**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

Sermon

*The Good News According to Mark, ~ An Apostle of Jesus Christ*

*Jesus’ Triumphal Entry - Proclaims the Cross*

*365 Day Disciple ~ Mark 11*

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**The unique perspective of the Bible is that God wrote His Word to you personally.** The Bible is intended to be personal. These books, that we call the Old and New Testaments, are God calling to us that we are created to be people of God and He is our God. The New Testament, as we call it, is an extension, a continuation of God’s revelation (Old Testament) to all people. There is not a new way to have a relationship with God. The new part is that God reemphasized key points of His plan for humanity. His focus that a person must have God’s spirit in them (circumcision of the heart, Deuteronomy 30: 6-9, Ezekiel 36) to carry-out His way of life and commandments is vital to people’s salvation.

God renewed efforts through Jesus, in working through the remnants of the Hebrews (Isaiah 10:20-22; Romans 9:27). The Hebrews were also called Jews because the tribe of Judah was the remnant who survived the Babylonian captivity. This group returned and rebuilt the Temple by 515 B.C. Thus, God worked through them to witness His plan for humanity. The promise (Genesis 12:3) given to Abram (The Father of the Hebrew people) never was taken away by God. Abram means “Exalted Father.” This is why it is important to read Paul’s letter in Galatians 3:17 when he states the “promise” to Abraham came 430 years before the Law. God changed Abram’s name to Abraham in Genesis 17:5 which means the “Father of Many Nations.” This is monumental and tells us that God’s plan of “justification by Faith” predates the Law, and this “promise” was through Abraham to the whole world. We see in the Book of Hebrews that the Law was never intended to save anyone. (Hebrews 10). This is a restatement from the Old Testament books of Psalm 40:6 and Psalm 51:16,17.

 Today, people can compare the Law in the Bible to the many rules, regulations and traditions that people are made to feel they must do in order to get saved or stay saved.

Many are confused when reading the Bible. There are many key figures. It is a big book spanning over 2,100 years from Abraham (Genesis 12) through the 1st century A.D. The book of Revelation written about 95 A.D. was the last book of God’s written message to us. The Apostle John wrote the book and died shortly thereafter.

**Looking at the main message of the Bible: “Right with God”**

Many portions of the Bible are directed at the Hebrews. They become our example on how to have a relationship with God and how not to have a relationship with God. Unfortunately, for the Hebrews, most of their history demonstrates how not to have a peaceful relationship with God.

God spoke to the Hebrews and to the nations of the world, when He said, “I will be your God and you will be my people.”

Exodus 6:7; Leviticus 26:12; Ruth 1:16; Jeremiah 7:23, 11:4, 30:22; Ezekiel. 36:28, Joel 2:27

God tells Abram that all the nations of the world will be blessed due to the covenant God makes with Abram; this means you and me. The focus here is that the content of the covenant with Abram can be kept by all people, thus making them people of God (Genesis 12:3). A person does not have to be a physical descendent of Abram. God used Abram to speak through to the rest of the world. This is a spiritual application that all people, regardless of their people group, can have access to be justified, made righteous to God through faith.

 However, this did not start with Abram. Always remember from the beginning with Adam and Eve, God established a person’s relationship with Him through faith. God never change the way people gained approval by Him. All things start with God’s love. So, accepting God’s faith to work in us is a love response. One on the foundational understandings of “faith” is “trust.” Adam & Eve chose to trust, that is, “faith-in” God until they freely chose to “faith-trust” in another (Genesis 3). So, we see “faith” at work through Adam & Eve from the beginning. The point being, that “faith,” that is “trust,” was foundational in the relationship between God and Adam & Eve before the Fall (first sin).

After Adam & Eve, we see Abel demonstrating trust and faith when he brings his firstlings as an offering to God (Genesis 4). The Book of Hebrews (New Testament) clearly states the Abel was approved by God because of in faith (Hebrews 1:1-4).

