

Do You Have the Time?  
Time To Slow Down  
Mark 11:1-11  
Palm Sunday (B)  
March 25, 2018  
Pastor Dea Sharp, Pikes Peak UMC

Mark 11:1-11 (NRSV) Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

11 When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples <sup>2</sup> and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. <sup>3</sup> If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.'" <sup>4</sup> They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, <sup>5</sup> some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" <sup>6</sup> They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. <sup>7</sup> Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. <sup>8</sup> Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. <sup>9</sup> Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

"Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

<sup>10</sup> Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

<sup>11</sup> Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

When I go into our storage pantry at home, I have usually see the big box of photos (old 35mm photos!) that we've moved from house to house for 32 years. They are a box of good intentions.

Several good intentions.

First, I want to scan them, at least the ones worth scanning (creative license will win *that* battle) so I can save them. I have the scanner. I haven't taken the time.

The next good intention is to JUST sit and look at them.

You know what I mean?

And last, but probably NOT last, I want to recall the moments that are frozen in those pictures.

The places.

The people.

Are you like me? I didn't fully experience the moment frankly, 'cause I was busy taking the picture OF THE moment!

Our Grandies are pros at photo ops.

They've been trained to pose their aunt.

And maybe by Grammy's *suggestion* that "we aren't opening presents or blowing out candles until everyone takes a NICE picture!" Guilty.

We've all heard the phrase "stop and smell the roses."

Too many of us know HOW HARD IT IS TO DO THAT.

Today's Scripture verses tell us about Jesus riding into Jerusalem.

There's a lot of hoopla.

This is probably **THE** high, positive point of the journey to the cross.

I imagine Jesus smiling and waving...even with a heavy heart that *knows*.

One commentary I study suggested that the "go get the donkey and bring it back" was actually A STAGED demonstration (posing at it's finest!) to enact the fulfillment of OT prophet Zechariah writing "*See your king comes to you...gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, a foal of a donkey.*"

But, frankly, that speculation is pointless; the point really is written in the early verses we heard today: "*They answered, as Jesus told them to, AND THE PEOPLE LET THEM GO.*"

**JESUS SAID SO, THAT'S WHY!**

There's also probably a lot of confusion in the onlookers' minds.

They have been Messiah-seekers for generations.

And their vision of THEIR messiah was to come as a war-horse riding, armor-wearing, military-deliverance-bringing fighter; not a guy on a donkey!

This wasn't filling their expectation of Israel's king.

But, staged or not,...and with the confrontations and challenges Jesus has been experiencing all through his ministry.....and just recently, among his disciples he's predicted his own death...

IT KINDA SEEMS ODD that Jesus is taking the time to do this parade thing.

Would good could come from it?

Here we have come, to the end of our Lent season 2018.

We've used cell phone apps to remind us to make the most of our time with God and others.

The "app of the day" is the camera that's in our phone.

I've used my phone to record lecture PowerPoint slides during classes.

I use it, obviously, to record moments. And the reality is I need to go through those photos and sort and save to "the cloud" or a disc, just like I need to go through my box of pictures.

The camera app can also take videos...{exaggerate slow-mo} and we can get creative with them: slowing them down, *as if we could "save" the moment, if we slowed it down.*

When we're busy it can be quite EASY to squeeze OUT anything that feels like an "extra."

That's where our Lenten time has been fruitful, 'cause we have been intentional in the giving up of distraction and the taking up of Bible study and prayer time.

Jesus, in today's reading, takes the time for a simple and slow arrival into Jerusalem.

It's a celebration with singing and dancing and waving of palm branches, like our kiddos did earlier.

And Jesus TAKES this opportunity to SEE.

AND BE SEEN!

Whenever I officiate a wedding, just after the bride has made it to join her groom, I ask the couple to pause and then turn and look at their guests. We pause a couple moments to "take in" and BE witnesses to how all the planning and executing of the plan has brought us to "this moment!" We slow down and take the opportunity to see the celebration.

It's probably TOO seldom, BUT, how often do we slow and stop?  
Are we too busy that we don't see (even REFUSE to see) what God is doing around us?

What God is doing FOR US.

Jesus wants to see and experience the moment.

So, he makes the time for it.

Jesus knew that in the midst of hard things he **should** look for things to celebrate. He knew WE'D need HIS example to slow down; I call it "lookin' for the glory in the gloom."

- In the midst of battles about our health that we should slow down and seek God's will in care and cures.
- In the midst of the angst of raising children, heck of BEING the child being raised, that we slow down and watch for God's will in the successes; day-to-day successes of lessons learned (in and out of the formal classrooms.)

Jesus **knew** what coming into Jerusalem meant!

And yet he slowed down to take in the celebration; to honor God's will for the coming hours and days. He knew!

...that he was just days from an excruciating, demoralizing, self-sacrificing, publically ridiculed death, deserted by followers and being quite, quite, QUITE alone...yet, even there, HE KNEW that there was a coming celebration in the VICTORY he would provide for US.

//What would we notice if we purposely took the TIME TO SLOW DOWN?

For today, we'd notice that Jesus coming into Jerusalem on a donkey, with no weapons and no army was a complete contrast of Pilate's arrival on a warhorse, with legions of armed soldiers and a lot of pomp and ceremony.

We'd notice singing and celebration from the rag-tag followers of Jesus on the other side of town.

We'd notice that Messiah, the "anointed one" coming wasn't with military might but with hand-to-hand COMPASSION.

That the coming of Messiah to save us was to establish righteousness and justice; to defeat evil; and punish corruption.

That the coming of Messiah IS not (that's present tense is not) an apocalyptic event but an on-going process that WE ARE IN where **God's will** is realized.

As this last week of Jesus' ministry unfolds, Jesus will continue (IT IS ONGOING REMEMBER Jesus will continue) to challenge the various forms of the "human empire" and sinfulness of wealth, power and our addictions to physical appetites (which are idolatry in various forms), and reveals instead, IN COMPLETE CONTRAST, God's Reign of generosity, of community that collaborates and the disciplines of simplicity.

If we slow down and look at it: this Palm Sunday procession WAS a "protest" of sorts.

Don't we hear about enough of those in human terms?

But this protest was Jesus demonstrating, SLOW DOWN WITH ME HERE, Jesus demonstrating in *no uncertain terms* how DIFFERENT God's Reign is from human empires.

It wasn't a military campaign; it was peaceful AND IT WAS REVOLUTIONARY!

It was a new kind of victory; winning over the hearts and lives of people; not with force or hot-air-speeches; but through grace and love!

Slow down, Dear Ones!

Especially in the coming days of THIS Holy Week.

We are called to proclaim to the world the message and invitation to God's Reign.

Slow down and recall: it all started with a little baby, in a feeding trough. How much more humble can you get?

It continued with a young man's life that touched (physically and emotionally) instead of scorned; that taught that the "least of these" (whoever they are) matter; and that it is NOT about dominance but serving with grace and peace, love and justice.

Slow down, wave a palm branch, and get excited about the "new order" that Jesus brings, from the back of a donkey.

Slow down to see how God has prepared you and can utilize YOU, humble Family of Faith, to live IN the new order, offering others the same life-giving, glory-in-the-gloom LIFE you have.

Slow down and praise God.

Slow down and remember Jesus.

“Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Amen!