

"TRUE HUMILITY"  
MARK 11:1-10  
FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT  
MESSIAH, BOERNE  
DECEMBER 3, 2023

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY  
SPIRIT. AMEN.

READ TEXT: MK 11:1-10

DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST:

OF ALL THE CHARACTERISTICS DESIRED OF A SPIRITUAL  
LEADER, HUMILITY PROBABLY DOESN'T TOP MOST PEOPLE'S LIST,  
YET IT IS INDESPENSIBLE. HUMILITY IS FOUNDATIONAL IN THE  
LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN. LUTHER'S STUDENTS ONCE ASKED HIM,  
"WHAT'S THE FIRST STEP IN RELIGION?" HE REPLIED,  
"HUMILITY." "AND THE SECOND?" THEY CONTINUED. "HUMILITY,"  
HE SAID. "THEN WHAT'S THE THIRD?" LUTHER ANSWERED,  
"HUMILITY." YOU SEE, PEOPLE WHO TRULY KNOW THEMSELVES  
CAN'T BE PROUD, AND THOSE WHO TRULY KNOW GOD WILL BE  
HUMBLE.

SUCH HUMILITY IS DEMONSTRATED BY OUR LORD JESUS IN OUR  
TEXT FOR TODAY. JESUS KNEW THE PAIN AND SUFFERING THAT  
AWAITED HIM AT THE END OF HOLY WEEK, AND HE ALSO KNEW THE  
GOD HE TRUSTED TO BE WITH HIM AND TO GUIDE HIM AS HE  
ENTERED JERUSALEM THAT FIRST PALM SUNDAY. CHRIST ENTERED  
THE HOLY CITY IN OBEDIENCE TO HIS FATHER'S WILL AND IN

ACCORDANCE WITH THE WORDS OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES. JESUS HUMBLED HIMSELF AND RELIED ON HIS FATHER DURING HIS HOLY PASSION AS HE SUFFERED AND DIED FOR OUR SINS AND THE SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD. AND WE, TOO, NEED TO TRUST GOD, OBEY HIS WORD, AND RELY ON HIM BY FAITH SO THAT WE MAY LIVE WITH TRUE HUMILITY.

JESUS DEMONSTRATED TRUE HUMILITY, FIRST OF ALL, BY TRUSTING IN GOD'S LORDSHIP OVER ALL THINGS. IT'S SAID, "PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT," AND THAT'S CERTAINLY TRUE WITH REGARD TO JESUS TRUSTING IN GOD'S LORDSHIP. HE TRUSTED IN THE LORD FROM HIS MOTHER'S WOMB. JESUS GREW UP AS A CHILD IN THE HOME OF JOSEPH AND MARY BELIEVING WHOLEHEARTEDLY IN THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL. NOT ONLY AS A BOY IN THE TEMPLE, BUT THROUGHOUT HIS ENTIRE LIFE AND MINISTRY, JESUS WAS A FAITHFUL SON, DOING HIS FATHER'S BUSINESS. NOW AS JESUS PREPARED TO ENTER JERUSALEM IN COMPLETION OF HIS DIVINE MISSION, HE DEMONSTRATED HIS TRUST IN GOD BY SENDING TWO DISCIPLES INTO THE VILLAGE OF BETHPHAGE TO GET A DONKEY'S COLT FOR HIM THAT HAD NEVER BEEN RIDDEN. IF ANYONE WERE TO ASK THEM WHAT THEY WERE DOING, THEY WERE TO RESPOND, "THE LORD NEEDS IT," AND EVERYTHING HAPPENED JUST AS JESUS HAD SAID.

YOU SEE, JESUS TRUSTED IN GOD AND HIS LORDSHIP TO

PROVIDE EVERYTHING NECESSARY FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF HIS MESSIANIC MISSION. HE DID THIS ON THE BASIS OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES. IN GENESIS 49, WE READ THE FOLLOWING MESSIANIC PROPHECY: "THE SCEPTER WILL NOT DEPART FROM JUDAH, NOR THE RULER'S STAFF FROM BETWEEN HIS FEET, UNTIL HE COMES TO WHOM IT BELONGS AND THE OBEDIENCE OF THE NATIONS IS HIS. HE WILL TETHER HIS DONKEY TO A VINE, HIS COLT TO THE CHOICEST BRANCH" (VV 10-11a). ALTHOUGH VARIOUS EXPLANATIONS HAVE BEEN GIVEN CONCERNING THE DISCIPLES' APPARENTLY MIRACULOUS SUCCESS IN BRINGING THE COLT TO JESUS—EXPLANATIONS THAT TRY TO MAKE IT ACCEPTABLE TO OUR HUMAN REASON—THE SIMPLE FACT IS THAT JESUS IS LORD OF ALL, INCLUDING THE COLT OF A DONKEY, AND HIS ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM WAS FORETOLD IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES TO BE FULFILLED IN THE PERSON AND WORK OF JESUS CHRIST. ONCE THE DIVINE CHARACTER OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE HOLY SCRIPTURES IS ACCEPTED BY FAITH, NO FURTHER EXPLANTATIONS ARE NEEDED.

