

Triumphant Approach; Failed Entry

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- [0 : 00] All right, thank you, Otis. Good morning, everybody. Y'all doing well today? See a lot of happy, smiling faces out there.
- Good to see you. Glad you're with us. Those who are new, glad you're with us. Those who are listening online, glad that you can at least do that, but we do miss you being here in person.
- If you got a Bible, go ahead and open it. Turn to Mark chapter 10. We're gonna start in verse 46 as we continue on in our Mark series. If you don't have a Bible, there will be the verses up on the screen as well.
- And by way of introduction, if you're new to this series, you're new with us, Mark tells the story of Jesus, and it also tells the story of his disciples following him over the three years of Jesus's ministry on earth.
- And so we're kind of in the final stages now. Even though we're kind of just in Mark chapter 10, we are in the final stages leading up to Jesus's crucifixion. And he has pivoted, he has turned himself toward Jerusalem for his final visit to that city.
- [1 : 05] Now, now that his time has come, he will no longer be suppressing his true identity as the long awaited Messiah King and Son of God. In this episode, we are going to read is about Jesus going public about those two things in a very big way.
- And probably in just about the biggest way possible. And there's a lot to cover because it's about Jesus first, but in Jesus being revealed, it also speaks to us. And what we need to reckon with is when we see Jesus for who he truly is, it evokes a response.
- And that's a big part of what this whole passage is about. So let's dive in. It says this, And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside.
- And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry and say, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent.
- But he cried out all the more, Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stopped and said, call him. They called the blind man, saying to him, Take heart, get up, he is calling you.
- [2 : 22] And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. And Jesus said to him, What do you want me to do for you? And the blind man said to him, Rabbi, let me recover my sight.
- And Jesus said to him, Go your way, your faith has made you well. And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way. Now, when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethpage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples and said to them, Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat.
- Untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, Why are you doing this? Say, The Lord has need of it, and will send it back here immediately. And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it.

And some of those standing there said to them, What are you doing? Untying the colt. And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus, and threw their cloaks on it, and sat on it.

And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. And those who went before, and those who followed, were shouting, Hosanna.

[3 : 38] Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David. Hosanna in the highest.

And he entered Jerusalem, and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve. This is God's word.

Now, there are some obvious takeaways in this story, and also not so obvious ones. So let's just kind of dig into it, and kind of follow this story as it goes along, and pick out some of the not so obvious things that can really help us.

So Jesus begins his approach to Jerusalem from this city called Jericho. And he not only has his disciples with him, it says in verse 46 of chapter 10, that a great crowd was following him.

And it's the same word and adjective to describe the number of pigs when Jesus sent the demon into that herd of pigs, and it was about 2,000 pigs.

[4 : 41] And so it's not just like, oh, kind of a great crowd, but it's like, you know, this is some significant numbers here. So they would have been hard to miss. I mean, we're talking about like either hundreds of people or thousands of people following Jesus.

So I want us in our minds to get some imagination. They're leaving this city, Jericho, on a dusty road towards Jerusalem, and there's this crowd, right? And what do big crowds do?

Man, they're not just big, they're loud. And they're kicking up dust. It would have been hard to miss them. Now, on the way, they pass this blind beggar named Bartimaeus on the side of the road. Most likely, he would have been near to the entrance to Jericho, to the city of Jericho, since it was a well-travel destination, and his chance of getting enough alms every single day to support himself.

Like, that would have been the great spot to make that happen. And so he obviously hears something unusual pass by. He can't see it, but he can hear it. He hears this large crowd, this loud crowd, and even a blind man wants to know what's going on.

And I'm sure he asks, what the heck is all this noise about? And often, great crowds in those days surrounded and accompanied important figures, or they were going to a very important event.

[5 : 58] And so Bartimaeus is intrigued. He wants to know. He might be experiencing some FOMO here, right? Like all of us would have. He wants to know who the big deal is.

Now, we see in verse 47 that somebody tells him that it's Jesus of Nazareth. But what is fascinating is that he doesn't cry out Jesus of Nazareth. He assigns to Jesus a very different title.

He says, Jesus, son of David. Bartimaeus, what he is doing here, he is ascribing to Jesus the title of the promised king, the long-awaited Messiah, who would bring about the salvation and restoration of God's people.

That's what he is doing. That's what he believes, that's who he believes Jesus to be. Now, that may not seem like a big deal to us, but remember, Jesus had banned his disciples from calling him the Messiah, calling him the Christ.

Like back in chapter eight, that's what Peter said. You know, he asked his disciples, who do you say that I am? And Peter says, you're the Christ. And he says, great, now don't tell anybody. Keep that quiet. But it's happening now.

[7 : 07] There's somebody calling him the son of David. There's somebody letting the big secret out, and Jesus doesn't rebuke him. Because Jesus is about to blow the lid open of who he is.

And this blind man, like he calls it out. It's kind of the first beginnings and stirrings in the crowd. And he gets healed, and he joins the crowd. And now Jesus approaches Jerusalem with his entourage, let's call it.

And the word is getting out about the son of David. Word is spreading. And they stop outside Jerusalem at Bethany and Bethpage, these little towns that were right outside on the Mount of Olives that could look at Jerusalem and see it.

And they pause. And everything that happens in the next 10 verses highlights this point. Jesus is worth extravagant praise and sacrifice. I mean, we often have a picture of Jesus as being humble, meek, and mild.

And for sure, he acted humbly in many respects throughout his ministry here on earth. And that is an appropriate picture to have of Jesus. But what we see in this passage is Jesus deliberately doing things to exalt himself for all to see.

[8 : 19] First, he tells his disciples in chapter 11, verse 2, to go and get a colt. And that you'll find it tied. And don't ask the owner to borrow it. Just untie it and bring it to me.

And if anyone happens to find you and ask, wait, wait, what are you doing? That doesn't belong to you. Just tell them the Lord has need of it. And that is exactly what happens. The disciples find the colt, exactly how Jesus described it.

They take it, people stop them, and they say, what are you doing? And the only reason they give is the Lord needs it. That is not very humble. And it wouldn't work for any of us.

Try going into a car dealership, jumping into a car, and start to drive away without signing your life away first. And you will probably get stopped or mobbed and asked by the people who work there, I'm sorry, sir, what do you think you are doing?

And we cannot reply, the Lord needs it. That is not going to work. But that is exactly what Jesus does. And think about, I want us to draw attention to you.

[9 : 23] The word he uses here, Lord, it's a word in the Greek that means someone that has absolute ownership rights. Someone that has supreme authority.

So when the disciples are asked, hey, hey, that colt doesn't belong to you, what do you think you are doing? Their defense is that the Lord needs it. What they're saying is someone greater than whoever owns this needs it.

And his ownership rights trumps this guy's ownership rights over this colt. Jesus is flexing. That's what he's doing here.

The humble servant, the humble servant Messiah, he's flexing his kingly rights. But here's the thing, why does he ask for a colt?

I mean, getting back to my ridiculous car dealership analogy, if I'm going to take any car off the lot, man, I'm not taking a Chevy Malibu. I'm taking the Corvette, right?

[10 : 20] That's what we're doing. In the other gospels, we know that this colt is a donkey. Oh man, why didn't Jesus pick out a war horse, right?

Man, if you've seen a thoroughbred, they are impressive animals. If you've seen a donkey, not so much. Why does Jesus pick the Chevy Malibu?

This is a fulfillment of the prophecy in Zechariah. In Zechariah 9, verse 9, it says, 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, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Now, it's easy to look at this and our takeaway is like, actually, Jesus is being humble. He's choosing the humble animal here. He's not choosing the war horse. He's choosing the donkey.

[11 : 16] Roman emperors, they rode in on war horses. Dignitaries and generals, they rode in on war horses to the applause and praise of men. Think about that scene in that movie Gladiator, right?

When the emperor and the generals come back to the great applause of Rome.

But Jesus, he's humble and lonely. Man, donkey probably just fits better for him, right? And to our modern minds, that's kind of the obvious takeaway, but to a Jewish person in Jesus's day, they are seeing something very different with Jesus riding in on a donkey.

In the Old Testament, kings rode mules. If you look at 2 Samuel 18 to 19, chapter 18, verse 9, that's what happened. David elected to have Solomon ride in on a donkey on the way to his anointing to be the next king of Israel.

But it's not just a donkey Jesus is riding. It's a donkey that has never been ridden, and that is significant because that was a qualification for royal use only.

[12 : 23] Add to that, donkeys were always associated with the Messiah in Jewish prophecy and literature. Now, you put all of that together, and here's the point.

Everyone knew what Jesus was doing by asking for this cult. He is going public about himself in spectacular fashion. With the shouts of Son of David still ringing in their ears and no doubt growing and growing as they approach Jerusalem, Jesus orders that an animal fit for a Jewish king be brought to him.

And how do the disciples respond? First, they use their own cloaks to blanket the donkey, kind of like a saddle for Jesus to sit on. This is an act of honor, honoring Jesus, which anticipates what the crowd will do next.

