

Coffee to Go | Palm Sunday 2024

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Jesus, expectation, Palm Sunday, humility, Hosanna, colt, Jerusalem, Gospel of Mark

SPEAKERS

Karin Peter, Blake Smith

Karin Peter 00:27

Welcome to Coffee to Go, where we center ourselves in the scriptures, seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter, and I'm here with Blake Smith. And we welcome you on the journey. Now today is Palm Sunday, which begins the events that lead up to the crucifixion of Jesus and Good Friday. And it's also our first episode of Holy Week, which is Palm Sunday. And then we'll have episodes on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday, and then start again on Easter. So the question, "Where are we with Jesus this week?", is answered with Well, we're spending this Palm Sunday in Mark or with Mark, who has a bit of a different take on the events of the day than Matthew does, who we heard from last Palm Sunday in 2023. So Mark uses the entrance into Jerusalem by Jesus and his band of followers as kind of a teaching moment. So let's listen in. Blake...

Blake Smith 01:38

Alright, our scripture this morning comes from the Gospel of Mark. It is the 11th chapter, the first through the 11th verse. When they were approaching Jerusalem at Bethpage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples 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 if anyone says to you, why are you doing this? Just say this, 'The Lord needs it. And we'll send it back here immediately.'" They went away and found a colt tied near a door outside in the street. As they were untying it. Some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing untying the colt?" They told them what Jesus had said, and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead, and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna, blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming Kingdom of our ancestor, David. Hosanna, in the highest heaven!" 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. So why does this matter? The biggest thing is that in Mark, especially, I mean, I guess probably in all of the Gospels, but because as you've mentioned, Karin Mark is a little different. It seems intentional, Mark is setting this tone, where Jesus is going to reveal himself as the Messiah. So he comes in on a humble donkey. A colt, actually, is one as the scripture says, that has not yet been ridden, and a mount for a messenger of peace. You know, we think about a king coming in to the city. And they would typically come in on a great steed, a king as king or warrior. And yet Jesus comes in on this humble animal. And the people lay cloaks on the ground, just like they would for a king and they cry Hosanna. We typically read that and think they're

giving praise. Yeah, but, but the reality in Hebrew is that Hosanna comes from a couple of words that really mean to "save us," they are really begging Jesus or their Messiah. They recognize Jesus as the Messiah, and they're, they're begging to save us or liberate us and save us now. So there's kind of a desperation and that rather than the sense of praise that we typically consider when we look at Palm Sunday,

Karin Peter 04:29

I think, I think I call it like hopeful desperation or desperate hopefulness, maybe. The whole idea of people being oppressed, and yet maybe this is the person that's going to somehow in some glorious way, redeem us, right, get us out of this horrible situation.

Blake Smith 04:48

Right, which gives some of the background for why they may have rushed out to greet him this is they are very much desiring that kind of saving. But an important thing to notice here, and Bible scholar Cynthia Rigby points this out in one of her commentaries, that this is so much different than the other gospels. Again, as you mentioned already. So you know, in Luke the the crowd is really loud the Pharisees are say to Jesus, can't you get your people to be quiet? And he said, Well, if, if I can get them to be quiet, but then the rocks will cry out, I mean, the noise and is not going to go away. And in John, the religious leaders are concerned that they've just lost their minds. There's nothing we can do. They've they've already made their decision, they've already followed him. The world, if you will, has gone mad. And of course, in Matthew, we follow this passage, right with Jesus going into the temple and turning over the tables and that kind of thing.

Karin Peter 05:49

A lot of drama, a lot of drama.

Blake Smith 05:53

Lots of drama in the scene, but not for Mark. Mark, in Mark, Jesus... he enters Jerusalem, he dismounts from the cult, he looks around, getting laid, he kind of gives gives a look at the temple, and then he turns around and leaves for Bethany. [Karin: That's it?] No drama, no excitement, I'm tired. It's been a long day, I just want to kind of get a feel for what's going on here. And then I'm, I'm going home to go to bed. So it seems that in this case, being more laid back that Jesus is not going to be pushed into doing anything right away. He's going to take his time. He's going to be who he is. He's not going to let anybody else convince him that he needs to do otherwise. It doesn't matter that the people are out there with their cloaks and their praise and their pleas for salvation. He is who he is, he's a messenger of peace. He's a servant, not a king. And he's going to take his time. And he surveys the situation. And he's just going to move on with the work that he's been called to do. So it's pretty clear in Mark, that Mark wants us to know Jesus is about humble service. The way of Jesus is not glory and honor and all of that. So...

Karin Peter 07:13

Yeah. All of that, that we kind of want to associate with these biblical events, and read a lot into them from our perspective, rather than the gospel writers perspective.

Blake Smith 07:25

Right. So some questions we might ask ourselves, in light of this information about Mark's portrayal of this passage would be Who am I created to be? Who am I created to be? And how do I live into that self? How do I live into that creation? Also, it would be important to ask Am I too easily pushed into trying to meet the expectation of others? So one of the things that gets in the way of us being ourselves is what everybody else expects us to be?

Karin Peter 08:02

And what a great illustration of that from the scriptures. All of these people expected Jesus to be something other than who Jesus was.

Blake Smith 08:11

Exactly. Yeah. So finally, we might also ask ourselves, if we are a follower of Jesus, are we more interested in a claim and receiving the goodwill of others? Or are we willing to be a humble servant, and just enter into this process with a mindset of peace and servanthood?

Karin Peter 08:37

That's, that's a really good place to be on Palm Sunday, I think, to enter into that kind of reflection. So when you think about how we might continue to live in that, this week, I was thinking that on a piece of paper, or maybe if you, if you journal, in your journal, you could list some of the expectations others have of you that just don't sit well with how you see yourself, and maybe select one or two, and make a choice to set them down to kind of all of us wear the expectations of those we love and those who are around us, and we all bear them differently, but sometimes they become burdensome, so take this opportunity to kind of peel them off of you or unburden yourself from some of the unrealistic expectations of others. And you might need to list the steps you need to take to do that. And then in this Holy Week, liberate yourself from that expectation, and in its place, except this message that Jesus brings that of a messenger of peace.

Blake Smith 09:50

Right, well, our blessing today comes from Jan Richardson. It's from "A Blessing that Becomes Empty as It Goes." This blessing simply desires to have room enough to welcome what comes today. It's you. So come and sit in this place made wholly by its hollows. You think you have too much to do, too little time, to great a weight of responsibility that none but you can carry. I tell you, lay it down just for a moment. If that's what you can manage it first. Five minutes? Lift up your voice in laughter and weeping. It doesn't matter and let it ring against these spacious walls. Do this until you can hear the spaces within your own breathing. Do this until you can feel the hollow in your heart, where something is letting go, where something is making way. So thanks to our listeners today for joining us for this Palm Sunday episode of Coffee to Go. We want to remind you that we do have extra episodes this week as we will be coming together for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. So we hope you will join us for those and all of our future episodes as we journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition.