

[your mission, should you choose to accept it]

:: mark 11.1-7 ::

Zechariah 9.9 - Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.

About 500 years later this verse was being fulfilled by Jesus Christ in the final days before He would be rejected by the people of Israel, beaten, tortured and crucified on a Roman cross.

Our text this evening is Mark chapter 11, verses 1 through 7.

Let me read those to you.

Mark 11.1-7 - Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples; and He said to them, "Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring it. And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it,' and immediately he will send it here." So they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it. But some of those who stood there said to them, "What are you doing, loosing the colt?" And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it.

There's some really interesting stuff in this passage. First of all, we learn a lot about the proper way to do ministry. There's a Biblical way of ministering in the Lord and He's revealed it to us. But secondly, we again see the fundamental principle that the Christian life is meant to produce discipleship. That's God's intention in transforming us. That we grow and go and glorify Him, not that we stand still, with our Christianity being just a label in our lives. Christianity in God's mind means action. Discipleship. Following. Going.

The Lord plans for our lives to be fruitful and progressive. We get to see a little of how that works in our text.

So, beginning in verse 1, we read:

Mark 11.1 - Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethpage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples.

Jesus and His disciples have just come from Jericho, where Jesus miraculously healed Blind Bartimaeus. He's now about to enter into Jerusalem as Messiah, fulfilling a 500 year old prophecy God had made to His people. But before He gets to town, He stops and pulls aside a couple of His guys.

It says He 'sent' two of His disciples. In Strong's Concordance you find that the word used there is a combination of two terms which mean 'to set apart' and then 'to send out.'

Jesus Christ is in the business of sending.

John 20.21 - So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

Luke 10.2 - Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

Or how about this one:

Matthew 10.16a - "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves."

Jesus sends people like you and me to go and accomplish His will. That is His plan.

Can God use other parts of creation to accomplish His will? Absolutely. He uses angels and nature and whatever else He desires.

However, His focus on the earth and the spread of the Gospel is done through you and me. His Body on the earth. To that end, He sets apart specific people to go and do specific works. And that's exciting. You and I have specific callings placed on our lives by God Himself.

Our text doesn't say which 2 disciples Jesus selected for this important task, but what He asks them to do is pretty fun.

Mark 11.2 - and He said to them, "Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring it."

Um, Jesus? Did you just ask us to commit grand theft auto?

Understand what's happening here. They're on their way to enter Jerusalem. They're in-between towns and Jesus stops on the road and pulls two guys aside and says, "Go over into this little village over here. As soon as you get there, you'll see a Chevy Silverado in a parking lot. Get in and drive it over to me" (That's sort of an updated version).

This is quite a mission. This is interesting stuff. I mean, what would you do if God asked you to do something like this?

The first thing *I'D* do is say, "Uh, Jesus, why don't *YOU* come with us?!? I'll go with You and everything, but how about *YOU* head over and grab the donkey that doesn't belong to us?"

What we see here is our ministry demonstrated for us. Because we live without the physical presence of Jesus Christ. His Spirit is with us. His word is with us. But Jesus Christ is in heaven, preparing a place for us. In the mean time, He still calls us out, person by person, to accomplish His will through various situations and circumstances.

What that means to us on a practical level is that the Christian life must be a life lived by faith. Of course we know we're saved by grace through faith. But what I'm talking about is daily living and taking what we call *steps of faith* in our discipleship, where we're stepping out in ministry and in our witness to see what God will do.

Now, we don't do this without any guidance or direction. I'm not advocating a reckless type of Christianity where we just do all manner of crazy things or irresponsible things and label them as steps of faith. But, if we're honest with ourselves, we generally are a more reserved, more conservative group of people. And many of us are conditioned by family or culture or tradition to have a 'better safe than sorry' mentality.

It's very easy to move into a mindset and a lifestyle that is described by the statement, 'seeing is believing.' And we need to internalize the fact that Christians are called by God to walk by faith and not by sight. Giving the helm of our lives over to the Lord, who has a different direction for us, a different destination for us, a different propulsion for us and who requires that we walk by faith, trusting Him even when we don't fully understand His plan.

Jesus wasn't going to go with these 2 guys. He was calling them to go out and do something on His behalf, by faith.

But, like I said, they weren't diving into this thing blind. Here's how it worked:

They had a place to go, they had a task to perform and they had a goal to focus on. And this is the way we should minister not only as individuals, but as a Church as well, because out there in the field there are a lot of perhaps well-meaning Christians that really are walking recklessly, without real direction and without real calling.

