

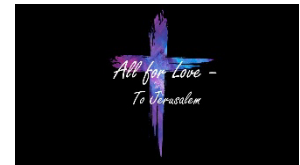
Have you ever been determined to do something?

For example, I knew I had to get a college degree to accomplish God's calling in my life – so I determined to push through the four years. Luke records that 'Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem ... (he said) I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem (Lk 9:51, 13:33 NIV)!' Jesus was resolute to accomplish God's plan of rescuing us from sin and death.

Today, we are jumping ahead to fit with today being Palm Sunday. Jesus is determined to go to Jerusalem.

- He is resolute because he is motivated by love for us.
- I love the Japanese construction of John 3:16: 'God, gives his one special son – to this point – he loved the world (Jn 3:16a).'
- Jesus' motive is 'All for Love.'

To Jerusalem Mark 10:32-11:11



We are reading through large segments of Mark's biography of Jesus.

- In the first half, Jesus served people through miracles, deliverances, and preaching repentance.
- Here in the second half, Jesus is the suffering savior; he is not the political / military Messiah everyone expected.

Last Sunday we read Jesus' first prophecy of suffering, death, and resurrection. Here we jump to the third time he prophesies his death and resurrection.

1. Third Prophecy, 10:32-34.

'They were now on the way up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. The disciples were filled with awe, and the people following behind were overwhelmed with fear. Taking the twelve disciples aside, Jesus once more began to describe everything that was about to happen to him. ³³ "Listen," he said, "we're going up to Jerusalem, where the Son of Man will be betrayed to the leading priests and the teachers of religious law. They will sentence him to die and hand him over to the Romans. ³⁴ They will mock him, spit on him, flog him with a whip, and kill him, but after three days he will rise again (Mk 10:32-34 NLT).'"

Note, Jesus is leading, he is determined to accomplish his mission; he is walking a few steps ahead.

The details to the prophecy are¹ ...

- Jerusalem
- Mocking, spiting, and scourging.
- The Romans – This is important because the Jewish religious leaders will use the Roman system to do their dirty work by night.

Jesus' prophecy is so precise that liberal scholars, who don't believe anything, think that Mark wrote this after the fact. But they forget that Jesus was aware of the prophecies of the suffering servant. For example:

- Isaiah's prophecy: 'I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting (Is 50:6 NIV).'
- Fulfilled in Mk 14:65, 15:15-20.

Even as they march towards Jerusalem, the disciples still do not understand.

2. Position & Service, 10:35-45.

'Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came over and spoke to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do us a favor." ³⁶"What is your request?" he asked. ³⁷They replied, "When you sit on your glorious throne, we want to sit in places of honor next to you, one on your right and the other on your left." ³⁸But Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you are asking! Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of suffering I am about to drink? Are you able to be baptized with the baptism of suffering I must be baptized with?" ³⁹"Oh yes," they replied, "we are able!" Then Jesus told them, "You will indeed drink from my bitter cup and be baptized with my baptism of suffering. ⁴⁰But I have no right to say who will sit on my right or my left. God has prepared those places for the ones he has chosen." ⁴¹When the ten other disciples heard what James and John had asked, they were indignant. ⁴²So Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. ⁴³But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. ⁴⁵For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mk 10:35-45 NLT)!"

Despite clear teaching, the disciples fail to see that the Messiah was not a political or military position; they take Jesus' teaching 'superficially.'²

We see poor timing: they bring up their desire for positions of influence right after Jesus has said he was going to die and be raised up again.

¹ William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark NICNT* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1974), pp. 375-76.

² Lane, *Mark NICNT*, p. 293.

- In ancient times, these were positions of honor (1Ki 2:19; Ps 110:1). Imagine the other disciples when they heard their overt striving for position.
- They want to share the messianic glory; this was pure selfish ambition.
- This is the way the world works; it is a selfish striving for position, rather than Jesus' teaching and example to serve selflessly out of love.

The word pictures of cup and baptism are different ways of saying suffering and punishment.

- God's wrath is poured out (Ps 75:8).
- Jesus will be overwhelmed with suffering.

They will drink the cup and be baptized, but they do not have a clue as to what that really means.

N.T. Wright points out that in Mark, Jesus did become king.³ Consider these Enthronement Points in Mark:

- Pilate – "'Are you the king of the Jews?' Jesus replied, 'You have said it (Mk 15:2 NLT).'"
- Roman soldiers – 'They dressed him in a purple robe, and they wove thorn branches into a crown and put it on his head. ¹⁸ Then they saluted him and taunted, "Hail! King of the Jews (Mk 15:17-18 NLT)!"'
- Sign – 'A sign announced the charge against him. It read, "The King of the Jews (Mk 15:26 NLT)."'

Instead of two positions of honor, there are two positions of shame. Mark records 'And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left (Mk 15:27 ESV).'

James and John were completely wrong on power and position; they were in fact 'extending the darkness' of the world's oppressive systems.⁴

- Rulers of this world flaunt their power and oppress the people in a supposed effort to help the people.
- But Jesus takes the 'evil of this world and draws it on to himself ... instead of keeping the pain in circulation by passing it on.'⁵ Rather than a ruling king, Jesus was a servant king.

³ N.T. Wright, *Following Jesus: Biblical Reflections on Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1994), pp. 43-49 (p. 43).

⁴ Wright, *Following Jesus*, p. 44.

⁵ Wright, *Following Jesus*, p. 47.

v. 45 is the key verse in the whole book of Mark: 'For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mk 10:45 NIV).'

In one sentence he condenses the book and states the means of salvation.

