

Mark 11:1—11
January 27, 2019

Thursday night was one of those nights in our home after one of those days. We had a hectic and chaotic day running kids all over the place. I was helping coach one of my son's soccer team. That, along with another commitment kept me out until 7. Tiffany—my wife—had a prayer meeting to get to.

It was one of those nights we literally passed each other: I was arriving as she was leaving.

And then, my cellphone sprang to a life with a message from my wife. It read, "Call me if you need ideas for dinner."

What you must know about me—is there is a short list of things that I am good at—that includes:

1. Driving
2. Training Dogs
3. Reading
4. Eating

There is another list that I am not just horrible, but hopeless at, and at the top of that list is

1. Food preparation (of any kind)

I'm hapless and hopeless in the kitchen. When I got the text I thought to myself, "Ideas. I have no ideas. I need more than ideas, I need Tiffany to tell me what to make. I have no ideas!"

I called her and she helped me.

Little Caesars came to the rescue with the \$5 Hot 'N Ready. Fortunately for us, it was both Hot and Ready and I was in and out in a snap.

Me? I was going to have spaghetti. I can do that. It involves boiling water and dumping my brown rice pasta into the pot.

I can do that. I knew the steps.

- Find a good pot
- Fill it with water
- Put it on the stove
- Turn on stove

Boom. Things were happening in our kitchen and then all of a sudden they ground to a halt. I could not for the life of me, find the pasta. I looked everywhere in the pantry and I had no luck.

I had no other ideas. All of my eggs were in the pasta basket. There was no back up plan. I pretty much only know how to make two other things, toast and a salad. So I had a salad. And that salad was pretty lame.

A long time later—after consuming the said salad—I found the pasta box. Was it hidden behind the chips? Nope. It was right in the front in the middle of everything standing there in plain sight.

I missed the pasta because I was looking for a plastic package and it was in a box. I was looking but missed it in plain sight because I expected different packaging.

As a result, instead of spaghetti, I had salad. A bit disappointing but not tragic.

It is one thing to miss pasta standing there in plain sight for packaging it is another thing to miss something or someone more important. Today we are going to meet two groups of people who miss Jesus though he is right in front of them.

Missing Jesus is not just disappointing but tragic. These two different groups are very different but they miss him for exactly the same reason.

They expected different packaging.

In other words, they expected Jesus to be different and do different things than he ended up doing and being. And they missed Jesus.

We must not do the same thing—we must not miss Jesus. We have the same opportunity this morning. We have an opportunity to see Jesus to get to know Jesus to embrace Jesus and to follow Jesus. We must not miss him!

Miss Jesus and nothing else you find will matter. I hope none of us miss him. But missing Jesus is easier than you might think.

Today we have the same opportunity—we are going to join Jesus as he completes his journey to Jerusalem.

PROP: Do not miss Jesus!

We will meet the two groups in our two points.

His Approach (to Jerusalem)

His Arrival (at the Temple)

“Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples ² and said to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. ³ If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.’ ” ⁴ And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. ⁵ And some of those standing there said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” ⁶ And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. ⁷ And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. ⁸ And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. ⁹ And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, “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 And 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.”

PRAY

1. His Approach (to Jerusalem): Mark 11:1-10—

Mark 11 chronicles the last week of Jesus’ life on earth. You may notice that chapters 1-10 covered around 3 years (there is no birth story) and chapters 11-16 cover his last week.

Lets do the math.

Chapters 1—10 covers three years

Chapters 11—16 covers 7 days.

Mark is doing all he can to say—buckle up folks this I this the most important part of Jesus' visit to earth. If this book was set to music, it would be the kind that sounds ominous and gets your attention.

Why?

Because this week that we are beginning to follow Jesus through is the most important week since the very first week of creation.

As we join Jesus he is nearing the end of the 18 mile walk from Jericho to Jerusalem. And along the way he had quite a crowd surrounding him.

Why?

Two reasons.