I love the old saying:

There were some that were sent, and some that just went.

And the model we see here, the model we see throughout the Bible, is that God sets apart specific people with specific gifts and callings. If they are willing, He then sends them to specific places with a vision and equipping to accomplish the work that He set them out to do.

We don't always have everything spelled out perfectly for us, but when we're ministering, we should have a target place, a target task and a target goal.

Lots of times people in the Church will be convinced that they are cut out to teach or to lead or just to do a specific ministry. That's not necessarily a bad thing. The Church needs teachers. God sets folks aside to do that. But sometimes people get convinced that they should be a teacher of the word and a leader in the Church or whatever else, despite the fact that the Lord has not given them that specific calling.

God *HAS* a very specific, very special plan for your life and your discipleship and His desire is to reveal that plan to you. But we have to wait for His leading. We have to wait for the time when He sets us apart and reveals His plan. As we step out we see more of that plan unfolding, we receive more clarity. Don't be reckless in ministry. Wait for the Lord to call you out and give you a task, give you a specific place, give you a goal that He has in mind. Because if we don't

have those things, if we don't really have a calling, we can do a lot of damage to ourselves and to others.

Mark 11.3 - And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it,' and immediately he will send it here.

This is such an encouraging verse because it shows that, number one, God does groundwork for us. Yes, God is going to send you somewhere. Across the world, across the country, across your lawn. Some near, some far. All of us are going to be given missions to accomplish. But, wherever He's going to send us, He's already there doing His own work by the power of His Spirit. We come in and partner with that work that He's already doing.

It's a wonderful thing, this life of partnership. He preparing hearts, we working in the harvest. He opening doors, we walking forward through them. We delivering the message, He giving power to that message.

God always goes before us and with us in strength and power. And, on top of that, He is a God of promises. Wherever God sends you, He will give you a promise. Some of those promises have already been made, some will be revealed to you as you set out in your venture of faith. But you always go with God's promises.

On the very fundamental level, all of us go with the promise that God is with us, He will not leave us and we don't have to be afraid of whatever we're facing.

Now, this particular mission that these 2 guys were being sent on was potentially very difficult and even socially embarrassing. Honestly, if we put ourselves in their sandals, this isn't exactly an easy assignment. But, as we see, God's commands are His enabling. And here He shows that even when He asks us to do something difficult, or asks us to do something unusual or even something that we're uncomfortable with, He's given us the ability and the equipping to do it. He know's what He's doing and our part is to trust Him.

One of the best encouragements I can give us this evening is that we shouldn't be afraid of what God wants to do in our lives. I think we sometimes get that way. For whatever reason, we start thinking that if we give God control He's going to mess things up. Instead, Jesus is thinking, "No, if you give Me control, I'm going to accomplish rad things in your life, eternal things."

Now, if they were stopped, they were to give a reason for what they were doing.

A lot of times at a street fair or farmer's market you'll see folks with big signs preaching to people. I'm not saying they shouldn't do that or that they haven't been sent by the Lord. However, often times, if you stand and watch some of these folks, you'll see that they ignore people who come up to talk to them. They just keep shouting and won't make eye contact.

That's not how we do ministry. When God calls us to go out and accomplish His will in our lives, we should be open to share what He's said with others. The whole point of the Gospel is that we share it person to person. So, when we're out there living life, being faithful to the tasks God has set before us, we need to be willing and ready to share what God has said with

others. Repeating back to them the message we have received. That's basic humility and servanthood.

Mark 11.4 - So they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it.

I've been thinking a lot about this little phrase "their way" or "your way" in the Bible a lot recently. It's an interesting idea to me. They went their way. Their way was the way that Jesus had pointed out for them.

In Mark 10, when Jesus healed Bartimaeus, He said to him, "go your way." At which point, Bartimaeus followed Jesus on the road. We see that phrase with the lepers Jesus healed. Same with the Rich Young Ruler. Same as a passage we already referenced tonight:

Luke 10.3 - Go YOUR WAY, behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves.

The question is: **which way are you going?** Life is all about choosing which way you will go. Choosing this day who you will serve. You can choose to serve God or you can choose to serve Mammon. You can choose to follow after Jesus or you can choose to go away sorrowful, unwilling to take on the Christian life. That's up to us. We've received options, now we choose which way we're going to go.

These 2 disciples had committed themselves to their Messiah and their **way** was wherever He told them to go.

Have we allowed God to send us? Do we see our lives as a mission to glorify Him and share His salvation? What way are we headed in life?