Faith is a choice to pursue. Adam and Eve pursued God by faith until they chose to listen to the serpent. They then “trusted/place faith in” what the serpent said, and then themselves. This broke the love-relationship they had with God. This is what happens to people in life. However, God always extends the offer for people to return to Him. This is what Jesus amplified in the Triumphal Entry.

**The Triumphal Entry** is the most epic entry in history. The Jewish leadership (Sanhedrin, Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes) had misunderstood the application of the Law. Since the return from Babylon they had developed many more rules and regulations added to the Tora (1st five books of the Old Testament). Governing through these additional rules they oppressed the people (Matthew 23). They created a barrier with their own rules to have a relationship with God. This is in regards to justification and right standing with God. They became the “mediator” between the people and God. This is not what God wanted from the beginning. There are many passages in the New Testament that detail God’s intended “mediator.” Galatians 3:19,20; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 8:6, 9:15; 12:24.

Paul explains to the Jews in his letter to the Galatians why the Law was given in the first place.

Galatians 3:19,24,25

19 Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made. . . 24 Therefore, the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

 So, the Hebrews needed a “tutor.” They needed close instruction like a 3rd grade class, or they would get in trouble. Even with the Law, they strayed. This was all in God’s timing. God’s patience carried until the time of the incarnation which was a great testimony to His grace and love.

God’s triumphal entry into the city of Peace, Jerusalem, was the tip of His sovereign-authority, grace, truth and love, all on display. This was the corrective measure that had to take place.

 It is triumphal, because God is deliberately choosing to go to the Cross to make THE HISTORICAL STATEMENT THAT DEATH, THROUGH HIM, CAN BE DEFEATED; YES, SIN AND DEATH CAN BE DEFEATED IN THE HEARTS OF FALLEN MAN THROUGH THE SUPERNATURAL SPIRITUAL POWER OF GOD WORKING IN THEM. What man could not conceive on his own, without God, is accomplished, because our Creator loves us; He came to be one of us, live our life, yet did not sin and then went to the Cross to pay the price for all mankind’s sin. The Law was never designed to remove the debt of sin (Hebrews 10). The Cross represents unmerited favor. God delivers that for which humanity did not ask or earn.

Without God, man is oblivious to the eternal questions. Man can look into the stars at night and only wonder. People observe that there are many (millions, billions) stars, that is lights in the night sky, and seek to find life out there somewhere. They are correct. There is Life out there. There is God who is beyond human description. It is what we cannot see that has created us.

1 Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 2 For by it the men of old gained approval

(Hebrews 11:1-2)

By faith, we gain approval and, thereby, are included in God’s

eternal kingdom. Inclusion in God’s kingdom is dependent upon the Cross. The Cross is a mystery to many. Can we say that a person must understand why God chose the Cross as the mechanism to be saved? We need to understand what God asks us to do in response to the Cross. But God is the only one who fully understands the creation or timing of the Cross. Man cannot fully understand what he did not create. Did man create love? Did man create grace? Did man create forgiveness? Did man create faith? These are infinite attributes of God. They are God’s gifts to us that we are incapable of creating. These cannot be created in a test tube. Man is too selfish. On his own, man kills himself (Cain/Abel). Man did not create love, grace, forgiveness or faith, but all of these are necessary for us to have a relationship with God. All of these are vital in application to our salvation.

God created us with the compacity to comprehend enough of the Cross to make a decision and respond. God calls for us to participate in His eternal gift through our submissive humility to Him. This is why Jesus starts the Beatitudes in Matthew 5 with, “3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, [humble] for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

God calls for us to participate in His Spiritual power that did not originate in us. This is what Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3. We need to be born-again of Spirit. Then we can see and enter the kingdom of God. We, in turn, share His spiritual power working inside of us with others. God chose to work through us. We are created in His image, meaning that we have the compacity for His Spirit to indwell us. The Greatest Gift is not of man’s doing. What saves man does not originate in man. There is no self-enlightenment leading to salvation. The Power (God) behind the creation is what saves man from himself.