- Service – Jesus served God to the point of death. One of the earliest songs of Christianity is 'Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross (Phil 2:6-8 NIV)!' Loving and serving to the point of death.
- Ransom – Jesus exchanged his life to release others from sin. 'Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all (Is 53:4-6 NIV).'

Ransom means to exchange or substitute something of equal or greater value ... to free it. Jesus took your sin, my sin, and exchanged his life for our purity before God.

The journey continues.

3. Faith of the Blind, 10:46-52.

'Then they reached Jericho, and as Jesus and his disciples left town, a large crowd followed him. A blind beggar named Bartimaeus (son of Timaeus) was sitting beside the road.⁴⁷ When Bartimaeus heard that Jesus of Nazareth was nearby, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"⁴⁸ "Be quiet!" many of the people yelled at him. But he only shouted louder, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"⁴⁹ When Jesus heard him, he stopped and said, "Tell him to come here." So they called the blind man. "Cheer up," they said. "Come on, he's calling you!"⁵⁰ Bartimaeus threw aside his coat, jumped up, and came to Jesus.⁵¹ "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked. "My Rabbi," the blind man said, "I want to see!"⁵² And Jesus said to him, "Go, for your faith has healed you." Instantly the man could see, and he followed Jesus down the road (Mk 10:46-52 NLT).'

- This is the last miracle and the only one of two in the second half of the book.
- Jericho marks the final stage of the journey, 18 miles from Jerusalem.⁶
- Jesus allows the calling out of 'Son of David' because Jesus was so close to fulfilling his destiny.

What I like about Mark including this story is that Jesus is not too busy for you and me.

⁶ An interesting prophetic twist is David in 2Sa 5:6-10.

- Here he is about to die for the sins of the whole world, millions of people who will put their faith in him, but he stops out of concern for one blind man.

After the healing, Jesus continues ...

4. Triumphal Entry, 11:1-11.

'As Jesus and his disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of them on ahead. ² "Go into that village over there," he told them. "As soon as you enter it, you will see a young donkey tied there that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³ If anyone asks, 'What are you doing?' just say, 'The Lord needs it and will return it soon.'" ⁴ The two disciples left and found the colt standing in the street, tied outside the front door. ⁵ As they were untying it, some bystanders demanded, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" ⁶ They said what Jesus had told them to say, and they were permitted to take it. ⁷ Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their garments over it, and he sat on it. ⁸ Many in the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him, and others spread leafy branches they had cut in the fields. ⁹ Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting, "Praise God! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁰ Blessings on the coming Kingdom of our ancestor David! Praise God in highest heaven!" ¹¹ So Jesus came to Jerusalem and went into the Temple. After looking around carefully at everything, he left because it was late in the afternoon. Then he returned to Bethany with the twelve disciples (Mk 11:1-11 NLT).'

Jesus again leads and takes the initiative to plan his entry. Jesus is careful to fulfill all the prophecies about the Messiah. For example,

- Zechariah prophesied, 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey (Zec 9:9 NIV).'
 - The father of Israel, Jacob, prophesied that the Messiah would untie a donkey at the beginning of the Messiah's reign (Ge 49:8-12).
 - This Triumphal Entry feels like a parade for the coronation of a king into Jerusalem. Psalm 118 notes, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD ... ²⁷ With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession (Ps 118: 26-27 NIV).'
- It is a kingly entrance; it is just not a military / political coronation.

But at that time, neither the disciples nor the crowds really understood what was going on. If they had, the Romans would have stepped in and brought order.

- Luke records some Pharisees complained about the crowds calling Jesus 'the king who comes in the name of the Lord (Lk 19:38 NIV).'
- But Mark's memory is that the pilgrims and locals all dispersed as soon as they reached Jerusalem. Even Jesus, just looked around at the Temple and then went to Bethany for the evening.

This is a time of calm before the stormy Thursday evening betrayal.

- Each day, until Thursday night, Jesus would go to the Temple and teach there openly.
- Meanwhile the religious leaders plotted to kill him secretly.

Last week's conclusion was an affirmation of faith in Jesus – you and I raised our hands to hold on in faith.

Today is something similar.

Conclusion.

We can look back and say James and John were foolish, but later in life, John would realize how naïve he was. He wrote, 'Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters (1Jn 3:16 NIV).' He finally got it.

Jesus rode into Jerusalem:

- Amid the festive shouts of Hosanna.
- He rode into Jerusalem as the servant Messiah.
- Mocking him, they would place a crown on his head.
- He would lay his life down as a ransom for our salvation.
- The cross comes before the real and glorious crown.

Us to the altar:

The book of Hebrews paints a picture of us living our lives in an arena surrounded and watched over by those heroes of the faith who have died: 'Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ²fixing our eyes on Jesus (He 12:1:2a NIV).' They shout and cheer as we throw off sin, and there is no greater sin than self-rule, being a king-me.

Everyday Satan whispers in our ears, 'do as you please,' or 'you are the hero of your own story.' Sadly, we believe that we are rulers of our own destinies.

- We wrestle with God's complete authority over our lives every day we open our eyes. We must lay down the crown of self-rule daily.
- In the book of Revelation there is a scene where the 24 elders in worship before Jesus we are to 'Lay our crowns before him (Re 4:10).'

I'd like to do something creative now. For us old-timers this is an unusual altar call. Let's imitate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.

- Let's walk to the altar and lay our selfish crowns down before God.
- If you don't want to walk down, please sing, clap, and shout. Wave imaginary palm branches and rejoice at those coming to lay it all down again.

David wrote: 'I used to go to the house of God ... with shouts of joy and praise among the festive throng (Ps 42:4 NIV).'

This Is Amazing Grace.

Prayer.

Paul said, 'I am crucified with Christ and yet I live (Ga 2:20).'