First, tens of thousands of pilgrims from all across Israel flooded the road to Jerusalem. It was Passover time. These pilgrims were going to the place that every faithful Jew would go for Passover (the commemoration of Israel's liberty from slavery to Egypt).

Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims would come to Jerusalem. The Passover crowds were one reason that Jesus would have had a large group around him.

The other reason?

You'll remember last week, as Jesus was on the outskirts of Jericho he restored the sight of a man named Bartimaeus. Bartimaeus was with the crowd

trying out his new eyes. A miracle like that will get people's attention. And it did.

Jesus and a flood of other people were snaking toward Jerusalem. Now, to get there Jesus and this crowd would have to cross over Mt. Olives.

Just as the group reached the foothills of the mountain, Jesus sent two disciples into the hamlet of Bethphage with a very strange mission.

Vs. 2,

“Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. ³ If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.’”

Mark uses the word, ‘colt’—don’t think little horse or Indianapolis—think young male donkey. Jesus sends two of his disciples into town to get this donkey colt.

The disciples found things exactly as he said they would. He told them exactly what would happen. Jesus is in complete control.

As he descends into Jerusalem it may seem that he is a tragic victim of circumstance, little more than a pawn in a Jewish political power play. It may seem that way, but he will be in complete control of all that would happen just as he was in control of the details of getting the colt.

Jesus had come to die.

The disciples get the donkey and bring it back to Jesus. Jesus gets on the back of the donkey and begins to ride it.

He does this for one reason and one reason only—TO GET EVERYONE’S ATTENTION. By riding that donkey Jesus is saying—LOOK AT ME!

Not just LOOK AT ME but more importantly I don’t want you to miss me—I am Israel’s Messiah. Don’t miss me—I am the long-awaited Messiah.

Him riding a donkey seems like a strange transportation choice but for the pilgrims on that day, Jesus was saying to them, “Look at me, I am your Messiah.”

There was a tradition of Jewish kings coming into Jerusalem astride a donkey. The first to do it was David’s son and successor, Solomon. You can read about Solomon’s arrival into Jerusalem in 1 Kings 1.

Even more importantly one of the last men who spoke for God (a prophet) to visit Israel said hundreds of years before the day we are reading about in Mark,

“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.” Zechariah 9:9

Just as the old prophet called the people to rejoice greatly—to shout aloud—they did.

Vs. 9,

“And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, “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!”

All the pilgrims understood what Jesus was saying by his actions. They began to shout—“Hosanna!” In English that means, “Save us!”

The people in front of Jesus and the people behind Jesus are all shouting in unison—“Save us! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

The King was coming to his city and the people were letting everyone in earshot know it. They didn’t seem to be missing him.

They were doing more than just shouting things at random. The Pilgrims had a set of songs that they would sing on the approach to Jerusalem. These songs would be kind of an ask and answer variety.

Like, “We’ve got spirit, yes we do, we have spirit, how about you?”

Back and forth.

When Jesus mounts the donkey they were singing Psalm 118. It was a kind of ask and answer singing Psalm.

I’ll show you what I mean—

Psalm 118:14–18

[14] The LORD is my strength and my song;
he has become my salvation.

[15] Glad songs of salvation
are in the tents of the righteous:
“The right hand of the LORD does valiantly,

Let's try it. When I point to you, say the next line.

[16] the right hand of the LORD exalts,
the right hand of the LORD does valiantly!"
[17] I shall not die, but I shall live,
and recount the deeds of the LORD.
[18] The LORD has disciplined me severely,
but he has not given me over to death."
Psalm 118:14-18

The culmination of the Psalm 118 is when the crowd shouts, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

The people are clearly saying that they understand that Jesus comes in the name of the Lord. Then to show that they understand that Jesus was Messiah, they literally wrote a new verse to Psalm 118 on that road on that day.

Vs. 10,

**¹⁰ Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!
Hosanna in the highest!"**

Verse 10 is found nowhere in the OT. They people were singing of the kingdom that the greater Son of David would usher in!

