

**HOSANNA IN THE HIGHEST**

Mark 11:1-11 (Key verse 10)

*"Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!" "Hosanna in the highest!"*

Jesus will be entering Jerusalem, with much praise and joy from the people. However, Jesus was actually entering Jerusalem as a sacrificial lamb. Which is the opposite of what one would expect for a triumphant king. In this passage we shall learn what it means that Jesus is Lord and king. What makes Jesus Lord or king of kings. Why we should rejoice over this entry of Jesus into Jerusalem? Though the people might have been rejoicing for a political saviour, may we see the true significance of Jesus entry and what it means for our lives. May we also learn the significance of the true owner of our possessions and life and what it means to be stewards of what God owns.

Look at verse 1a, As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives," Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. We learn from John 12:1a, "Six days before the Passover Jesus arrived in Bethany..." and only on the following day started moving towards Jerusalem. The Passover started on Friday evening, which then means today's event are taking place on a Monday. Bethany is on a ridge of the mount of Olives and it is about 3.2 km from the city of Jerusalem. On the east downwards is the Jordan valley what is today known as Jordan. And then on the west a bit more upwards is the city of Jerusalem. So at Bethany you cannot actually see the city of Jerusalem. That is why in John 11:55 we read that many went up to Jerusalem for the Passover. Bethany was a place where Lazarus lived. In John 12:9-10a, we learn that a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. Jesus was already surrounded by crowds as we already learned from last week passage. In this region it was well known that Lazarus had been raised from the dead. Which explains again why Jesus had large crowd around him. Jesus then commanded his disciples something, look at verse 1b-3, "Jesus sent two of his disciples, 2saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. 3If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.'" This was a strange command from Jesus for the disciples, firstly, how did Jesus know such details, they will find a colt tied and no one would have ever ridden it. Secondly, how will the owner of the colt simply let them take it if they simply told the owner, "The Lords needs it and will send it back here shortly." We will come back to this question. Let us look at verse 4 on how the disciples managed, "They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, 5some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" 6They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go." They answered as Jesus had told them and they were able to bring the colt, no issues.

Returning to my question, what does this tell us about Jesus who knew beforehand about the colt. This event shows us that Jesus is the Lord of everything. The people when told the Lord needs it did not argue or make a fight, they simply obeyed. We read in Colossians 1:16, "For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him." God is the owner and we are all but his creation. All things that are created belongs to God. This means that, Jesus is the owner and we are stewards of what belongs to Jesus. The owner of the colt, which is a young donkey, was simply a steward of the young donkey. The real owner is Jesus. That is why he could say, if

anyone ask where they were taking the colt, they could simply say, the Lord needs it. God has entrusted us to take care of His possessions such as family, job, money, time, properties/car, studies and life. These are our modern colt while we are living in this world. Clearly the owner of the colt was a believer in Jesus (John 12:11). This means that, those who accept the Lordship of Jesus depend on Jesus for every aspect of their lives. The owner of the colt had to trust in the goodness of Jesus, when he/she was told the Lord needs it. Jesus is our Lord who cares for our goodness and has made us stewards of what belongs to him. We should not worry about tomorrow, what to eat, what to wear and what to do. Our calling is to firstly accept the Lordship of Jesus and be good stewards, pleasing God by taking good care of what belongs to him. We should live to please God by faith day by day and simply obey the words of God. Look at what happened to the disciples when they simply obeyed the words of Jesus, they could be used and experience the Lordship of Jesus. Later on the owner of the colt could rejoice having taken care of the colt, his stewardship was greatly honoured because Jesus used the colt to enter Jerusalem. Whenever Jesus needs something we have, we should remember that God is the owner of our life and we are just stewards of the things of God. Whether we have big or small things, the Lord has entrusted those things to us. Many times we may feel a sense of loss because we think we are owners of our life. So we can easily become stingy to God and generous to ourselves. Someone said, "You can tell whom the person is serving, by the way they spend their money." I pray that when Jesus needs us in any situation, me and you may answer, "Yes Lord".