SUCH ACCEPTANCE OF GOD'S LORDSHIP OVER ALL TAKES TRUE HUMILITY. A PERSON MUST HUMBLE HIM OR HERSELF BEFORE THE LORD GOD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH AND TRUST HIS WORD IN ALL ITS PARTS AND PROMISES. YOU SEE, GOD HAS ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY OVER ALL, AND THE ONLY SURE WAY OF KNOWING HIS WILL FOR OUR LIVES IS IN HIS WRITTEN WORD. BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, GOD

WORKS FAITH IN OUR HEART TO TRUST HIS WILL AS COMMUNICATED TO US IN HIS WORD. AS JESUS HUMBLISHED HIMSELF AND TRUSTED IN GOD'S WILL FOR HIM AS THE CHOSEN MESSIAH FORETOLD IN THE PROPHETIC SCRIPTURES, SO GOD LIKEWISE WANTS US TO HUMBLISH TRUST HIS PLAN OF SALVATION FOR US THROUGH JESUS CHRIST AS PROMISED IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, THAT THE PERSON WHO TRUSTS IN THE LORD WILL NEVER BE PUT TO SHAME (IS 28:16), THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED (JOEL 2:32).

SECONDLY, JESUS SHOWED TRUE HUMILITY BY LIVING IN OBEDIENCE TO HIS FATHER'S WILL. NOW, WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN HOW JESUS SOUGHT TO FULFILL GOD'S WILL CONCERNING HIS ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM BY TRUSTING IN HIS WORD OF PROMISE. JESUS ALSO LIVED ACCORDING TO THAT WORD OF PROMISE, SPECIFICALLY TWO MESSIANIC PROPHECIES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT. THE FIRST IS WRITTEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT BOOK OF ZECHARIAH CHAPTER 9 CONCERNING THE MESSIAH'S ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM ON A DONKEY'S COLT: "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" (V 9). THE SECOND IS FROM MALACHI 3: "SEE, I WILL SEND MY MESSENGER, WHO WILL PREPARE THE WAY BEFORE ME. THEN SUDDENLY THE LORD

YOU ARE SEEKING WILL COME TO HIS TEMPLE; THE MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT, WHOM YOU DESIRE, WILL COME,' SAYS THE LORD ALMIGHTY" (V 1). JESUS IDENTIFIED JOHN THE BAPTIZER AS THE LORD'S MESSENGER, AND AFTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD HAD BEEN PROCLAIMED TO THE LOST SHEEP OF ISRAEL, THE LORD JESUS CAME TO THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM IN ORDER TO FULFILL GOD'S WILL FOR OUR SALVATION.

AS JESUS HUMBLLED HIMSELF AND DID HIS FATHER'S WILL, SO WE MUST HUMBLE OURSELVES BEFORE GOD IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND LIVE IN OBEDIENCE TO HIS WILL, AS SUMMARIZED IN THE TEN COMMANDMENTS. WE LIVE IN THIS WORLD IN TWO KINGDOMS AND UNDER TWO AUTHORITIES: ON THE ONE HAND, THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST UNDER GOD, AND ON THE OTHER HAND, THE KINGDOM OF THE WORLD UNDER EARTHLY GOVERNMENT. WHEN WE BELIEVE THE GOOD NEWS OF OUR SALVATION IN JESUS CHRIST, WE BECOME MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM OF GRACE AND ARE CALLED TO LIVE IN OBEDIENCE TO HIS WORD. PART OF THAT INCLUDES OBEDIENCE TO THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT. IN THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT GOD TELLS US TO OBEY THOSE IN AUTHORITY OVER US—OUR PARENTS AND OTHER AUTHORITIES, SUCH AS THE GOVERNMENT—AND GOD PROMISES TO BLESS US THROUGH THEM. WE SEE IN THE UNREST IN OUR OWN NATION AND WORLD WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE AUTHORITY OF GOVERNMENT AND THE RULE OF LAW ARE

TAKEN AWAY. YET WE ALSO SEE SOMETHING EVEN MORE BASIC:  
PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM BECAUSE THEY  
DO NOT BELIEVE THE GOSPEL—THE GOOD NEWS OF THE FORGIVENESS  
OF SINS, LIFE, AND SALVATION THROUGH JESUS CHRIST—ARE NOT  
ABLE TO HONOR AND OBEY GOD AS HE REQUIRES. THEY NEED TO  
HEAR ABOUT AND BELIEVE IN JESUS, GOD'S MESSIAH, WHO HUMBLLED  
HIMSELF FOR THEIR FREEDOM FROM THE POWER OF THE DEVIL, THE  
WORLD, AND THE SINFUL NATURE. THEN THEY WILL BE ABLE TO  
WILLINGLY HUMBLE THEMSELVES UNDER THE GOVERNING AUTHORITY  
OUT OF FAITH IN CHRIST, NOT SIMPLY OUT OF FEAR OF  
PUNISHMENT.

