

Monday, March 22

Today's Reading: Matthew Chapter 21: 1-27

Today's Devotional Message is by Matt Cesare

The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!" Matthew 21: 6-9

I believe that when we read this story today, we kind of miss the point. We see Jesus riding on a donkey and think, "Oh look how humble He was, He's riding in to Jerusalem on a donkey with a huge crowd of people singing, 'Hosanna to the highest!'" We call this event the "Triumphal Entry" and in a sense it is. It's also just five days before the leaders in Jerusalem put Jesus to death.

The significance of this entrance, however, was not lost on the people living in Jerusalem, especially the Romans. It was tradition at that time, for the king or even the emperor himself to have a parade or procession into the cities he conquered riding in on a donkey. Now the emperor could ride into town on the greatest war horse, or surrounded by powerful guards, instead he would choose to ride in on a donkey. This act was symbolic act. "I have conquered you; you no longer have any power over me and cannot harm me. I am your king and you will worship me."

Again, this symbolism was not lost on the Roman soldiers and citizens living in Jerusalem, and it most like did not make them happy. Who was this guy to come riding into Jerusalem like a king?

Jesus goes directly from this procession to the Temple, where he throws the money changers out and spills over all the tables. He calls the merchants there "robbers". He also begins healing the sick and making the blind see. Children are running around the temple courts screaming and being children. This did not make the Pharisees happy!

So in one afternoon, Jesus manages to upset pretty much all the leadership in Jerusalem. By the end of the week, the people who were with him during this entry have all turned on him. Even his closest friends deny that they know him.

Jesus is not what we expect. He rides into town like an earthly king, but his is not an earthly King, He is the Heavenly king. He goes to the Temple to pray, but he's does not bring a sacrifice, he is the sacrifice. He heals the lame and makes the blind see, but His desire is to heal our souls and make our spirits see.

Prayer: Lord, You are never what I expect. You surprise me with your grace and love and I cannot understand all that you do. Give me the wisdom and the faith to trust you every day. Amen.