The pilgrims were telling Jesus through song—we know who you are. You are the promised Son of David and we know you are here to inaugurate the kingdom of God.

And we are so excited about it that we are going sing.

You might be saying—just how are these folks who are so excited about singing to and walking with Jesus miss him?

You'll recall that we said there are two groups that we meet today—both of whom miss Jesus. How do these pilgrims miss Jesus?

How can it be said that these pilgrims can miss him if they walk with him, sing to him and enter Jerusalem with him?

Verse 10 and 11 show us how they miss him—

Vs. 10,

**“Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!
Hosanna in the highest!”**

¹¹ And 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.”

Do you see what happened?

Nothing. The exuberant crowd melted away and NOTHING happened. The king had come and the people left to go find a place to sleep and get a bite to eat.

They missed him.

All these pilgrims were swept up in the excitement of the moment and they missed Jesus.

How do we know this?

They left him. Not one of the crowd stayed with him. They dispersed.

When the people shouted and sang, "Save us!" they were thinking of a different kind of salvation from a different kind of king. The pilgrims were aware they needed saving but they were looking for a political savior.

When they shouted, "Hosanna!"

They meant save us from Roman oppression!

The pilgrims were looking for a revolutionary leader to release them from the yoke of slavery to Rome. Jesus was not that kind of king.

They did not know that, not yet, so they missed him.

The pilgrims were enthusiastic about Jesus but they expected a different packaging. They wanted a political savior. The pilgrims said / shouted / sung all the right words but they missed Jesus.

What can we say?

Enthusiasm for Jesus does not mean that you understand who Jesus is.

How did the pilgrims miss him?

The pilgrims knew who he was, sung praises to him but did not continue to follow Jesus. Genuine followers of Jesus must continue to follow him.

The pilgrims got swept up in the enthusiasm of the moment on the road but enthusiasm and emotional responses alone are insufficient.

More than that even, these pilgrims had a stirring spiritual experience but experiences alone are not enough. Rely on experiences and you will miss Jesus.

When the pilgrims arrived with Jesus in Jerusalem they went their own way.

The crowd of pilgrims should have continued to follow Jesus and be with Jesus, instead they dispersed from Jesus.

Throughout the rest of the book of Mark we never see these pilgrims again. They left him.

You might even say it like this—the pilgrims were happy to make Jesus king for a day—but that was about it.

They had no designs on following him.

It is good to get enthusiastic about Jesus and who he is but if you rely on enthusiasm alone you will miss Jesus like these pilgrims.

The Pilgrims were not the only ones who missed Jesus in his procession into Jerusalem. There was another group that missed him completely.

2. His Arrival (at the temple): Mark 11:11

It is not so much what happened, but again, what did not happen.

Vs. 11,

“And 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.”

Psalm 118 tells us what should have happened.

[26] Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!

We've heard the crowds singing this. The sound of this song would have echoed down from the mountain.

The second half of verse 26 is the response line to the song in Psalm 118.

"We bless you from the house of the LORD." Psalm 118:26

Now how did the house of the LORD respond?

Look again at verse 11,

"And 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."

The LORD comes to the house of the LORD and the house of LORD was silent.

Where is the blessing that should have echoed forth from the house of the LORD? Instead of exploding with shouts of joy, the temple was quiet.

The LORD of the house was at his own house and the attendants of the temple missed him completely.

Where are the priests singing—

"We bless you from the house of the LORD."

Where are the chief priests singing—

"We bless you from the house of the LORD."

Where are the temple attendants singing—

"We bless you from the house of the LORD."

Where are the Pharisees singing—

“We bless you from the house of the LORD.”

Where are the religious leaders singing—

“We bless you from the house of the LORD.”

How ironic. There is no blessing for the LORD when the LORD comes to his very own house. Jesus finally comes to his house and his presence is answered by silence.

They miss him entirely.

The Pilgrims missed what he was going to do, but the temple authorities missed him entirely.

