

Title: Parade of Purpose
 Text: Mark 11:1-10
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 Place: Decatur Church of God
 Theme: Journey With Jesus

“I LOVE A PARADE!”

Do you?

I can tell you what will be on our TV set on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and on New Years Day. It will be a parade.

I like to hear the bands play. Some people like the floats. Some like to hear the vocalists sing.

Now when we are down at the 4-H fair in Monroe I like to see all the people from the Decatur Church of God who are in the parade and serving as representatives for our church. YEAH!

Our gathering here today is all about a parade. It is probably the most significant parade that was ever held.

Mark 11:1-11

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, ²saying 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. ³If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.' "

⁴They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, ⁵some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" ⁶They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. ⁷When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. ⁸Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the

fields. ⁹Those 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!"

I just want to take a look at the parade and see if I can locate the purpose behind it. Will you journey with me?

To begin with there must be...

I. Preparation for the parade

- A. Jesus had a plan.
 - a This was a fulfillment of scripture.
 - b It required a young colt.
 - c The colt belonged to someone else and would require a loan.

* Every battle is won or lost before it is fought.
 —Sun Tzu, *Chinese General and Strategist*, in *The Art of War*, written in the late sixth-century BC

- B. Jesus still has a plan.
 - a That's why he brought the Jews to the Promised Land.
 - b That's why he was born in Bethlehem, raised in Nazareth, and surrendered his life on the cross in Jerusalem.
 - c That's why he rose from the grave. --- It was all according to plan.

* According to pastor and author John Ortberg, a fictitious manual for Peace Corp volunteers headed for South America offers advice on how to handle a chance encounter with an anaconda (a large type of boa constrictor). This is the list of instructions under the heading "What to Do If Attacked by an Anaconda":

1. If an anaconda attacks you, do not run; the snake is faster than you are.
2. Lie flat on the ground.
3. Put your arms tight at your sides and your legs tight against one another.
4. The snake will begin to climb over your body.
5. Do not panic.
6. The snake will begin to swallow you from the feet end.
7. Step 6 will take a long time.
8. After awhile, slowly and with as little movement as possible, reach down, take your knife, and very gently slide it into the snake's mouth. Then suddenly sever the snake's head.
9. Be sure your knife is sharp.
10. Be sure you have your knife.

John Ortberg quotes these humorous instructions and then makes a serious point: "You never really know what curves life will throw at you, what's lurking around the corner ... But when you are called, and you will be called, you need to know what to do. If you wait until a crisis hits, because it will hit, you have waited too long. You need to be prepared first."

Once you have a prepared plan, then it is time to do something about it.

II. Performance required for the parade

- A. The disciples were required to perform or to be obedient to the plan.
 - a They went and found the colt.
 - b They untied it.
 - c When questioned they explained what and why they were doing it.
 - d They brought it to Jesus and put their cloaks on its back for Jesus to sit upon.

*.Over the 2011, 4th-of-July weekend, a group of motorcyclists gathered in Onondaga, New York, to ride in protest against the New York state law that requires motorcycle riders to wear a helmet. One of those riding in protest was a 55-year-old man from Parish, New York. During the ride, police say, his 1983 Harley Davidson spun out of control, and he flew headfirst over the handlebars. His head struck the pavement, and his skull was fractured. He was pronounced dead at the hospital.

The police and the doctor treating the man said afterward that if he had been wearing a helmet, he probably would have survived the accident. The group organizing the protest ride said that while they encourage the voluntary use of motorcycle helmets, they oppose mandatory helmet laws.

Whatever the case for or against laws concerning motorcycle helmets, you cannot miss the irony of this accidental death: the man died protesting a law that—if he had obeyed it—would have saved his life.

- B. Performed obedience is the challenge set before us
 - a. Acknowledge that without Christ we are sinners.
 - b. Ask for God's forgiveness.
 - c. Receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

We are responding to Him because He is the....

III. Personality in the parade

- A. Jesus is the focus.

* Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade and Christmas Day Parade have Santa Claus among others. Some parades have a Grand Marshall.

The entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday had a well-known personality leading the way.

B. The King of Kings was riding into Jerusalem. The Messiah had come.

* Robert Webber was traveling on a plane from San Francisco to Los Angeles a few years ago. Hewas sitting next to the window, reading a Christian book. The man next to him, obviously from the Eastern hemisphere, asked, "Are you a religious man?" "Well, yes," he said. "I am too," the other man responded. They began talking about religion. In the middle of the conversation Robert asked, "Can you give me a one-liner that captures the essence of your faith?" "Well, yes," the other man said. "We are all part of the problem, and we are all part of the solution."

They talked about his one-liner, a statement Robert felt was very helpful. After a while Robert said, "Would you like a one-liner that captures the Christian faith?"

"Sure," he responded.

"We are all part of the problem, but there is only one man who is the solution. His name is *Jesus*."

Okay, so we know that the solution is Jesus. What else is needed?

IV. People respond to the parade

* Stuart Briscoe, author and long-time pastor of Elmbrook Church in Brookfield, Wisconsin, tells the following story:

Many years ago, during the Cold War, I traveled to Poland for several weeks of itinerant ministry. One winter day my sponsors drove me in the dead of night to the middle of nowhere. I walked into a dilapidated building crammed with one hundred young people. I realized it was a unique opportunity.

Through an interpreter I preached from John 15 on abiding in Christ. Ten minutes into my message, the lights went out. pitch black.

My interpreter urged me to keep talking. Unable to see my notes or read my Bible, I continued. After I had preached in the dark for twenty minutes, the lights suddenly blinked on, and what I saw startled me: everyone was on their knees, and they remained there for the rest of my message.

The next day I commented on this to one man, and he said, "After you left, we stayed on our knees most of the night. Your teaching was new to us. We wanted to make sure we were abiding in Christ."

- A. People shouted out "Hosanna" and "blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."
 - a In the excitement of the parade they acknowledged the Christ.
 - b It was their hope.

* What they knew of Jesus and what they saw that day elicited a response. As you see Jesus today, what response do you give?

- B. What is your response?
 - a Deny or ignore Him?
 - b Remain neutral?
 - c Accept Him as the Christ and follow Him?

Conclusion: In the early 1990s when President George Bush had fiery John Sununu as his White House chief of staff, a reporter asked Sununu if his job was difficult. He quickly answered, "No." The reporter thought Sununu had misunderstood the question, so he asked again, and got the same reply.

Sununu, a former governor of New Hampshire, then explained why he felt his job was easy: "I have only one constituent." He knew his job was to please the President.

The parade had a purpose. Jesus was and is calling us to please the heavenly Father.

Don't kid yourself. Singing a song about Him isn't enough. God expects us to praise Him, to listen to Him, and to serve Him.

Anything less and we've missed the point of the parade!