Jesus sits on the donkey. He is going to ride into Jerusalem. Now, this is all happening during, right before a time called the Passover, is leading up to the Passover feast.

And that was a big feast. That was a huge Jewish festival. And in those days, for those kind of big festivals, Jews from all over the place, all over the nations even, spread out, would come in pilgrimage to Jerusalem for that Passover feast.

[13 : 38] And it was expected of them, as they approached Jerusalem, which was situated on a mountain, they would ascend up to the city on their feet if they could. It was told to them that you should walk.

But Jesus is choosing in this moment not to come as a commoner. He is ascending into Jerusalem in the style of the Messiah King. And the crowd responds in the way expected if a king were coming into the city, which was very common in that day.

If there was a visiting king or there were dignitaries that were approaching a city and they knew about it, there would be a pause before they came in and the city would prepare itself and they would make sure that these dignitaries and these kings were greeted with great pomp and circumstance, large crowds.

People would get dressed in their best. And here we see the crowd do a couple of things that are deeply symbolic. First, they lay their cloaks on the ground along with palm branches.

They are carpeting the dirt road for this mule to walk down. Today, we call that rolling out the red carpet. That's what they were doing for Jesus. In 2 Kings 9.13, the same action was performed for King Jehu.

[14 : 51] Men laid their garments down on the steps before him while crying out, Jehu is king. And the crowd is, what they're doing here, they're treating Jesus like a true king of Israel.

It was expected of them that, sorry, and the other deeply symbolic thing the crowd did was to shout, Hosanna. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David. Hosanna in the highest. And that is a direct quote from Psalm 118, verses 25 and 26, which was well known by Jewish folks.

And it was chanted at major festivals, kind of like at the Passover. And the word Hosanna, which means save us now or help us now, was very common to them, but it had turned into the shout of praise much like hallelujah.

But they aren't just shouting Hosanna. They are repeating it. And in the Hebrew language, that was significant. If you repeated a word, what you were doing is you were adding a heightened quality to it.

[16 : 01] You were intensifying what you were saying. For example, in the book of Isaiah, chapter six, when Isaiah has this vision of the Lord seated on the throne high and lifted up and the train of his robe fills the temple, he sees the seraphim surrounding the throne that are encircling the throne and they're calling out to each other, holy, holy, holy.

They're saying God is not just holy, he is holy, holy. He is not just holy, holy, he is holy, holy, holy, which is a completion and a perfection of holiness.

They weren't just, they just weren't running out of words, right? They were saying something about God like he is unsurpassed in measure and holiness here to everything else.

They were intensifying the holiness of God and the quality of what belongs to him. And that's what is happening here. They aren't just saying, here comes our Messiah King, save us now. They are amped up with joyful anticipation surrounding Jesus' entry.

This crowd is so excited, they have become undignified and uninhibited in their praise. Think about throwback to King David.

[17 : 11] When the Ark of the Covenant is coming, he is dancing, he is unrobed, he is singing and people are like this dude, he has lost his marbles. And what does he say?

Oh, I will become even more undignified than this. See, the crowd is caught up in their Messiah King. The consolation of Israel finally having arrived in the flesh, the salvation that has been promised forever and ever.

Finally, they're seeing it, beholding it, and man, it has come. It is a moment full of emotion. It is loud, it's raucous, it's joyful, it's hopeful. Now, let's step back for a moment from looking at the crowd and let's pivot.

Let's imagine what Jesus is like in the face of all of this spectacle. Do you think he's embarrassed by it? No, he is receiving it. He is reveling in it.

He is enjoying it. In fact, the account of the same moment in Luke's gospel tells us that the Pharisees go to Jesus and say, hey, you need to rebuke your disciples for what they're doing.

[18 : 18] This is not right. And Jesus says, man, if they were to be silenced, then the rocks would cry out. Like, I'm coming in and somebody's gonna be worshiping me and you can't stop it.

And Jesus responds with that. Jesus isn't embarrassed by this. He is saying it is right and fitting for him to receive this kind of exuberant praise.

And no doubt, that can rub people the wrong way. We could be like, man, is God really that needy? Does he need that much hype? Is his ego so fragile that he needs the praise of men?

And it's easy to think that because, man, we know our own hearts. We discern our own hearts and we can project that onto God and we shouldn't, but we do. Because we know for ourselves, we know why we seek the praise of men, don't we?

Because we're insecure. We're trying to be validated. We're using the praise of men to get at some things that are just broken inside of us. But if we're honest, the praise that we seek, man, we really know.