Someone may have never heard of the Cross. They lived centuries before the Cross or are in a foreign land. God has reached these people with His eternal attributes evident in the creation, from the beginning of time, and they are without excuse (Romans 1:18ff). The Cross applies to all. Regardless of someone having knowledge of the Cross or not, the saving value of the Cross can still be applied.

 **God knew what fallen man would do.** The Triumphal Entry depended on man, in that fallen man is predictable. For three and one-half years, Jesus had been THE piercing thorn in the hearts and minds of the Jewish religious leaders and their followers. Jesus had given the people miracles; He healed the sick, the lame, raised the dead and constantly corrected misunderstanding and application of God’s Word. Jesus had exposed the Pharisees, the Scribes and the religious lawyers for the frauds that they were. Jesus pushed the leaders to their limit and beyond, but God was not finished when He entered Jerusalem on the back of a colt.

 God as Jesus entered their capital, the city of David, the city of promise to Abram, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Jerusalem also was a place of Roman rule. The Jews on their own authority could not execute a person. They needed the permission of the Roman rulers. Of course, God knew all of this. God’s plan depended on man’s corruptness to crucify an innocent man. This is one of the messages of the Cross. Jesus pays the price for man’s sin, yet He is sinless (Isaiah 53:9; John 3:5; 1 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:21-22).

 The Triumphal entry into Jerusalem, The City of Peace, had been brewing for about two thousand years since Abraham was to sacrifice Isaac on Mt. Moriah (Genesis 22:2). Jerusalem’s Temple Mount where the Holy of Holies was contained is the same site. But then God substituted a ram for Isaac. And now, God, as Jesus, humbly rides into Jerusalem to substitute Himself for us on The Cross. Like Isaac, God provided the sacrifice, not man.

Jesus is a superior High Priest, to any previous High Priest. The main reason is that His sacrifice had only to be made once.

(Hebrews 10:10ff) (ff means *and following verses*)

**Jerusalem is a key place in history**. Jerusalem is the place where the Ark of the Covenant had been kept in the Holy of Holies in the Temple. The Ark had long disappeared at the time of the Babylonian conquest. The last Scripture reference is 2 Chronicles 35:3 when king Josiah orders the Ark to be placed back into the temple as part of his renewal to God (ca. 621 B.C.). There isn’t any mention of the Ark at the return of the Jews from Babylon or during the rebuilding of the Temple. Ezra 1 accounts for the return of the artifacts and temple accompaniments. There isn’t any mention of the Ark in these lists.

In Jesus’ day, the priest still entered yearly on the Day of Atonement seeking God’s forgiveness. But now, the Messiah, the Prince of Peace, was entering Jerusalem riding on a colt, and they could not recognize the glory of God’s grace even though God had prophetically spoken through the prophet Zechariah (Zechariah 9:9). God intended to drive man to a decision point. Surrender to Me in humility or kill Me! Man chose to kill God. In their pursuit of their temporal kingdom, they crucified their eternal hope and life. For those who come to the knowledge of The Cross, they are charged to make a choice. You either surrender to God, or a person is eternally separated. There isn’t any in between. The grace is, for most of us, we have a lifetime to make that decision. Again, for those who have never heard of the Cross, God has spoken in Romans 1:18ff that He has afforded them, in His own way, knowledge sufficient for a decision.

How ironic; The Prince of Peace rides into Jerusalem, the City of Peace, humbly on the back of a colt and is crucified. There isn’t any army behind Him, but the whole power-base of the religious establishment is threatened. God is declaring that salvation is not through religious leaders or their concocted liturgical apparatus. God declares for people to look to Him and only Him.

However, the religious leaders responded with Crucifixion. Their hearts were so dark that God had already handed them over to their own desires (Romans 1:18ff). They hadn’t any ears to hear or eyes to see. They were blind.