They not only went in the way Jesus had directed them, but then they did exactly what He said to do. They followed their instructions.

The way we do things as Christians or as a church matters. Methods can change. They *need* to change to stay contemporary and effective, but how we do things matters.

Because Jesus gives us instructions on how we should do things and our part is then to actually do them. The end doesn't justify the means in the Christian life. So **how** are we doing ministry? **How** are we obeying God? Are our methods Biblical? If so, great. Keep them fresh and engaging for the time and place we find ourselves in. If they're not Biblical, it's time to go back to the instructions Jesus has given us in His word.

Mark 11.5-6 - But some of those who stood there said to them, "What are you doing loosing the colt?" And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go.

I'm always glad to know that God doesn't want to leave us hanging. He puts a calling on our lives and brings us opportunities day by day because He wants to actually accomplish things on the earth. He wants fruit. He wants harvest. And so when He says He's going to do something and asks us to be a part of it, we can be confident that it's actually going to happen.

These other guys in the street asked the disciples what they were doing. We don't know if these guys were the owners or if they weren't the owners. We don't know if they were angry when they asked what they were doing. I'm inclined to think they weren't. Because we know that God had gone before the disciples to work in this situation. He'd already prepared the owner of this donkey and put a different calling on his life. Specifically, the calling to give the donkey for service to the Lord. And when they explained, it was as if the men knew what was happening, "Ok, *THESE* are the 2 guys we've been waiting for!"

But, at any rate, these fellows questioned the disciples, who then spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded.

As you're living the Christian life, people are going to question you. Sometimes as friends, sometimes as enemies. That's just the deal. Even when a Christian is backsliding or trying to hide out in the world, like Peter was the night before the crucifixion, people still call you out and ask you things because it's spiritual. You are a Child of God and therefore you have the light of the world shining through you. The people around you are going to want to know about that.

When we're asked for advice or counsel, when we're being questioned about our faith, when we're in these conversations, we need to say what Jesus said. We need to deliver His word to them, because His word has power. His word is life. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Know the word. Share the word. Repeat it back to the people around you, not like a zombie, but personally and faithfully. Because the Bible is where we find truth and that's what people need.

Mark 11.7 - Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it.

These disciples were determined, not just to do what Jesus asked them to do, but to glorify Him as they did it. To lift Him up. And what a wonderful thing it must have been as they walked back to the place where their Lord was waiting. And what a great joy must have been felt as they came into view of Jesus and the other disciples and He said to them, "well done."

This is ministry. This is what your Christian life is meant to be.

As disciples, we are called upon to send and be sent. At different times, we are the ones that are sent to minister to others, whether they be near or far. We should be stepping out in faith to see where the Lord might send us. We should be faithful in the small tasks He's given us in the family and in the Church. We should expect the Lord to call upon us to go out to minister because that's what discipleship is about. Being fishers of men. Not just being Christian by label, but being Christian by action as we do what Jesus did, saying what He said, filled with His power and His Spirit, which directs us throughout this walk of faith.

But if we're not being sent, we should be open to sending to the Lord. Our resources are valuable to God because with them He invests in eternity. Whether it's small things or great things. God looks at our lives and says, "I can use you and I can use your donkey. I can use a widow's mite and I can use great riches. I can use it all if you're willing to partner with Me."

If we're not being sent during this particular season of life, the question is: **are we sending?** Have we relinquished our lives to the discretion of the Messiah, who has *MUCH* He wants to accomplish all over the earth?

The graciousness of our God is that He is willing to use us and our lives on every level as we surrender to Him. Pastor Jon Courson points out that Jesus loves to borrow things. He borrowed a manger, He borrowed a boat, He borrowed a Roman coin, He borrowed an upper room, He borrowed a tomb, He borrowed a donkey. He borrowed all of those things because His desire is to partner with us in His Kingdom. To share with us the richness of His glory. To give us real abundance and satisfaction in our souls.

This is the offer that we've been made as Christians. That even the smallest, seemingly insignificant aspect of our lives might be transformed to have eternal weight and value. Our mission, should we choose to accept it, is to trust the Lord, respond to His calling, send of ourselves for His ministry and be sent to share what God has done and what He still desires to do.

It's up to us. The Christian life doesn't happen on it's own. It's time for us to step forward and take on the yoke of discipleship. God's yoke is easy, His burden is light. He will transform what we might see as meager into something beautiful and powerful and eternal. The time for our decision, the time for our abandon to Him is right now.