[19 : 26] And even if we receive it, we really know we probably don't deserve it. But Jesus isn't like us at all. He isn't insecure. He isn't looking for validation through our praise.

Think about this. Jesus, he is God. He preexisted creation and people and angels and anything else that could give him praise, which means before anything was, God was a community, a father, son, and Holy Spirit.

And he still is and he will be forevermore. But in eternity past, there was God all by himself. before the foundations of the world. And you know what they were doing? They weren't bored.

They weren't wondering, man, there's like a hole in our heart here. Something is missing. You know what they were doing? They were reveling in one another. They were reveling and beholding each other and glorifying in each other.

They celebrated. They enjoyed. They glorified in each other. And that there was, is, and ever will be this giving and receiving of delight within the Trinity.

[20 : 35] Jesus said, Lord, glorify me with the glory I had from the beginning. Right? And then he says about himself, he's like, now is the son of man glorified, but in my death, in what's gonna happen, I am glorifying you.

There's this, you see this relationship of the son doing everything to glorify the father and desiring to give the father the glory due him. And we see the reciprocation from the father to the son.

And Jesus confesses these things in the gospel. But it's so pleased God in his good and perfect will to create.

To create other beings, to do what? To join in with them. He created us out of love to experience that which is perfect, holy, transcendent, beautiful.

So when God brought into existence angels and planets and plants and people, it wasn't because he realized, oh man, there is something insufficient in just us.

[21 : 40] No, he is saying, God is saying, man, I created out of love to bring things into this divine dance of our glory. So that you can enjoy and be a part of that.

And that is the essence of life. That is what Jesus came to redeem us into and save us back into that we get to join in with that. It's the essence of redemption and our new existence of being a new creation through Jesus Christ.

It is to worship the Lord our God and to worship him alone that we get brought into this divine dance. Now we think we'll be happy if people praise us but God knows that happiness only comes when we praise him.

Because what are we doing? We are stepping in to that that which we are made to be. And a necessary part of worship is beholding God's glory. It's seeing him as he truly is.

Not how we want him to be, right? God said, you're not allowed to make an image of me at all. We don't get to form God into any version of who we want him to be.

[22 : 48] Man, we praise him for who he truly is and that has to be revealed to us. He has to reveal himself to us. And you know what? Before Jesus jumped on that donkey, before the crowds shouted, Hosanna, a blind man first cried out, Son of David.

It began there. The irony is the blind man saw. He saw Jesus' glory. He heard Jesus of Nazareth and he saw beyond that and he said, no, no, no, this is the son of David.

And he did what the Psalms tell us to do in response to when God's glory is revealed to us. When we see him for he truly is. Psalm 29 verse two says, ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name.

Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness. I love the New King James version. It says, worship the Lord in the beauty of his holiness. I love that. What happens to you and I when we see something splendorous, when we see something beautiful and majestic?

Think about it. It could be at a wedding when the bride is first revealed before she walks down the aisle to her groom or when you experience a magnificent sunset or hear a splendid song or orchestration at a concert or you watch an athlete do something that just seems impossible.

[24 : 09] What happens to us, something deep within us is moved. It goes beyond our brain and logical senses. Emotions are stirred, right? Feelings are evoked and we feel these things deep within us and they demand a out response that flows out and through our bodies.

At a wedding, beholding the bride, we often cry. Definitely the groom does. At the magnificent sunset, we sit quietly in awe. After hearing a song that enraptures our soul, we applaud and we shout.

We call for an encore and we shout and scream and chant for those athletes that we see do great things. Now, as wonderful as those moments are, as much as we can connect with that and they stir us within us emotion and evoke responses, they don't quite satisfy the desire in us.

They point to something even greater. They point to something in our souls that desires something even more transcendent. C.S. Lewis puts it this way. Most people, if they had really learned to look into their own hearts, would know that they do want and want acutely something that cannot be had in this world.

There are all sorts of things in this world that offer to give it to you, but they never quite keep their promise. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.

[25 : 43] You and I were made for more than what this world can give us. We were made to behold God's glory, to behold perfect holiness, and to give Jesus our worship and our praise.

And what if we don't? Well, the final verse that we read is a warning for anyone who could offer Jesus muted praise, non-sacrificial praise, or just indifference.

Mark 11, verse 11, says, Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple, and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

Now, there's a lot happening here, but it points to something. Failing to praise Jesus is catastrophic. See, Jesus, he comes in, he's not having a quick glance around the place.

