

The Lord Has Need of It¹

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Palm Sunday is rather unique as regards the Lectionary for the day. As you no doubt noticed, we hear two readings from the Gospels, one during the Liturgy of the Palms, and another from the Liturgy of The Passion of Jesus. I have chosen to take my sermon topic from the Reading from Mark 11, which we heard during the Liturgy of the Palms, and I want to focus on the response that Jesus told the two disciples to give if anyone asked why they were taking the colt; “The Lord has need of it.”

Let’s start by getting a little perspective on where this need arises. Our reading begins, “*Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives...*”

Jesus is coming to Jerusalem from Jericho, which is about 18 miles northeast of Jerusalem. Bethany is located on the east slope of the Mount of Olives about two miles from Jerusalem. It is the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, and John reports Jesus as raising Lazarus from the dead shortly before entering Jerusalem. The location of Bethphage is less certain, but it is probably located on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives near Bethany. The Mount of Olives is a ridge overlooking Jerusalem about 2.5 miles long and 2963 feet high.

And so it is that from a 2½ mile trek from Jerusalem, Jesus dispatches two disciples with the instruction, “*Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring it.*”³ And if anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it,’ and immediately he will send it here.”

This instruction of Jesus doesn’t cause us any concern. But have you ever considered how the two disciples felt about carrying out this instruction? Let’s put Jesus’ request into a current perspective. It would be as if Jesus said today, “Go into town, and when you come to Main Street, you will see a brand New Rolls Royce with the keys in the ignition. Get in and drive it here and if anyone asks ‘What are you doing,’ just push the button to roll down the window and holler out the window, ‘The Lord has need of it, brother.’”

Kind of brings Jesus’ request into perspective, doesn’t it? How comfortable would you be if the Lord spoke to you and told you to go jack a brand new Rolls Royce? How comfortable do you think the two disciples were at the prospect of “borrowing” this “colt on which no one has sat?”

Do you think that they were concerned? After all, they could be accosted and thrown in prison for “grand theft colt.” Surely, these thoughts must have been on their minds, but what did they do? “*...they went their way...*”

Today, one might be hard pressed to know who it is that needed the transportation if you said “The Lord has need of it.” I can just hear the response, “Which Lord do you mean? The Lord of work? The Lord of Play? The Lord of prurient interests? The Lord of drugs? Just which Lord needs this royal transportation?”

¹ Reference: Mark 11:1-11a

But there was no confusion when the disciples said, “The Lord has need of it.” In fact they didn’t even respond to the disciples.

Many today are confused because they don’t know that in truth there is but one Lord. In fact, scripture reveals unquestionably that the Lord our God is the one true God. In First Corinthians Chapter 8, Paul tells us, ⁵ For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), ⁶ yet for us *there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.*

But setting all that aside, consider this, how willing would you be to obey someone you have known for less than three years if he told you to go jack a Rolls?

If the Lord asks something of you; perhaps it is a difficult task, or something you don’t like doing, or even something for which you fear may get you into trouble, how eager are you to proceed on your way to do it? How willing are we to exercise our faith and obey His request?

And what about this, if Jesus was in the beginning and there was not anything made that He did not make, from whence does this need come? It is hard to imagine that because He could foresee all things, had foreknowledge of all things, created all things, how could He possibly have a need, especially for a donkey?

Feature this now, to display His royalty, Jesus must enter Jerusalem riding a colt upon whom no other rider has set. Yet he had to borrow that very same colt. It describes an oxymoron of sorts, doesn’t it?

Here we have the confluence of absolute authority and abject poverty in the person of Jesus. And while it may seem oxymoronic, it is truth without exception.

Jesus is the king of creation yet has no earthly possessions. This blending of humility and majesty runs throughout His life and ministry. He had to use a fisherman’s boat as a pulpit to address those who had come to hear Him speak divine wisdom. He accepted loaves and fishes from a young boy which He then used to feed thousands. He was even buried after His crucifixion in a borrowed grave; from which He rose and ascended into heaven, breaking the bonds of death for all who follow after Him.

The message to the owner of the colt, and the message to us, is that Jesus has needs and He calls upon His disciples to provide them.

In the truest sense, God needs nothing!

Yet He has graciously premeditated to work by the means of His creatures. This is God's plan.

Can we tie the hands of God? Oh, yes. We can limit God.

In fact, we are limiting God today. God would like to be doing a thousand times more than is being done, but we are limiting Him. He has chosen to work through His creatures. He cannot move forward any faster than He can get you and me, His creatures, to move.

We need to see where we fit into God's plan; Paul taught the Church that we are workers together with God (2 Corinthians 6:1).

Someone may say, "Well, Jesus said that He would build His church."

How does He build it? --by getting a person 'sold out' who will sow the seed

--and another who will water.

Why are we not getting a better harvest of souls? Because one sows the seed, and the next one, instead of watering it, pulls the seed out and plants something else. There is nothing left long enough in the hearts of man to take root.

We need to accept the responsibility of promoting the Kingdom of God in a greater way.

One might say, "Jesus builds the Church." And of course that person would be correct, however, we should recognize that the Apostle Paul was a wise master builder; he helped build the Church. It was Jesus working through him, but it was Paul who was building the Church.

There is a human aspect to church growth that we cannot overlook. For the Church to grow, it needs to have some real sowing, watering, and cultivating. And while it is God who gives the increase, the increase does not occur UNTIL , we sow, we water and we cultivate.

We can see this principal at work in nature. A man had a beautiful garden, and a friend said, "My, that's a beautiful garden you and the Lord have." To which the gardener replied, "You ought to have seen it last year, when the Lord had it all by Himself -- it was just weeds!"

Truly. It is the Lord who builds the Church, but how does He build it? He adds to the Church every one who gets saved, but how do they get saved?

We have such a laid back, rocking-chair religion that all we want to do is enjoy ourselves and pray every day, "Lord...send your Holy Spirit to visit the lost; convince them and convict them." Well, I am here to tell you, the Holy Spirit does not fly around like a fairy.

When Jesus was here, the Holy Spirit dwelt in Him, in His body; and when Jesus went away, His Holy Spirit moved into the hearts and lives of the Christians. The Holy Spirit cannot go and tell someone what has been ordained for you to speak.

Regardless of our desire to sit at home and send Him; it just does not work that way. We need to see exactly where we fit into this picture.

God is ready for a revival like we have never seen. God is ready to save by the hundreds and thousands. There is an expression that I often see on bumper stickers, "Get'er done!" Why aren't we gettin'er done?

Look around at our community, it is clear that the Lord has needs today, maybe not for a donkey, rather He needs lives, time, and talents to send into the community.

Even as the Lord needed that little colt on which to ride into Jerusalem to fulfill prophecy, He has great need of us today to fulfill prophecy.

We, the individual and collective members of His body, the Church, are needed to fulfill prophecy today. We are in an era when the Lord does not need a donkey to make a triumphal entry into Jerusalem, what He needs today are men and women who are dedicated to His cause. He needs people, who through Him, will triumph over sin, the flesh and the devil and prove to the world that He is Lord.

And just as the disciples responded without questioning Jesus about jacking the colt, we need to respond immediately to His call. We need to be obedient disciples and go into the world and sow, water, and cultivate. We need to become farmers for Christ, for when we respond by sowing, watering, and cultivating, it is then that He brings the increase. If it were not so, the world would have been saved centuries ago.

It's time that we get our bib-overalls on, grab the hoe, the seeds, and watering can, and went to work in the fields, becoming farmers for Christ. We need to get'er done!

Why? Because, "The Lord has need of it." Amen.