The good news is that there is always a remnant. God works through His remnant. A few, those who came to Jesus by night (Nicodemus John 3), humbled themselves to the Lord. Those who were at the foot of the Cross. Those who came to the empty tomb. Those who stayed and waited to be empowered by God’s Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Those who returned to the Temple steps and preached the Gospel, the Resurrection in Jesus’ name.

The fate of humanity rests upon this sacrificial love-act of God, specifically, the incarnation and the Cross. The note of the Cross here covers the Triumphal Entry and Passover week, arrest, trial, crucifixion, burial, resurrection and ascension. All of this is under God’s love. This is why John 3:16, “God so loved the world. . .” sums-up God’s work.

 God’s love overcomes man’s self-indulgence and pride. God as Jesus had been ministering from the northern portions of Israel, but now makes the prophetic entrance into the city where king David moved the Ark of the Covenant over 900 years previously (2 Samuel 6). As noted, the Ark had long disappeared from history, but God provides another place of atonement: The Cross. Remember that God never intended for the blood of animals to pay the price for man’s sin. Every priest made daily sacrifices but to no avail. Man can’t and hasn’t any ability to pay the price for sin (Hebrews 10:1-23). In verses 8,11 and 17 of this chapter, Psalm 40:6-8 and Jeremiah are quoted.

**The Gospel Text Mark 11**

**1** And as they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives,

He sent two of His disciples,

Below are on-line references about these towns and locations and why they are important.

beth'-fa-je, beth'-faj (from beth paghah; Bethphage, or Bethphage; in Aramaic "place of young figs"): Near the Mount of Olives and to the road from Jerusalem (2474 feet) to Jericho; mentioned together with Bethany

([Matthew 21:1](http://biblehub.com/matthew/21-1.htm) [Mark 11:1](http://biblehub.com/mark/11-1.htm) [Luke 19:29](http://biblehub.com/luke/19-29.htm))

 Mount of Olives: The Mount of Olives is a mountain ridge east of and next to Jerusalem's Old City. Named for the olive groves that once covered its area.

**Continue in Mark 11**

2 and said to them,

"Go into the village opposite you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find a colt tied *there*, (Zechariah 9:9) on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it *here*.

[Colt here means young donkey, thus one that had never been ridden.]

 3 "And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' you say,

'The Lord has need of it'; and immediately he will send it back here."

 [Jesus’ popularity had grown, and the locals knew who He was and most likely knew Jesus’ Disciples, because Bethany had been an area Jesus had been known to accomplish His ministry.]

4 And they went away

and found a colt tied at the door outside in the street; and they untied it.

 5 And some of the bystanders were saying to them,

"What are you doing, untying the colt?"

 6 And they spoke to them just as Jesus had told *them*,

and they gave them permission.

 7 And they brought the colt to Jesus and put their garments on it;

and He sat upon it.

 8 And many spread their garments in the road,

 and others *spread* leafy branches which they had cut from the fields.

 9 And those who went before, and those who followed after, were crying out,

"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!"

 11 And He entered Jerusalem *and came* into the temple;

and after looking all around, He departed for Bethany with the twelve, since it was already late.

**In Mark 11:12-14**

**“THE FIG TREE” Compared to the Hebrews & Jerusalem**

Some see Isaiah 5:1ff as a reference to Jesus’ condemnation of the Jews and Jerusalem. We also see Jeremiah 24 as a reference. Also, Jesus is chronicled in Luke’s Gospel teaching a parable and comparing the Hebrews to a fig tree.

Luke 3:5-9

5 "I tell you, no, but unless you repent,

you will all likewise perish."

 6 And He *began* telling this parable:

 "A man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any.

 7 "And he said to the vineyard-keeper,

'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?'

 8 "And he answered and said to him,

'Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer;

9 and if it bears fruit next year, *fine*; but if not,

cut it down.'"