He isn't going in and being like, hey, what's up, guys? He's checking things out closely. He is looking to discern what is going on, and what is Jesus seeing in the temple? Well, he is noticing something, the great omission.

[26 : 51] no one's excited that he's there. No one is entering into the celebration. They're not shouting, Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

The exuberant praise party of his approach to Jerusalem is muted as he gets into the city and into the temple. Sure, there are people there, but they are going about their religious duties and tasks, but they could care less about Jesus.

See, you don't have to be hostile to Jesus to be his enemy. Indifference is enough. Jesus draws this out in a parable about 10 virgins whose job it was to welcome the bridegroom who had returned for his bride, and that was a thing that happened in those days.

It was part of the ceremony of getting married, and when the bridegroom showed up in this parable, when the bridegroom showed up on the outskirts of the town where his bride was, it was these ladies' jobs to run out and to meet him with their lamps full of oil, burning bride, to usher him in to where his bride was awaiting him.

But in this parable, five of them stopped being excited about his return. It said the king took a long time to come back. They started to care about other things, and slowly, the earnest anticipation was crowded out with busyness or other concerns that seemed more important.

[28 : 23] So when the bridegroom appeared, they weren't ready and couldn't go out to meet him. You know what? In the parable, it did not go well for them. What Jesus found in the temple, what he found in the city of Jerusalem in their muted praise, their indifference, was akin to the bridegroom rolling up on these five foolish versions who stopped waiting and looking for the bridegroom.

And Jesus leaves the temple in this story that we just read. But next week, we see that he returns, not next week, the next day he returns, and makes a ruckus. He's got whips and he's overturning tables.

He is upset, to say the least. Jesus, meek and mild, is also the Messiah King, exalted and worthy of extravagant praise.

There are no half measures in the gospel. It is good news to you and me. It is good news about what Jesus has done for us, but make no mistakes, there is no half measures in it.

It is all or nothing. Jesus gave his all and in turn, he demands our all. Now you might be thinking, man, this sounds impossible. Jesse, I can't do that.

[29 : 41] I can't live in exuberant praise all the time. I'm gonna fail. I'm gonna be a lot like those 10 virgins. Yes, you are. And you know why? Because we are imperfect as much as we try to be.

But here's the good news. Grace. He knows we're gonna fail him time and time again. But our failures, be encouraged by this, our failures don't lead us to stop giving our all.

In our failures, we get to run to him and realize that those things, those great omissions of our lack of praising God and Jesus as he deserves, those are covered in the blood of Jesus.

And then we won't step back and be like, oh well, no big deal. And we say, oh thank you Lord. And we get back up and he calls us to extravagant praise again and we just pursue that.

Now I say all that and it's important to remember the order. We respond to him. We respond to what Jesus has done. We respond to him revealing himself to us.

[30 : 49] He earned our salvation so our eyes could be opened to behold his glory and give him all our praise. Jesus initiates, we respond. That's the order of the gospel truth here.

That's the order of grace that we have to hold on to and realize. Jesus reveals, we give him our praise. Jesus reveals, we give him our praise. We don't give him our praise. Jesus reveals he's got grace and you know what?

It's sufficient for us to come and find forgiveness and healing in him and then we go back to Jesus reveals, we give him praise. The whole episode, I'm gonna close with this, begins with a blind man ascribing to Jesus the glory he was due.

Jesus, son of David, he cries out. Jesus opens his eyes. The blind man, he didn't just wanna see.

He wanted to see his savior. He wanted to see his Messiah king that he knew was so close to him. He wanted to behold him with his own eyes and when Jesus says, what do you want me to do for you?

[31 : 54] And he says, I wanna see you again. That is why he wants to see. Jesus is asking you and me today, what do you want me to do for you? What do you want me to do for you?

As the band comes up, our only response can be, Jesus, open our eyes to see your glory. whether you know him, you've never put your faith in him or you've followed him for many years, our cry is that cry.

And he stands before us today, our savior, our king, and he's saying, regardless of where you're at, regardless of what is going on in your life, he's saying to you and me, what do you want me to do for you?

And you know what? We can ask him to fix a lot of problems in our life. The biggest problem is our spiritual eyesight. Amen? That's what we want him to solve.

I'm gonna give us all a moment to just respond. I want us to sit in this. I want us to reflect. And I want you to imagine with some holy imagination, Jesus standing right in front of you, right on this stage.

[33 : 23] And he's asking you that question right here, right now. What do you want me to do for you? And let your heart cry out to him in earnestness.

Man, open my eyes. I want to see your glory. Let's do that together. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.