THIRD, JESUS DEMONSTRATED TRUE HUMILITY NOT ONLY BY  
RELYING ON THE FATHER THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE, BUT ESPECIALLY  
DURING HIS PASSION, SUFFERING, AND DEATH. JESUS WAS WELL  
AWARE OF THE PAIN AND SUFFERING, THE TORTURE AND PUNISHMENT  
THAT HE WOULD UNDERGO LATER IN THE WEEK. HE HAD THE  
OPPORTUNITY TO AVOID ALL THIS BY EXERCISING HIS POWER AS  
THE SON OF GOD WHEN TEMPTED BY SATAN IN THE GARDEN OF  
GETHSEMANE, BUT HE HUMBLLED HIMSELF AND RELIED ON THE FATHER  
TO GUIDE AND STRENGTHEN HIM BY THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HIS HOLY  
ANGELS. AS JESUS RELIED ON THE LORD AT THE BEGINNING OF  
THE WEEK BY RIDING ON THE FOAL OF A DONKEY, SO HE WOULD END  
THE WEEK WITH SIMILAR RELIANCE ON HIS FATHER'S LOVE AND

MERCY BY DYING ON THE CROSS. HE BELIEVED THE FATHER'S PROMISE THAT AFTER HIS SUFFERING AND DEATH HE WOULD BE RAISED FROM THE DEAD, AND HE RELIED ON THE FATHER TO BRING HIM SAFELY THROUGH DEATH'S DARKNESS TO THE GLORY OF ETERNAL LIFE IN HEAVEN.

WE, TOO, NEED TO RELY OF GOD'S PROMISES AS WE WALK THROUGH LIFE, ESPECIALLY AS WE SEEK TO MASTER TRUE HUMILITY. SOMETIMES GOOD THINGS HAPPEN TO US AND WE ARE FILLED WITH JOY, BUT BAD THINGS AND SORROW CAN JUST AS EASILY TAKE PLACE. BAD EXPERIENCES AND EVENTS DON'T MEAN THAT GOD DOESN'T LOVE US OR ISN'T WITH US. WE ARE GOD'S DEARLY BELOVED CHILDREN, AND HE PROMISES NEVER TO LEAVE US OR FORSAKE US. WE SIMPLY NEED TO HUMBLE OURSELVES, ACCEPT GOD'S WILL FOR OUR LIFE AS OUR OWN, AND RELY ON HIS PROMISES OF GRACE TO CARRY US HOME. GOD PROMISES TO WORK ALL THINGS TOGETHER FOR THE GOOD OF THOSE WHO LOVE HIM, WHO HAVE BEEN CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE. GOD'S PURPOSE IS OUR SALVATION, AND WE WHO HAVE BEEN CALLED BY THE GOSPEL, ENLIGHTENED WITH HIS GIFTS, SANCTIFIED, AND KEPT BY HIS GRACE WILL ONE DAY BE TAKEN FROM THIS VALLEY OF SORROW TO OUR FATHER IN THE GLORY OF HEAVEN.

DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST, THE STORY IS TOLD HOW PETER THE GREAT OF RUSSIA ONCE LAID ASIDE HIS ROYAL GARMENTS AND

TRAVELED TO HOLLAND TO LEARN THE ART OF SHIPBUILDING FOR HIS PEOPLE. DRESSED IN WORK CLOTHES LIKE ANY OTHER WORKER IN THE SHIPYARDS, HE KEPT HIS IDENTITY A SECRET AS HE LEARNED HIS TRADE AND LABORED AS A COMMONER FOR THE EVENTUAL BENEFIT OF HIS PEOPLE. HE WILLINGLY ASSUMED THE MOST MENIAL TASKS TO PRESERVE HIS ANONYMITY AND TO LEARN THE FULL MEASURE OF THE LABOR OF SHIPBUILDING.

ALTHOUGH THE ILLUSTRATION MAY BE IMPERFECT, THAT STORY ABOUT PETER THE GREAT GIVES US SOME INSIGHT INTO THE HUMILIATION OF OUR LORD JESUS, HOW HE ASSUMED THE ROLE OF THE OBEDIENT AND SUFFERING SERVANT OF THE LORD FOR THE SALVATION OF ALL PEOPLE. CHRIST IS OUR LEADER—THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE—AND ONLY BY FOLLOWING HIM IN FAITH AND THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL WE COME TO THE FATHER. MAY THE HOLY SPIRIT INCREASE OUR TRUST, OBEDIENCE, AND RELIANCE ON OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST SO THAT WE CAN FOLLOW THE FOOTSTEPS OF OUR SAVIOR IN TRUE HUMILITY AS WE WAIT FOR HIS GLORIOUS APPEARING AT THE END OF TIME. AMEN.