nd River Kids location at Thunderbird Hall last Sunday with a team that we have been training since September.

This is where we lean in a little and focus.

So, why am I telling you this? I don't know what or who God is calling you to. I know, that if you do not have a relationship with Jesus, that is why he came. He came to seek and to save the lost. You may be visiting or just checking CRBC out for a bit. But maybe you heard something today or previously and it is settling in your heart. Maybe this morning Jesus is saying to you to turn from your ways, follow him and learn to trust in him alone. You can do that anytime. That is the first step. If you did that today or you want to talk about that, come and talk with a staff member after the service or at the potluck. This is what we are all about, introducing people to Jesus.

Or maybe you are sitting here and saying I did that 20 years ago. Let me tell you when we give our lives to Christ, it doesn't end in the prayer, it only begins. He wants to do something wonderful in your life and in others through you.

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We have a total of 8 identified Riverkids locations if you check on the screen. The red ones are the ones that are going. The white ones may be for you to come, learn and maybe start in September. We want to be bringing in a new team to learn and be a part of it now so we can plant a new location in September. And another in February 2017.

We also have a small team that is partnering with Cedar school on a Tuesday afterschool program. The goal is to prepare a snack after school for kids and their parents and connect with them over a craft, floor hockey, etc.

God is opening up doors and inviting us in all over the place. Maybe he is knocking on your door and saying, get in the game. It's not enough to know but we have to be obedient to his leading. Maybe it is Riverkids, maybe it is Cedar School, maybe it is your neighbor or coworker that he is calling you to share with?

Who are you inviting this week to Easter service next week? Who needs to hear that message? Let's pray.

Who is Your King
Palm Sunday
Matthew 21:1-11
Week of March 20th, 2016

Objective of this study: To discover who is your king and how that affects your plans/life.

[Remember, the main goal of each Growth Group is to allow God's Word to change your heart so that others would see Jesus in you and be likewise changed to be like him. He wants to change the world through us]

Worship (5 – 10 minutes)

- A. Sing a song or two of praise and thanksgiving to God.
- B. Spend five minutes in silence asking God to prepare your heart for how he wants to speak to you.
- C. After the five minutes have someone interrupt the silence and read Psalm 95:1-7. meditatively to the group. Pause after each phrase letting God speak to you.

Welcome

What is the biggest celebration or event you have been to?

Word (20 - 30 minutes)

- A. What stood out from the sermon?
- B. Read Matthew 21:1-11.
- C. What jumps out at you in this passage?
- D. Briefly discuss some of the events in scripture that led up to Palm Sunday?
- E. How does humility and obedience are depicted in this passage?
- F. Who were the Israelites looking for in a Messiah? How was their picture much smaller than who Jesus is?

Work (30-45 minutes)

A. Sermon Quote: “Ever since sin entered the world, we have had a sin problem. Sin is what separates us from God.”

Why do we have a sin problem? Why is sin such a big deal to God?

B. God's Plan is perfect, magnificent and unchangeable.

Sermon Quote: “Our plans and promises may change due to our health, finances, relationships, etc. But God's plans do not”

Is this quote reassuring to you or cause anxiety? Why?

C. Jesus uses imperfect people (you and I) to fulfill his mission.

How does Jesus use imperfect/fallible people in Matthew 21:1-6? Share some examples in OT and NT that he does the same? What fears does this relieve for you? What promises of God are you not trusting in?

D. Obedience to Christ is the only way to grow and mature.

Sermon quote: “These 2 disciples are part of the story not because it was prophesied 500 years before, not because they read it or heard Jesus say it. They followed his directions. They were obedient to him. They could have known their OT inside and out, but would have been left out of his story if they didn’t heed his voice.”

Matthew 21:6-7 Why is obedience hard? How as a Growth Group can we encourage one another in this?

E. Jesus is worthy of all praise.

How does Eph 2:8-10 and Matthew 21:8-9 show why it is all about Christ? How does humility and obedience relate here?

F. Who is your King? If you don’t know him, then you can’t follow him.

Matthew 21:10-11, Matt 28:19-20. The Israelites had a wrong picture of Jesus? How does this happen in your life today?

With a right picture of Christ and of us, what impact would that have on your family?

Take some time to pray for one another for God to open doors to each one to be part of his story.