Verses 7-8 tells us that, when they brought the colt to Jesus they threw their cloaks over it and sat on it. Many people also spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. John 12:13 reveals that these were palm branches, "They took palm branches and went out to him..." (13a). From here we can actually see, what is believed to be the traditional palm Sunday, that it should actually be Palm Monday. And the palm branches scripturally symbolise salvation joy [Revelations 7:9], Look at verse 9-10, "Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna! "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" 10"Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!" Hosanna in the highest heaven!" The words Hosanna is a Hebrew word that means, "save us" they are expressed in joy and praise. Prophet Zechariah prophesied the entry of King of kings who is coming by riding a colt [Zec 9:9-10]. They shouted, "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David, Hosanna in the highest heaven!" They were actually shouting for joy that Jesus was coming to save them from the gentile kingdom (Roman kingdom). Since Jesus is king, it means he also has His kingdom. That is why they say, blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David. They were seeing Jesus as the one who would restore their Jewish kingdom, saved from the gentile kingdom of the Romans. Remember at this time they used to pay taxes to Caesar. We shall also see in the book of Mark, that Jesus was ultimately handed over to Roman law for the capital punishment by the chief priest. So, they saw Jesus as a political liberator. However, they were correct to say Jesus had come in the name of the Lord. For indeed Jesus had come to save us from the power of sin. Jesus did not come riding on a war horse to fight the gentile kingdom and oppression of the Jewish people. Jesus came riding on a donkey, because his fight to liberate the world was through his death.

Jesus had declared in Mark 10:45, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." And Mark 10:33, ""We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise."" Like a humble colt, that was never ridden before, Jesus came

with humility, spotless without sin. Jesus laid down his life to serve us even with his life. He was going to be mocked, spat on, flogged and killed. That is what awaited him in Jerusalem. Usually Jesus would prevent this kind of praise, however this time around he allowed it in order to be prepared as the sacrificial lamb of God. On the Friday of that very week, Jesus was going to be killed. Being received this way would give the religious leaders and teachers of the law, grounds to accuse Jesus of trying to challenge the political leadership of the gentile kingdom. And so Jesus entered as king and saviour with shout and praises that even reached the heavens. This was really praises of joy for our Lord Jesus who would be offered as a sacrificial Lamb for the Passover that was starting on Friday evening.

Because of Jesus death on the cross, through his blood we will be saved. Through Jesus blood our sins are forgiven. God will pass us over and we shall not face eternal death because of sin. Death is a reminder of what God had decreed from the beginning. That the wages of sin is death. And so Jesus became our sin, so that we may not have to face God's judgement, but receive eternal life. Death is man's enemy. And there is no one in this world who can conquer this enemy. Scientists are trying many things to end death. There are even programs that you can sign up for, that once you die your body can be reserved by some chemicals so that you do not decompose. They can then in the future reactivate you with your memory and in this way they plan to reserve mankind forever. This is the evil of mankind trying to defy the Lordship of God over our lives. This is what sin does, we sin because we want to be our own Lords. We want to be Lords of our own lives. And not surrender our will to God. We are born sinners and that is why we die. We were not meant to die originally however because of sin death entered the world. Sin takes away life. Look at our world, all over the world we have the same problems, greed, lust, corruption, unbelief and so on. It is because the world is run by people. It is not only in South Africa that there are complaints of corruption of political leaders. The world is in a mess, broken families, death, corruption, gender based violence, black on white and white on black racism, and so on.

What then is the real problem, is it education, is it because people are not voting for the right party? In South Africa we have lots of children raised from single parents, mostly mothers. This was not the creation order of God. What is the real problem? Actually the real question is, who is the problem. And the answer is, me and you. We are the problem. The desire to be our own God, our own Lord. We have various sin problems such as, being judgemental, hurting others, being cold, being self centered and so on. Who can save us from all our sin problems? Our saviour Jesus. Jesus is our true Lord and king because only Jesus can save us from our fundamental problem. All other kings and Lords including ourselves are fake, they can only treat and massage the sin problem. Jesus is our true Lord and king because he alone, singlehandedly can take away sin.

Remember how did Adam and Eve fall, they were given one command, not to eat from one tree, for if they do so they will surely die. There were lots of trees, but were only forbidden from eating from one. In this way God had set a spiritual order, He is the Lord and we are his creation. They were told they will surely die if they ate from that tree. The desire to sin made them question God's command/word, they began to think they were better than God, wiser than God, more understanding than God and could have life without observing God as Lord and king. That even if they ate from that tree they will not die. Originally, Adam was entrusted with God's creation, was entrusted to be a steward. But he ended up making what was God his, making himself an owner and not listening to the real owner how to handle His own creation. This is the sin that is rooted in mankind which continues today. Since our father Adam, we too are born sinners, under the power of sin and under the prison of the kingdom of Satan. However, praise to God, Hosanna in the highest. The coming of Jesus into

Jerusalem riding on a colt, would set the chain reaction for his offering of his own life for the sin of the world. For we read in Acts 4:12 that, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved." Jesus is our only true king and Lord who can save us from the power of sin and thus claim us back into the kingdom of God. No one can save us from the power of sin including ourselves. Trying to rely on ourselves, by either trusting in money, good health, good job, finishing your studies and so on is a denial of the Lordship of Jesus in our lives. Only king Jesus saves, Jesus saves us from our fundamental problem. Jesus saves us from the power of sin. Only Jesus can save campus students.

