

INTRODUCE

Well, good morning church! If I haven't met you yet, my name is Chris Martin, and I'm the Lead Pastor here.

If you've got your Bibles, and I hope you do, please open them up to Matthew 21. Matthew 21. That's where we're going to be.

We want every person to have a hand on their Bible. You can open your phone or tablet to Matthew 21. That's on page **236** in those Bibles under the chairs.

INTRODUCTION: HOLY WEEK

Today is Palm Sunday,

- and historically the church has observed this Sunday
- as the start of Holy Week,
 - the last week of Jesus' life,
 - also known as passion week.

And depending on how you were raised,

- you might have officially observed Lent,
 - the 40 days leading up to Holy Week
- inaugurated by Ash Wednesday.
- And then Palm Sunday,
- followed by Maundy Thursday
 - where we remember the last supper
 - and Jesus washing his disciples' feet.
- On to Good Friday where we remember the crucifixion.
- And on to Resurrection Sunday also known as Easter.

And Holy Week or the passion week is a REALLY big deal because...

- about 1/3 of all four gospel accounts
- cover the last week of Jesus' life.

Now, here at Fathom for Holy week we always have

- a Good Friday service, so, **GF SLIDE** this Friday at 6:30pm, man,
 - you're not going to want to miss
 - this service of darkness
 - where we focus in on the betrayal,
 - trial,
 - crucifixion,
 - death,
 - and burial of Jesus Christ.

And then, of course, on to Easter Sunday **EASTER SLIDE**.

- 8:45 & 10:45
- with kids ministry at both services.
- AND baptisms in-between the services.

TRANSITION

PS SLIDE But today is Palm Sunday, and I want you to know that in the seven-year history of Fathom...

- I have never preached a proper Palm Sunday sermon
- where the text was The Triumphal Entry.
- But today that all changes!

We're going to look specifically at the account from Matthew of the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem today...

- and then on Friday we're going to fast forward
 - five days to the crucifixion of Jesus...
- and next Sunday we'll dig into...
 - Christ's resurrection.

So, I want as many of you as possible to come with us on this journey over the next seven days. Invite some folks in your sphere of influence.

We're putting our more chairs, alright?

So, let's get to work. Matthew chapter 21, starting in verse 1:

MATTHEW 21:1-3

[1] Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, [2] saying to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. [3] If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once."

EXPLAIN

So, this is the scene.

- Jesus and his disciples have been on this journey to Jerusalem.
- And Jesus has been really clear
 - that he was going to Jerusalem to suffer and die.

- But disciples either haven't got it, or they haven't bought it.
 - *"Nah...that's just hyperbole.*
 - *Jesus certainly won't suffer and die.*
 - *He's the Christ.*
 - *He's the messiah.*
 - *He's the king...*
 - *and kings rule!*
 - *They don't die!"*

And this is going to be the key for understanding our text this week.

- Jesus' disciples DO believe that he is the Messiah.
- But they have **SLIDE MISPLACED EXPECTATIONS** about...
- HOW he would do this.

The people of God, at this time, WERE on the lookout for...

- their messiah...
- their deliverer...
- their savior...
- their king.

They were looking for the one who would come and save them from all the pain and oppression around them.

And Jesus is going to give them a TON of clues that he is this one!
But it's not going to play out the way they expect it to...

PS SLIDE

EXPLAIN

And so, the text says that Jesus came to the Mount of Olives, which is an important location.

- Not just for what will happen on Friday night
 - as he will be betrayed there...
- but also, because the prophet Zechariah,
 - hundreds of years earlier,
 - had prophesized that the future Messiah,
 - the mashiach,
 - who was to bring all the nations to the God of David,
- would stand on the Mount of Olives
- and look our over Jerusalem.

So, if you were an ancient Jew,

- you would be familiar with the words of Zechariah,
- and you would know that the stage was being set.

Jesus was giving a clue that he was the Messiah.

