



Becoming a People Who... Come Alive!

"Above and Beyond Expectations"

Matthew 21:1-11

Message Notes: April 14, 2019

This is Holy Week, during which we journey with Jesus, to the cross, through the grave, and into His resurrection. In this week, we celebrate how, through Jesus' sacrifice, we **Come Alive--** Alive to His cross, His resurrection, His grace, His power, His transformation in our lives today.

We watched a stirring video that declares how HOPE came rushing into the world in this cosmic, eternal, Holy Week in history. And actually today, *Palm Sunday*, hope comes "clopping" in . . . as the King of Kings comes riding into the city of Jerusalem – on a donkey.

Jesus' "triumphal entry", as it is often called, reveals how God's plan for redemption went **Above and Beyond Expectations**... His plan was established *before* Palm Sunday, *before* the manger birth, *before* the deliverance of the Hebrew people from Egypt, *before* creation itself.

God's plan, revealed in Holy Week, went beyond immediate circumstances to effect eternity. Beyond physical events to transform the spiritual realm. Beyond human interactions to secure God's divine purposes.

Three Focal Elements:

1. The Donkey.

Why a donkey? Not noble, impressive, or captivating, but rather a lowly work animal. Why?

- * *Above and beyond* the basic practical need for a ride, but a fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy (Zech 9:9) – declaring Jesus to be the King, the Messiah.
- * An expression of the gentleness and humility of the Lord. A king of Peace not war.

2. The Palm Branches.

- * A traditional symbol of celebration as victorious kings would re-enter the city.
- * The Hebrew people were acquainted with this praise of palm branches: They remembered Judas Maccabeas' triumphal entry into Jerusalem after liberating them from the Syrians. They remembered David's victorious parades after conquering victories. They remembered God delivering them from the slavery of Egypt. So, they wave branches and shout – "Here is our new delivering King! *Hosanna* - Lord save us now."
- * This is often our own cry in the midst of trouble and hardship – "Lord, save me now."
- * Like those waving palm branches that day, expecting a political king to free them from their Roman oppressors, WE expect God will rescue us from all our bad circumstances. But God's redemption is *above and beyond* our immediate and physical expectations. He is at work at a deeper level for our *spiritual* liberation (from evil) and our *eternal* freedom (from sin and death).

3. The Rocks (see Luke's story - Luke 19:37-40)

- * The Pharisees are offended by the blasphemous praises to Jesus. They tell Jesus he should quiet the crowds. He replies – "If I quiet the people, the very stones will cry out [to me]."
- * God's redemption is even *above and beyond* US; it includes ALL of creation – the whole world, the

earth, the very rocks themselves, rejoice in the redemption of their Creator.

- * Yes, the religious leaders opposed Jesus, appalled at all the fanfare for him. But even Jesus' own disciples were confused about what was going on (John 12:16).
- * And very soon, the crowds cheering "Hosanna to the King" would change to jeering – "Crucify him!" All these with flawed expectations of this entering King.
- * What about us? Do WE toggle between "**Hosanna, Lord save me!**" (when we are expecting God to fix our difficult circumstances) to "**Crucify him**" (expressions of disappointment or even anger when He doesn't come through in the ways we expect).

- * To the Pharisees, to the exuberant crowd, even to the confused disciples, Jesus' coming was a . . . DISILLUSIONMENT – a loss of illusion, an adjustment of a distorted view, a correction of false expectations.

- * God sometimes *disillusions* us so we can have a true, fuller, picture of who He is and what He is doing. In such times, we are freed to see the truth (that is above and beyond) and to release the false expectations of who God is *supposed* to be, so we can embrace (and surrender to) who **He IS**.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, declares the Lord." Isaiah 55:8

May we open ourselves to such disillusionment as we journey through this Holy Week – that we may behold, celebrate, and surrender to our loving King and his transforming love and grace in our lives. May we COME ALIVE to Him!