

“The Fulfillment of Reconciliation Part 1”
Mark 11:1-11
The Confession of 1967 9.53
Sermon #94
Lent 6/Palm Sunday
55th Sunday in the COVID-19 Pandemic
3.28.21

Mark 11:1-11 CEB

When Jesus and his followers approached Jerusalem, they came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives. Jesus gave two disciples a task, 2 saying to them, “Go into the village over there. As soon as you enter it, you will find tied up there a colt that no one has ridden. Untie it and bring it here. 3 If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘Its master needs it, and he will send it back right away.’”

4 They went and found a colt tied to a gate outside on the street, and they untied it. 5 Some people standing around said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” 6 They told them just what

Jesus said, and they left them alone. 7 They brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes upon it, and he sat on it. 8 Many people spread out their clothes on the road while others spread branches cut from the fields. 9 Those in front of him and those following were shouting, "*Hosanna! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord!*" 10 Blessings on the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest!" 11 Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. After he looked around at everything, because it was already late in the evening, he returned to Bethany with the Twelve.

The Word of the LORD. **Thanks be to God!**

C67 9.53-9.54

God's redeeming work in Jesus Christ embraces the whole of man's life: social and cultural, economic and political, scientific and technological, individual and corporate. It includes man's natural

environment as exploited and despoiled by sin. It is the will of God that his purpose for human life shall be fulfilled under the rule of Christ and all evil be banished from his creation.

Biblical visions and images of the rule of Christ, such as a heavenly city, a father's house, a new heaven and earth, a marriage feast, and an unending day culminate in the image of the kingdom. The kingdom represents the triumph of God over all that resists his will and disrupts his creation. Already God's reign is present as a ferment in the world, stirring hope in men and preparing the world to receive its ultimate judgment and redemption.

Let us pray: May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O God, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

Have you noticed that it wasn't necessarily a crowd in Jerusalem waiting for Jesus who shouted "Hosanna" in today's scripture? It was the people already with Jesus stirring the pot. They made the colt into a makeshift throne for Jesus and improvised the red carpet by throwing their garments and branches to pave the way for the Savior.

Yet, within a few days, everyone is disappointed. Jesus wasn't their ideal liberator. In four days, he would be handed over to be executed.

Jesus was indeed the liberator these people needed, but not what they wanted. He was David's Son, but even more so, God's Son. He had the credentials to sit on the physical throne AND the heavenly throne. Yet, people were fixated on the physical side. "Surely he'll save us from Rome!" They tried to fit him in a box.

Of course, Jesus was and is a liberator. But, not according to the plan of so many on that Palm Sunday. And there's nothing worse than having your plan shattered, right? We have these grandiose plans for a job, relationship, church, retirement, family, school, or something else and then they're shattered. Shattered by circumstances beyond our control. Maybe circumstances we could've handled better. But, let's be honest: When our magnificent plans are shattered, we get angry. Maybe not to the

point as the crowds would eventually do later in Holy Week for Jesus, but it still stings.

Imagine with me hearing something like this: Jesus will take Caesar's place! Jesus will make us the envy of the world again! Let's get these Romans out of our country and run it like we used to! That's probably what many thought and their dreams were crushed. Many had the plan of making Jesus their partisan liberator, but they couldn't see the ultimate liberation that God would do through Jesus.

Of course, at the very beginning of Mark's Gospel, it sets us up with one sentence: "The beginning of the good news about Jesus Christ, God's Son...". From the very beginning, readers and listeners are

already in the know that Jesus Christ is not your typical savior who leads the people in a war against mere earthly powers. Jesus is the Savior who, by his willingness to suffer and be raised from the dead, conquers the powers of evil that seek to harm us. But, Jesus Christ being God's Son is this big secret throughout Mark. No one gets it except the people reading and hearing these words!

Yet, we know how the story goes. Jesus shares a final meal, is betrayed, and faces his death. All because he wouldn't fit in the people's small box of the ideal liberator.

It's as if people tried to fit Jesus in one box to govern one area of life. In this case, an earthly kingdom. But, in the stories we've read together about Jesus, especially in Mark, Jesus casts out demons,

he heals the sick, he feeds thousands of people at a time, he blesses children, and he teaches with authority.

Jesus doesn't fit in one box, no matter how hard we try. Jesus didn't come to make Israel the world power it had been. Jesus Christ is sovereign over every area of our lives, not just to the ones we try to impose on him. As God's Son, Jesus is also concerned with the lives of so many people who were hungry and hurting. Ultimately, through his humiliation and death, Christ humiliated death. So, if Jesus is concerned with people's physical health and well-being as well as our spiritual well-being, don't you think it's foolish to attempt to put Jesus in such a small box to make our plans or dreams work?

I appreciate what the authors of the Confession of 1967 have written. Today's excerpts come at the final part of the document, which is the smallest, but it says the most. These excerpts tell us that Jesus Christ embraces the *whole* of our lives, not merely a portion. Through Jesus Christ, God's redeeming work touches "social and cultural, economic and political, scientific and technological, individual and corporate" and even includes our own natural environment even though it has been damaged by sin.

Jesus didn't come for partisan purposes. He came to liberate the whole of creation. He didn't come to raise an army and chase the Romans out of town. He did, however, teach the people how to live as reconciled people in the shadow of an evil empire. He countered Caesar's claim of divine status by speaking truth to

power, ministering to and healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and befriending the friendless.

In the life of Jesus, we get a glimpse of God's reign on earth that we still see at work today. This glimpse of God's reign on earth is demonstrated through the people who work on behalf of the last and least of these in our culture. It is demonstrated in those who push back against the physical and spiritual forces of evil that tempt us to dehumanize the other. These glimpses of God's reign on earth give us a foretaste of God's ultimate triumph over evil made possible due to the reconciling work of Jesus Christ through his life, death, and resurrection. These divine previews are proof that God's reign on earth, as C67 tells us, "present as a ferment in the world, stirring hope in men and preparing the world to receive its ultimate judgment and redemption."

A ferment in the world. No, I'm not talking about the verb fermentation. I'm talking about the verb which means to incite or stir up trouble. And if you haven't noticed, Jesus' life certainly stirred up a lot of trouble as he preached God's reign. And as we move through this Holy Week, we will see just how far the trouble will be stirred.

Friends, trust this Good News!

In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Amen.