TRANSITION

Now, when they come to the Mount of Olives, Jesus decides that the last couple miles into Jerusalem should be ridden on a donkey.

- Now, this isn't just Jesus getting tired
- and wanting to ride the rest of the way. No!

This is another clue.

And Matthew reminds us that this is a clue in verses 4 & 5 when he says this:

MATTHEW 21:4-5

[4] This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying,

[5] “Say to the daughter of Zion,

‘Behold, your king is coming to you,

humble, and mounted on a donkey,

on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’”

EXPLAIN

So, the Prophet Zechariah again is noted here in a direct quote.

- The second clue was that the king would ride on a donkey.
- Jesus is making a claim about who he is.
- **Your king is coming to you!**

Now, a fascinating point of history.

We know historically...

that right around the same time that Jesus was riding into Jerusalem,

- Pontius Pilate was on his way into the city, as well.
 - Pilate from the West on a white horse....
 - Jesus coming in from the East on a donkey.

Now, that’s backwards, right? The king is coming on a donkey?

That’s not really that epic...this isn’t how to write a triumphal entry!

- And then the king came in on a donkey’s colt...
 - on a young donkey...
 - not even like a grown-up donkey...
 - a teenage donkey.

“Oh, I see what going on here...this is a strategic move! Right?”

- *So, maybe he’s coming in on a donkey*
 - *as kind of a bait and switch...*
- *he’s feigning that he’s weak and lowly...*
- *but just wait until he pulls a ‘trojan horse’ move,*
- *and calls his army to overthrow them!*

You see, if I was writing this story...and I called it the Triumphal Entry...

I’d start with the mode of entry.

- Jesus gets the white stallion.
- Or a black stallion.
 - Your choice...
 - just get a stallion, alright!
 - Get you a man horse.
- And come in a dusk...ok?
 - Right as those heat waded can be seen off the horizon!
 - On your war horse!
 - In slo-mo...
 - with the desert sand swirling in plumes...
 - at every step of your mighty steed!
 - Wearing a beautiful scarf...
 - Just flowing in the wind!
- I mean, this is the entry of triumph!
- This is how the story should be written.

But Jesus comes in on a tweenage donkey...it’s like Shrek should be there.

And John's account picks up on the absurdity.

Right after the prophecy about the donkey's colt, John says this:

SLIDE JOHN 12:16a

[16] His disciples did not understand these things at first,

You think? **PS SLIDE**

TRANSITION

This was another clue about the messiah that was missed on his followers.

- You see, the messiah who would overthrow the oppressors...
 - who would deliver them from the Romans...
 - who would save his people
- SHOULD have come in riding a war horse, like Pilate.
 - Yet Jesus enters humbly,
 - on a donkey,
 - a beast of burden.

Verse 6...

MATTHEW 21:6-9

[6] The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. [7] They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. [8] Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. [9] And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting,

“Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”

EXPLAIN: JERUSALEM

Now, this is the famous scene we celebrate on Palm Sunday, and rightly so, but I want to unpack it for us lest we miss the subtlety here.

It’s the Passover, and so masses of people are coming to Jerusalem. People would make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Passover,

- and the city of approximately 70,000 residents,
- would swell to over 250,000 people!

And I’ve personally been to Jerusalem,

- and let me tell you,
 - even today,
- it is small and squished,
- and you feel packed in.

So, picture the scene...

- Jesus is coming into Jerusalem...
- for the Passover feast...
- with tens of thousands of people...
- coming in at the same time.
- And he’s riding on a donkey.

Now, Jesus’ fame had grown.

- His renown was increasing.
- So, this is like a celebrity walking into a crowded space...
- the crowds are surrounding him.

EXPLAIN: COATS & BRANCHES

And the crowd starts spreading their coats on the ground for this donkey-riding messiah to walk on.

- It's a red-carpet of sorts...
 - but even more so,
- this is another clue.