**Continue in Mark 11 “The Fig Tree”**

 12 And on the next day, when they had departed from Bethany, He became hungry.

 13 And seeing at a distance a fig tree in leaf, He went *to see* if perhaps He would find anything on it; and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs.

14 And He answered and said to it,

 "May no one ever eat fruit from you again!"

 And His disciples were listening.

Here is the passage in Jeremiah related to Jesus’ teaching in Mark 11.

**Jeremiah 24** 1 After Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and the officials of Judah with the craftsmen and smiths from Jerusalem and had brought them to Babylon, the LORD showed me: behold, two baskets of figs set before the temple of the LORD!

 2 One basket had very good figs, like first-ripe figs,

 and the other basket had very bad figs which could not be eaten due to rottenness.

 3 Then the LORD said to me, "What do you see, Jeremiah?" And I said, "Figs, the good figs, very good; and the bad *figs*, very bad, which cannot be eaten due to rottenness."

 4 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

 5 "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Like these good figs, so I will regard as good the captives of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place *into* the land of the Chaldeans.

 6 'For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them again to this land; and I will build them up and not overthrow them, and I will plant them and not pluck them up.

 7 'I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the LORD; and they will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart.

 8 'But like the bad figs which cannot be eaten due to rottenness-- indeed, thus says the LORD-- so I will abandon Zedekiah king of Judah and his officials, and the remnant of Jerusalem who remain in this land and the ones who dwell in the land of Egypt.

 9 'I will make them a terror *and an* evil for all the kingdoms of the earth, as a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse in all places where I will scatter them.

 10 'I will send the sword, the famine and the pestilence upon them until they are destroyed from the land which I gave to them and their forefathers.'"

**Applications**

There are many applications we can make to our lives from Jesus’ Triumphal Entry. One question for many in the world is -

Has God made a Triumphal Entry into your heart?

If a person is looking for Jesus to enter Jerusalem in a big parade with a band playing loud music and CNN coverage, they will be disappointed. In God’s big historical entry in the capital city of Jerusalem, He takes the donkey ride. Not very flattering. Not very grand for a world leader. Not very eye-catching for the paparazzi.

The examples we see in the Bible concerning God’s triumphal entry into a person’s heart are God’s Holy Spirit convicting people of their sin (John 16:8), and then God simply comes into a person’s heart and things change; a person’s life becomes a growing transformation into the person God intended. Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night and things began to change for him (John 3, John 19:39). Peter preaches on the steps of the Temple after the Pentecost empowerment and thousands are saved (Acts 2:41, 2:47, 4:4, 5:14, 11:21, 11:24).

We Believers can say and proclaim that the Lord has made a triumphal entry into our hearts and changed our lives forever. The effects of God’s Triumphal Entry are that we have spiritual victory over this fallen world. That we can spiritually overcome the challenges and tragedies of life and have peace with God and our neighbor. That when our natural bodies fail us we know we have gone to be with the Lord in His heaven forever. When we go through the fires, in this life, in this fallen environment, we ‘keep our heads up’ and proclaim victory to God in all things.

Triumph for God’s people is not measured by secular standards. Jesus proclaims that when persecution comes because of His name-sake that we are to be joyous (Matthew 5:10-12).

**Steps to Triumphal Living:**

1. **Look at God’s Word for standards in success.** Pursue all things with... *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control* **(Galatians 5:22-23)**
2. **Pray in this way…Matthew 6:9** *"Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. 11 'Give us this day our daily bread. 12 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen .'*
3. **Remember love in all things: 1 Corinthians 13:4** *Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,*

 **4.Consider Ourselves Servants of God.**  **2 Corinthians 6:4-7**

 *4 but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, 5 in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger, 6 in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, 7 in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left,*

1. **Heart of God: Colossians 3:12** *And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;*
2. **Seek to Mature in Faith. Romans 5:1** *Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*
3. **Seek God’s Holy Spirit.****Romans 14:17** *for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

**AMEN**