

## **The Triumphant Entry**

### **Mark 11:1-11**

Friends, if there is any credibility to stereotypes you can tell a lot about a person by their ride. For example what sort of person would you associate with the following vehicles...

A VW Minibus – aging hippies, dropouts, slackers

Subaru WRX – young male likes to street race

Toyota Celica – chick sports car

Buick Regal - Senior Citizen

Audi / BMW Sedan – Corporate executive

Really Nice Truck - Oil Company executive often in the field

Plain Truck – working guy

Monster Truck - redneck

Jeep – Outdoors enthusiast

Volvo – Civic minded safety conscious citizens

Dodge Caravan – Soccer / Hockey Mom

SUV – a soccer / hockey mom in denial that they are a soccer/  
hockey mom

A donkey...

Friends this morning as we continue to hang out with Jesus in the gospel of Mark, we see that He and the disciples have made their way down to Jerusalem from the northern parts of Israel...

And as they get close to the city Jesus pauses and tells his disciples to go into the small village ahead of them and bring back a donkey colt for him to ride on.

Now we might be thinking, ok why not, Jesus might be tired from all that walking... ride into Jerusalem on a donkey...

But friends in the ten chapters that we've been hanging out with him have we seen Jesus do anything "just because"

So the question is "What does Jesus choice of ride into Jerusalem tell us about him?"

Well, just like we automatically know a few things about the kinds of people who drive certain vehicles in our society, the residents of Jerusalem knew a few things about what it meant

for Jesus to ride into Jerusalem on a donkey - they knew that if someone like Jesus did this it was a claim to be King.

Now pause for a moment to remember that in Jesus day the kingdom of Israel had ceased to exist – it was now a couple of backwater provinces in the Roman Empire.

The Promised Land had been conquered and subjugated not just by Rome, but by all the major empires in the history books...Babylon, Assyria, Persia, Greece.

Its inhabitants oppressed and persecuted for their faith and worship of the one true God, most severely by Alexander the Great's successor Antiochus Epiphanies IV who desecrated the temple by sacrificing a pig on the most holy altar.

Since then generations of Israelites had been waiting for their God to show up and deliver them just as He had done in the ages past and as God's prophets had promised that he would.

And we read one of those promises this morning spoken by the prophet Zechariah. And it promises that the Chosen city of

God, Jerusalem would delivered from foreign oppression – chariots and warhorses – become a great city once more and defeat its enemies of whom Greece is specifically mentioned...

So the people had been waiting....

And up to this point, although Jesus has done lots of miracles - healing and telling people their sins are forgiven... He has not sent out any sort of press release stating that He is or isn't the promised Messiah, the savior and deliverer of Israel...until now.

Riding into Jerusalem on a Donkey tells us that Jesus is the promised King who has come to deliver Jerusalem from foreign oppression.

No wonder the people cut palm branches and laid them down on the road with their cloaks and shouted "Hosanna – God save us!" They knew what Jesus was saying with his choice of ride – that He is King.

But friends, stereotypes have their limits don't they. The fellow who drives the monster truck may actually be quite cultured and educated...

The aging hippy who drives the VW minibus might own a very successful hemp clothing business... and Jesus is definitely a King but he might not be the kind of King which most people are familiar with.

Friends Jesus choice of ride has some layers to it

A donkey is not a warhorse, a donkey is a working animal, a humble animal, an affordable animal – Jesus comes as a gentle, humble King who will work to serve the all the people. He is going to deliver the people through his service not through displays of power and might.

But there is more to why Jesus chose to ride a donkey into Jerusalem and not a horse

You see God's chosen people were not really innocent victims of the Roman Empire. They had been defeated, conquered and

oppressed because they and their ancestors had consistently been unfaithful in their covenant relationship with God.

Ever since God had delivered them from slavery in Egypt and given them the Promised Land, He had warned them to beware of being lead astray by the beliefs of the nations around them. He warned them not to live as they did and not to worship their gods. They were to worship Him alone.

Basically the deal went like this - If you stay loyal and worship me alone, I will be your God and protect you and guide you through my laws and I will bless you....If you worship foreign gods, you will be conquered by foreign powers and be oppressed by them....

And among the horrible things that they will do to you is forcibly take your donkeys from you and not return them...

(Deut 28:31)

But Jesus tells his disciples to say to the owner of the donkey that "He will send it back shortly."