We testify and declare the Lordship of Jesus in our lives by being submissive to God's will and His word, as Jesus submitted himself to God, through laying down his life. When we become submissive to the words of God, we are welcoming Jesus as our Lord and king. If we put our own idea and plan above God's will, we make ourselves as a king. Let us examine ourselves, what differentiates us from a person who does not believe in God? Is Jesus Lord of your life? Do we understand that we have a saviour who has saved us from the power of sin. For this means our destiny is set and final in the kingdom of God. That means the life we live we should only live it by faith. No one knows what tomorrow holds, but God does. To have Jesus as Lord is to surrender all our worries and anxieties to God, because we are now saved into His kingdom. I pray we may have the faith that Jesus our Lord will take care of us, that all that we can do in this world while we look forward to the coming of Jesus, is to live this life by faith.

As a student I used to be stressed by the course, I used my performance in my studies as means of identity and worth. However, I could persist, because I told myself that once I finish my studies, my life will be great and wonderful. I will earn money, buy myself my own car and house and be able to do the things I want. However, after graduating from my studies my desires did not really seem to be satisfied. I started working. However, when I observe myself recently, I now find myself doing a lot of admin work, e-mails, conducting reviews, chairing and attending meetings and so on. I do not seem to be producing publications as I had desired to. I have a Master's student who is really struggling and also happens to be on my NRF grant. He will be completing his second year this year and has not submitted their proposal yet. All these things worry me and give me stress. The whole of last week I had a headache that persisted without fail. However, looking at this I am realizing that I still live to be praised, honoured and respected. I draw my identity from how I perform. As though my life depends on those things. And not publishing good quantities of papers and guiding well master's students for them to graduate in time also reflects badly on me as an academic. And in that way, there is no praise, honour and respect. It seems as though I am in need of worldly love and identity through my work. Which reveals that I am not taking what Jesus did for me as enough love. And that is why I think in the end I fall into much stress, fear and end up feeling unnecessary and wasting the earth's oxygen. However, from this passage I am realizing and reminded that, actually Jesus is Lord of my life. My identity is in Jesus who has saved me into His wonderful kingdom. I am only a steward of what he has entrusted me with. Instead of seeking an identity from the world or my work. I should instead accept newly Jesus as my Lord and king. May God help me fully accept once more that Jesus has saved me from my fundamental sin problem so that I may live my life by faith in Him. This does not mean I should not work hard to produce papers and be good supervisor. It means my work is like the colt. I should not use my work as a means of getting praise, honour and respect or identity. Rather I should seek to praise and honour Jesus through my work. Because of Jesus Lordship I should already feel honoured and loved by king Jesus. I should not live to seek the love of the world/people through my work for fulfilment. I should

already be fulfilled in Jesus because of what He did for me on the cross. Jesus became my replacement, instead of me being the one judged by God. Jesus was judged and died in my place. Jesus entered Jerusalem fully knowing that in five days he was going to be killed. He did not back down like a coward, but instead went into Jerusalem riding on a colt. My work is not my life, Jesus is. My life is not my life, Jesus is. What I have is what God has entrusted to me so that my work may be to honour and glorify God. I pray that I may daily accept that even my life belongs to Jesus so that I may live this life only by surrendering it to Jesus.

In conclusion, Jesus deserves all our praise and honour. Jesus willingly offered himself as a sacrificial lamb of your sin and my sin. Jesus made a conscious decision to save us from our fundamental problem. Jesus is king of kings because no other king could resolve our fundamental problem. Unlike worldly kings, Jesus offered his life as sacrificial lamb for our sin. He rules his kingdom with love, righteousness and peace. He is humble and gentle king. Jesus is Lord and owner of our life. This means we should entrust our lives to His sovereign will. He becomes king of kings when we submit ourselves to his words humbly. Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest. Praise king Jesus. Amen.