For you see, in 2 Kings chapter 9,

- the astute Jews of Jesus time would have remembered
- the famous King Jehu,
- who was proclaimed king,
 - in opposition of the evil king Ahab and his wife Jezebel.

And after his anointing,

- every man took his garment
- and put it under him on the bare steps,
- and they blew the trumpet and proclaimed, "Jehu is king."

So, this is a sign of loyalty...a sign of fidelity.

- And so, the people are symbolically
- pledging their loyalty to this new Messiah king,
- riding into Jerusalem on a donkey.

The cutting of palm branches, would have also had a deeper meaning.

- They didn't just run out of coats to lay out.
- See, the branches likely referred to the Maccabean revolt,
 - during the intertestamental period.
- And this was a symbol to Rome that God's people
- would no longer be under their occupying rule.

EXPLAIN: HOSANNA

And when the crowds shout “Hosanna” which means “save us” they aren’t doing so in a merely sentimental way.

- This isn’t just a catchy Hillsong tune for these people. No!
- It’s a battle cry.

“Save us Son of David.”

- David.
- The king par excellence!
- By saying, *“save us Son of David,”*
- the people are coronating their royal Messiah.
- This is the king!

The people are calling out divine blessing on their expected deliverer,

- but they will be shocked...
- as Jesus subversively redefines HOW he will save them.

TRANSITION

Again, MISPLACED EXPECTATIONS

Now, in verse 10 and 11 we’ll finish our passage for today:

MATTHEW 21:10-11

[10] And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, “Who is this?” [11] And the crowds said, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.”

EXPLAIN: SHAKEN

All this commotion around Jesus

- on the donkey...
- and the coats...
- and the palm branches...
- and the shouting...
- causes the whole city of Jerusalem to be stirred up,
 - or more literally translated “shaken”.

There is a seismic shock felt in the 70,000 residents of Jerusalem as word of a possible royal messianic figure ignites the people.

But note what the residents of Jerusalem say: “Who is this?”

- And the crowds of pilgrims...
- tens if not hundreds of thousands of them reply:

“This is Jesus of Nazareth. The prophet of Galilee.”

- Jesus is highly regarded by the people...
- and they are on his side...for now.

APPLICATION POINT

Now, that’s our text...and it’s here that I want to drill down.

Because, listen, in this passage the crowds get it right!

And the crowds get it wrong.

They get it right in that they accurately identify Jesus as the Messiah.

- *“Here he comes!*
- *It’s the messiah!*
- *Save us.*
- *Save us Son of David.*
- *This is our king!”*

But the crowds get it right. AND the crowds also get it wrong.

You see, they had a **SLIDE MISPLACED EXPECTATION**

- They had an expectation...
 - about HOW Jesus was going to function as king.
- They had an expectation...
 - about HOW the Messiah was going to save them.
- They had an expectation...
 - and they were dead wrong.

Their hope is in the enthronement of Jesus...

- And they are calling out divine blessing
 - on their expected deliverer,
- but they will be delivered
 - by the suffering servant...
 - rather than a conquering king.

In this moment he is their Christ...

But in just a few days he will be a criminal.

TRANSITION

And so, I think the application point of this passage...

- is in the voice,
 - not of the crowd shouting, “*Hosanna!*”
- but of the residents of Jerusalem.

Who, in all the commotion of Jesus’ triumphal entry, ask,

SLIDE WHO IS THIS?

- This is the key question of this text.
- AND this is THE key question for each and every one of us.

WHO IS THIS?

AND this has been the question all through Matthew’s Gospel.

Let me just show you a couple.

SLIDE MATTHEW 8:23–27

[23] And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. [24] And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. [25] And they went and woke him, saying, “Save us, Lord; we are perishing.” [26] And he said to them, “Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?” Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. [27] And the men marveled, saying, “What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?”

POINT SLIDE

EXPLAIN

Just a few things to note:

Jesus and his disciples are on a boat.