This indicates Jesus is a King who will undo the consequences of being an unfaithful covenant partner with God. Donkeys are taken, but are returned....

People who recognize Jesus rule' as King will have a relationship with God which  **blesses**  them.

And friends Jesus choice of ride also explains  **why**  that is.

Now a number of times in last couple weeks we've heard Jesus tell his disciples he had to go to Jerusalem to suffer and die and that God would raise him back to life. And his disciples were having a hard time understanding why Jesus had to do this if He was God's chosen One.

Jesus choice of ride makes it clearer, but there's some background info we need to know...

In order to remember how God delivered them from slavery in Egypt, God's people were to offer back to him the firstborn of their livestock in the various sacrifices which were part of worship.

So you would offer sheep, oxen, cattle, goats for sacrifices. But you didn't sacrifice a donkey. Instead you redeemed or "bought back" a donkey by sacrificing a lamb in its place. (Ex 13:13)

Now Jesus rides into Jerusalem five days before the Passover meal, another celebration which helped God's people remember their deliverance from slavery in Egypt.

Five days before the meal was the day when each family selected the lamb they would sacrifice for the Passover meal. Friends, nothing is coincidental with Jesus....

You see just like you could "buy back" a donkey from its death by sacrificing a lamb in its place, Jesus intends to sacrifice his life, to be God's "lamb" in order to "buy back" God's people, to free them from Sin which was the cause of their unfaithfulness to God and to undo the consequence of that unfaithfulness – separation from God which ultimately leads to death.

And just like the blood of the Passover lamb painted on the doorframes of the houses of the Israelites in Egypt caused the Angel of Death to “passover” that house and spare them from judgment

So Jesus blood - applied to our lives through our belief in him - causes God’s judgment on our sin and rebellion to “passover” us and allows us to be forgiven of whatever we’ve done wrong and begin a new relationship with God that is free from offence.

This is why Jesus’ rule as King gives us a relationship with God that blesses us – He offered his life to buy us back from death, and give us a life which can survive death!

Believe it friends – it’s the good news! For anyone and everyone...

And Jesus chose to let people know about this good news publically by the kind of ride which he chose.

So friends if we believe in who Jesus is and we have experienced that blessing from God of forgiveness and a new kind of life...

Our gratitude will motivate us to want others to know about that good news as well and so we need to choose “a ride” which communicates publically to people who Jesus really is...

...A gentle, humble King who offers forgiveness, deliverance and a relationship with God which gives you life that can survive death.

We might not want to communicate it exactly like this... (show picture of the Jesus-mobile)

But our “ride” is really how we live our lives in front of other people isn’t it. And it’s good to be intentional in every area of our lives to let people know about Jesus...maybe even through our cars.

Because that in itself says something about Jesus as King – that His Kingdom includes everything....

He's king over us when we shop for groceries on Monday, when we work on Tues, when we are in class on Weds, when we have family time on Thurs, when we go out to party on Fri, when we sleep in on Saturday morning...

and especially when we get up to praise him and worship him at Church on Sunday...

Friends if Jesus is our King, then we need to make it clear to people that we do everything "in his name" because we are loyal to him.

When you help the poor, when you do a favor for a neighbor, when you give to a charity make sure people know that you do it because Jesus motivates you...

When people tell you that you're a kind, honest, loving person – thank them and let them know you live that way to honor Jesus...

When people cut loose and curse using Jesus name, gently ask them not to do that – it offends you because Jesus is your Lord

– it may not stop that person... but the important thing is you've demonstrated your loyalty!

And friends since Jesus has secured our loyalty through offering his life for us – showing us incredible grace and having mercy on us in this way, we are indebted to him to show grace and mercy to others.

So we avoid gossip and slander, we don't join into the "he said she said" conversations at work and school, and we stand up against bullying... not because we're fans of Lady Gaga – but because Jesus Christ is our merciful King.

And it's great that we live in such a tolerant society where everyone is so quick to say "live and let live" there's many benefits to that - but friends don't confuse that with showing grace and mercy...

In our context showing grace and mercy to others means that we let everyone know that Jesus wants to be their King too – and that nobody is excluded from needing the forgiveness we received to start a new life with God, Jesus gives it to all...

So friends – if you take home one thing with you for the week that God wants you to consider, its this...

What does your choice of “ride” say about who Jesus is to the people around you?

So friends, I encourage you to choose the ride of your life – because that’s how Christians roll. Amen.