The religious leaders missed Jesus.

Not only would there be no blessing that would come from the house of the Lord, but the house of the Lord would oppose the Lord.

Instead of leading the people in shouts of acclamation for Jesus the Messiah—they would soon lead the people in shouts of, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” in just a few days time.

How did the temple leaders miss him?

The priests and temple leaders were not looking for Jesus so they missed him entirely. The temple leaders should have welcomed Jesus like the royalty he was. But they weren’t even looking for him. And in fact, in the pages that follow they would oppose him and condemn him to death.

Why?

Because he wasn’t what they expected. Jesus came in different packaging.

The religious leaders of the day expected a Messiah to arrive with a sword in his hand and a plan to eject the hated Romans. But Jesus came with a different plan.

The pilgrims were willing to make Jesus king for a day but the temple leaders were not even willing to do that.

Why did the temple leaders miss Jesus?

They didn't think they needed Jesus to be their king.

They didn't think they needed him. A king? Why do we need a king? We are doing fine ourselves. We are leading the nation quite well, we don't need you Jesus thank you very much.

We've got this.

They didn't need a king. Or so they thought.

The Pilgrims and the religious leaders show us two very common ways to miss Jesus—

The Pilgrims are willing to follow Jesus when it is popular—and the religious leaders don't think they need Jesus at all.

Both missed Jesus.

They missed them for different reasons but they missed him just the same. Are you missing Jesus?

What does missing him look like for us?

- Making Jesus king for a day

The Pilgrims were happy to follow Jesus at the end, to make him king for a day.

How do we make Jesus king for a day?

When it is easy or even popular to follow Jesus.

Maybe you have grown up in a family that follows Jesus and you have just gone with the flow. You are happy to go to church, you are happy to pray and read the Bible.

You are happy to do these things because you believe Jesus is worth following. You believe you need a king. But what happens when life gets hard?

None of the pilgrims were circled around Jesus on Golgotha shouting HOSANNA in the highest. They weren't willing to follow Jesus to a grizzly cross.

Here is something to mark well. Significant spiritual experiences are no substitute for following through good and bad times. By that I mean this—let's say you are wondering if you are really following Jesus and you look back and think—well there was that one time I felt his presence with me, I'm okay.

OR

There was that one time I raised my hand or came down an aisle to accept him.

OR

There was that one time when I got healed—I'm good.

You miss Jesus if you don't continue to follow him through good and the bad times. You might have soul-stirring spiritual experiences but if you don't continue to follow him as king of your life, you miss Jesus.

You might even be enthusiastic and emotional about your relationship with Jesus, just like these pilgrims. And you can miss Jesus.

One more warning for you—emotionalism is no substitute for simply following Jesus. Sometimes the measure of godliness for some is emotionalism.

Crying Tears

Raising Shouts

Raucous Dancing

Riotous Laughing

None of those things mean anything in and of themselves.

People who rely on emotion are happy to make Jesus king for a day of their lives as long as they feel something but that is all.

If that is the way you follow Jesus you are really missing him.

Sometimes—most times you will feel nothing as you follow Jesus. The faithful saints remain faithful through dry seasons.

The Pilgrims were willing to make Jesus king for a day—the religious leaders were unwilling to follow a king.

If you are willing to follow Jesus while it is easy you will not follow Jesus long.

You might say, you have already missed him.

- Unwilling to follow a king

The religious leaders did not think they needed Jesus—they had everything under control. Some in this room might think that.

You might think, I don't need a king. I don't need Jesus. I'm doing fine by myself.

Here is the issue. The reason the religious leaders did think they needed to follow a king is because they did not want to submit to any king.

Following Jesus means laying down your rights, expectations, needs, wants and everything for him.

The religious leaders would have none of that.

Will you?

Are you missing Jesus because you don't submit to him?

Christians—

Is there an area of your life that you are not submitting to the king?

How are we to respond?

PRAY

[23] The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. [24] My
love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen. 1
Corinthians 16:23–24