- And the storm that arose is so legit, that his disciples freak out!
 - some of them were professional fishermen

So, they wake up Jesus...

- the guy who made his living on dry ground.
- And they say, "*save us!*"
 - you remember what Hosanna means?

But they had an expectation about following Jesus...

and their expectation wasn't a storm.

And this is so important to note:

- Jesus is WITH THEM on the boat,
- AND they still go through a storm.

This did NOT match the disciple's expectation.

- Just because you have Jesus in your boat,
- that does not mean you won't go through storms...

And so, Jesus gets up,

- he rebukes the winds and the sea,
- and there was a great calm.
- And the disciples marvel.
- And ask, "What sort of man is this?"
- or in other words,
 - In response to their MISPLACED EXPECTATIONS
 - They ask: WHO IS THIS?

TRANSITION

I really only have time for one more, though there are more.

In Matthew 16 there's this incident with Jesus and Peter.

- Now, if you've been around Fathom a minute,
- you know I'm so hard on Peter.
 - Cause he's just always screwing things up
 - in the New Testament.

I just feel like when I get to heaven, if he's allowed to punch me, he will.

But there this instance in Matthew 16...starting in verse 13

SLIDE MATTHEW 16:13–15

[13] Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" [14] And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." [15] He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

So, this is Jesus posing a WHO IS THIS question but to his disciples.

- He's asked, "Who do people say I am?"
 - and the guys give some unconvincing answers.
- But then he's like, "who do you say that I am?"
 - Awkward silence.
 - Crickets.

- But not Peter.
- Peter doesn't need to think about stuff.
- He just starts talking!

Verse 16

SLIDE MATTHEW 16:16-17

[16] Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

[17] And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven."

So, Peter nails it!

But then right on the heels of that,

- Jesus says,
 - *"I have to go to Jerusalem,*
 - *and I'm going to be arrested.*
 - *I'm going to be put on a cross.*
 - *And I'm going to be killed."*

And Peter can't have this!

- And instead of being confused and quiet,
- he is confused and loud.

Matthew 16:22-23...

SLIDE MATTHEW 16:22–23

[22] And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” [23] But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

He rebukes Jesus. Why?

Because of **SLIDE MISPLACED EXPECTATIONS**

- Kings don't die on crosses.
- Kings send people to crosses.

In Peter's mind...

- Do you know who was going on die?
 - Rome!
 - Rome is going to die once Messiah comes into town!
- Not King Jesus!

Peter had an expectation for Jesus.

- And just like the crowds on Palm Sunday...
- he gets it right...
- AND he gets it wrong.

APPLICATION

Now, I think this is so unbelievably applicable for us as well. That very same question is posed to each one of us,

ADD SLIDE WHO IS THIS?

- Who is Jesus?
- Who do YOU say that he is?
 - And so many of us get it right...
 - AND we get it wrong.

And I wanna suggest it's because of our MISPLACED EXPECTATIONS

- We have expectations for HOW Jesus is supposed to work.
- And when he doesn't work that way...we freak out.

APPLICTION: STORMS

We aren't all that different than the disciples on that boat.

- We don't expect storms when Jesus is in our boat.
 - We expect victory!

But has that been anyone's experience in relationship with Jesus?

Since becoming a Christian...since bowing the knee to King Jesus...

- My parents got divorced after more than 20 years of marriage.
- My wife suffered with a chronic illness that still lingers.
- We lost our first child to a miscarriage.

- I've been betrayed by close friends.
- I've fought in the darkness of panic attacks and depression.
- I've had my sin exposed publicly...for all to see.

- I've sat in hospital rooms begging God to heal sick children.
- I've been to funerals of people who took their own lives.
- I've sat in counseling sessions begging spouses not to divorce.

And in all these things, I've wrestled with the question, WHO IS THIS?

- *"Jesus, this is not how this was supposed to go!*
- *This is not what I expected."*

APPLICATION: CROWDS

And we aren't that different from Peter OR the crowds on Palm Sunday.

