

MARK 11:1-11 **A DOWNHILL RIDE FOR AN UPHILL BATTLE**

¹ As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, ² saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³ If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.' " ⁴ They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, ⁵ some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" ⁶ They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. ⁷ When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. ⁸ Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. ⁹ Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" ¹⁰ "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!" "Hosanna in the highest!" ¹¹ Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

Jesus was in charge and displayed his authority as he entered Jerusalem and the Temple. He told the disciples what to do and it was done, just as he said it would be. The donkey ride fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah (9:9) and the events of the ride were reminiscent of Psalm 118. In Mark's account, even the work to be done at the Temple had to wait for another day – it would be done on Jesus' schedule. It was a kingly act, by a kingly person, that was accompanied by appropriately kingly acclamation.

It was not only a literal downhill ride (the Mount of Olives provides a panoramic view of Jerusalem), but it was also the easiest part of Jesus' work in Jerusalem. As the saying goes, "Everybody loves a parade." The same holds for Jesus and the people of his Church today. As Jesus marches into our lives we throw our expectations before him and cheer for him as the answer to all our desires. As the crowds along the road cried out "Hosanna" (save us), we too expect Jesus to take over and make it all right. But Jesus is not about generating spectators who need continuous parades to feed their excitement. What Jesus desires are disciples who will pick up their crosses and join in his work for the long haul. To truly win our hearts to such a calling is the greatest uphill battle of them all.

Jesus, you are the sovereign king of all creation. Through your Holy Spirit empower me to be your faithful disciple and not settle for being a cheerleader for you or a spectator for your parade. Soften my heart and strengthen my will so that I might perform the kingdom work you have given me to do. Amen.