

## FROM MY POINT OF VIEW

There were people everywhere because of the Passover celebration. You know, the Romans soldiers were there, the merchants, Jews and Gentiles from near and far. Of course Jesus and the disciples were there, but do you remember me? I did not speak nor hold any position of authority. I have no name. However, I was at the center of his entry into Jerusalem. I am in all the pictures you have seen of Palm Sunday. Who am I is not the correct question. It is more correctly, what am I? **I am the donkey**, the foal of a colt that Jesus rode on into Jerusalem. **Why do I get to tell my view of that day, Palm Sunday--because, you and I have a number of things in common and lessons to learn from the donkey!**

**So what can that donkey “teach” us, anything?** We have learned much by observing God’s creation. There have been many helpful and lasting lessons.

**We are both God’s creation, created to serve a purpose.** Now in the donkey’s case here was an animal less than three years old and had never been ridden. After three years the foal of colt is a donkey. **The donkey was small, smelly, and was known for its stubbornness. Many of us, at one time or another have been called out on our stubbornness. I would label it as persistent myself!**

**One thing to remember in this comparison is the fact that if God chose such an animal to be part of his plan and carry the son God, then no matter how little we may think of ourselves or how unprepared we think we are, we were chosen for ministry, God has a purpose for us!** Ephesians 2:10 *“for we are God's masterpiece, he has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”*

Now just like the donkey, we can be stubborn and ignore those plans God has for us, because of the gift of free will. However, I firmly believe after reading scripture that there will be an “emptiness” within us that cannot be satisfied in any other way than to be in God’s will for us!

How many people right now just can’t find that “something” in their lives that brings completeness and with it that joy? Our culture runs from this to that and keeps us searching then when that isn’t the answer, we are on to the next pursuit. But remember, in *John 15:16* in part it says *“you didn’t choose me, remember; I chose*

*you, and put you in the world to bear fruit, fruit that won't spoil.*" How clear it is that God sends his message to each and every one of us – **we are here for a purpose!**

In the reading this morning the donkey was prepared by the disciples for Jesus to ride into the city. The disciples put their garments on the donkey for a place for Jesus to sit. Now remember, donkeys are not known for their cooperation and this donkey had never been ridden as we are told in Verse two. **The donkey did not know his purpose, not yet anyway, but he made himself available. How "available" do we make ourselves for God's purposes and use? Do we make a place for Jesus, not on our back as the donkey did, but in our hearts?**

*2 Timothy 2:15 says "present yourself to God".* **Do we remain "tied" up to things that prevent us from being a part of God's plan or like the donkey in today's reading become a part of God's plan?**

Now picture Jesus atop that donkey, that was God's only son, not on a white horse, but a lowly donkey!!! He was coming not as a conqueror, but a servant, Jesus was fulfilling God's plan for the salvation of man. **You could say Jesus certainly was God-driven and the donkey too, but are we God-driven?**

**When we live out our daily lives what are our decisions based on?** When we speak words do they come from the guidance of the Holy Spirit? Or does that spirit of stubbornness refuse to yield to what we know is the right thing to do or speak? As disciples we have been given the truth and when we love God with all our heart, mind, and soul and love our neighbor as ourselves then, and only then, can we say that Jesus is our Savior **and** our Lord.

**Once I heard a Pastor speak on being a servant of God. As a servant we have no "rights", *only responsibilities to serve.* We have no "right" to strike back with sharp words, we have no right to believe we are better than anyone else, and really we have no "right" to think we know better than God does!**

Is it easy to give up these "rights", not really, and will we from time to time try to exert our "rights" for sure, but God's grace is there, His forgiveness, and His love. In Lent all these qualities are brought into sharp focus for us with Jesus and the cross. The Son of God hung up there on the cross because "God so loved the world" and Jesus never had an unkind word as His earthly life ended on that cross.

Now remember in the Old Testament there was Balaam's donkey who was given the gift of speech. The donkey speaks to Balaam about his mistreatment. If our donkey in today's reading was granted the gift of speech would he have complained about the garments being placed on him and having his first rider? Would he have suggested he was good enough as he was and was not in need of a rider or the garments? **Do we look from a distance at Jesus not really wanting to get closer, because He might suggest we are in need of change? Might we act as a donkey- rearing, kicking, and bolting?**

Let no one ever tell you change is easy! There are plenty of stories of people who fought God in their lives with both feet dug in before real change took place. However, they will also tell you that they will never trade where they **are now** compared to where they were! *Philippians 3:16* in part says "*forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead*". **Jesus knew what lay ahead for Him and rode into Jerusalem anyway. We may not know what lies ahead for us, but faith in God should comfort us as we press forward each day!**

One more lesson we can take away from "our donkey" today is revealed in this short story.

The donkey awakened the day after Palm Sunday, his mind still savoring the afterglow of the most exciting day of his life. Never before had he felt such a rush of pleasure and pride. He walked into town and found a group of people by the well. "I'll show myself to them," he thought. But they didn't notice him. They went on drawing their water and paid him no mind. "throw your garments down," he said crossly. "don't you know who I am?" They just looked at him in amazement. Someone slapped him across the tail and ordered him to move. "Miserable heathens!" He muttered to himself. "I'll just go to the market where the good people are. They will remember me." But the same thing happened. No one paid any attention to the donkey as he strutted down the main street in front of the market place. "The palm branches! Where are the palm branches!" He shouted. "yesterday, you threw palm branches!" Hurt and confused, the donkey returned home to his mother. "Foolish child," she said gently. "don't you realize that without him, you are just an ordinary donkey?" But why me then? She nuzzled him gently and replied, "**because you were chosen, little one.**"

**This last lesson we can learn from the donkey this morning is that it's not about us... while the donkey may have thought that everything going on around him**

**was all about him – it was actually all about the one he carried – Jesus who would go to the cross.** It is a fine line that we walk, realizing that we do not follow Christ in order to be happy, successful and popular. When we follow Christ down that road – we follow him carrying our own crosses. While it's not about us - God still chooses to use us. **The donkey was used to make Jesus more visible to the crowd and we too must draw people to focus on Jesus not us.**

**In closing the donkey left all for Jesus, humbled himself, served Jesus' need, carried the son of God, the living word, obeyed, and finished his task.**

**May we all learn the lessons of the donkey on this Palm Sunday.**

Amen.