- We want Jesus as the conquering king.
- Not the Jesus who will suffer and die...
 - who says to us,
 - *"If anyone would come after me,*
 - *let him deny himself*
 - *and take up his cross*
 - *and follow me."*

You see, this crowd, who on Sunday was chanting,

- *"Hosanna to the Son of David!"*

Would be chanting a different message on Friday.

- Because when Pontius Pilate,
 - who had ridden in on a white horse,
- asks the crowd what he should do with the man
 - called the King of the Jews?
- They don't chant,
 - *"Hosanna! Save us Son of David!"*
- No. They chant,
 - *"Crucify him! Crucify him!"*

You see, their expectations were shattered...

- and they couldn't see past the suffering...
- and they couldn't understand HOW Jesus could be the king...
 - the Messiah...
- and die in this way.

But the promise of scripture

- isn't that we'll understand all of what God is up to...
- the promise of scripture is that we'll love it when he's finished.

ILLUSTRATION: FIXER UPPER

It's like those house-flipping shows on HGTV. You seen these things? They're great...though they certainly foster delusions of grandeur!

Cause when you watch them, you look at your house, and you're like:

- "Man, if I just blow this wall out..."
- "I can make my bathroom into a master suite!"

And then a dozen trips to Home Depot later,

- all you have is a ruined bathroom,
- and you're calling a contractor.

But on these shows: it's like Chip and Jo walk into a legit dump!

- I mean, barely standing up,
- boards on the windows,
- blood-stains on the carpet.

And they're like, "There's shiplap! Yeah! This is great!"

- Which, by the way, what the heck is shiplap?
- Is that just a fancy word for...WOOD?

But unless you've got the eye for that kind of thing, you're watching going...

- *"I don't know what they could possibly do with this junk heap!"*

But you know what the problem with that is? It isn't finished yet.

- You've got an EXPECTATION...
 - But you can't judge it on first appearance...
 - or when they're midway through...
- but when it's all finished,
 - it's like, *"Oh...that's amazing!"*

That's because the designer had a better plan that we could have imagined

- And we make the mistake of looking at a half-finished house,
- And thinking we know the end result.

BLANK SLIDE W/PADS

ENDING

So, I think it all comes down to MISPLACED EXPECTATIONS.

I could tell you story after story after story, church.

- Of people I've walked with,
- who were doing the Christian thing,
 - but NOT simply to know and love Jesus Christ,
 - but because they really wanted something FROM Jesus.

In the back of their minds and in the back of their hearts,

- there was an expectation,
 - maybe not even spoken,
- where they think,
- *"God, you'd better deliver on this."*

And when God didn't deliver...

- when he wasn't the conquering king,
 - but the king who bids us come and die with him...
- they withered.

But Jesus' message is *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."*

This is not very seeker friendly!

- You see, he never promises you wealth.
- He never promises you health.
- He doesn't promise you marriage.
- He doesn't promise you children.
- He doesn't promise you retirement.
- He doesn't promise you long life.

He promises none of that.

But he says, *"I'm gonna give myself for you."*

- *I will be your savior...*
- *I will be your king...*
- *but it's gonna be on my terms."*

And intimacy with him is created NOT in the good times, but in the HARD times.

On the donkey...not on the stallion.

- It's in the pain.
- In the struggle.
- In the fight.
- In the fire.

And so, my friends, if you feel less than triumphant this morning...

- don't give up.
- Don't quit when your expectations are unmet.
- Press on.
- Press on believing that on the other side of the cross...
 - is a resurrection.
- Don't judge the half-finished house, oh beloved,
- for your greatest hope is still to come.

WHO IS THIS?

- He is the Christ.
- Son of the Living God.
- Hosanna to the Son of David...
- to the King!

Let's pray.

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

RESOURCES USED:

- Blomberg, Craig. Interpreting the Parables.
- Carson, D.A. Matthew: The Expositor's Bible Commentary.