

## Sermon-based Small Group Guide - Week of Sunday, March 16<sup>th</sup>

**Sermon Title:** What is Your Donkey?

**Scripture Texts:** Luke 19:28-40

Read Luke 19:28-40

"It is not a mistake that we call this passage... which shows up in all four gospels... the 'triumphant entry.' That is the main point: Jesus entering Jerusalem hailed as a king as people throw their cloaks on the road, wave palm branches, and cry 'hosanna'."

Kevin turned our attention toward a minor character in this story – the donkey.

### **The role of the donkey - #1**

"The donkey really is a story prop at best ... a symbol Jesus borrows from Old Testament prophecy to drive home the main point that he comes as king."

Read Zechariah 9:9

*Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion!  
Shout, daughter of Jerusalem!  
See, your king comes to you,  
righteous and having salvation,  
gentle and riding on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

What image of a king does this portray?

How does the donkey affect this image?

Look again at Luke 19:28-40

How does Jesus relate to the crowd?

How does Jesus relate to the Pharisees?

What do these verses tell you about the kind of king Jesus is?

Is the image here of Jesus as king consistent with the Old Testament prophecy?

### **The role of the donkey - #2**

"... something in your life that the Lord has need of"

#### **What is your donkey?**

"Now your metaphorical donkey might well be something as practical and concrete as that colt Jesus requested all those years ago. Maybe what submission to Jesus as king looks like for you will involve something external you count as your own: a vehicle, a home, your company, a set of golf clubs, your Vitamix. Maybe what the Lord has need of in your life isn't something external at all, but is instead a gift or skill or passion he placed in you for just such a moment as this. Maybe it is a gift or calling that has been lying dormant in you for years: something untested to date and untried."

The donkey had never been ridden.

What is something in your life you might not have tried letting God use before?

Share past examples of a time God used something in your life that you would not have previously thought he would have need of.

The donkey was not a stallion.

Is there something you have that seems too simple or insignificant to be used by God? In what ways might you be letting this keep you from allowing it be used by God? Can others in your group imagine ways God might use this?

The donkey was valuable to its owners.

What is something valuable in your life that would be difficult to let God have?

**Pray together** – ask God to guide you all in letting go of the things he is asking for.

**Look at the attached pages and talk about how you might participate in Holy Week together as a group.**

## Consider making the journey through Holy Week as the 'previous' owner of a donkey.

Imagine you are the owners of the donkey in this story. Put yourself in their sandals and speculate what they may have been feeling and experiencing. Do this as a means of journeying with God this week on the path of following Jesus.

So, you've decided to give up your donkey.

"Curiously, we don't get to hear what the owners say after hearing this. Obviously, given the rest of the story, they let the two disciples leave with the colt... but did they do so willingly or under duress? Was it gladly or with great reluctance? Did they grudgingly make the two disciples sign some sort of ancient rental animal agreement that promised they would return the animal fully refueled and without any dings or dents?"

How are you feeling about it? Are you willing but reluctant? Are you glad, confused, resentful, or . . .

The owners of the donkey probably followed it. Curious about where it was headed. Wondering who this Lord was and hopeful of the possibility of getting it back.

What are you expecting God to do with your donkey? In what ways are you still holding onto it?

Somewhere along the way they probably also got caught up in the excitement of the 'Palm Sunday' parade. Maybe they even started bragging about the fact that this king was riding 'their' donkey.

Are you excited about Jesus? About the prospects of what he may do to make your life easier? How he might save you? Does this make it easier to give to him?

It's easy to follow the parade but Jesus' journey doesn't stop there. Are you willing to keep following?

The dust settles in the story of the donkey owners lives and there is a period of time when nothing seems to be happening. Maybe this supposed king was really a 'nobody' after all and giving up our donkey was pointless, not as useful as you thought.

Are you wondering why Jesus asked for your donkey but now doesn't seem to be doing anything about it? This is part of the journey. What we expect or hope isn't always what God plans. How we think God will use something isn't always what he needs.

As the owners of the donkey you might be unaware of the activity going on with Jesus. Or, you might get the privilege of peeking in the window and witnessing a meal he shares with his closest friends. Maybe there is more going on here than you realize.

*Enter into the community on Maundy Thursday – Dinner 5:30-6:30, Worship at 7:00  
Tell someone about your donkey.*

*Come to worship with an attitude of willingness to give what you have because the Lord needs it.  
Bring you uncertainty about what it means to have given your donkey to the Lord.  
Let God show you what he can do with your participation.*

Before long, Jesus seems to be in the public spotlight again. You remember the parade and it stirs hope and excitement in you again. And then, there is a dreadful turn . . .

*Are you willing to follow Jesus to the cross?  
Are you asking, 'Wasn't the donkey and the parade enough?'  
Are you afraid of what other sacrifices you'll be asked to make?*

If you stop the journey now you'll miss out on the completeness of God's plan.

*Come to the sanctuary at FPC on Friday evening for the Good Friday worship service at 7:00pm.  
Hear the scriptures that tell the whole story.  
Listen with whatever willingness you have to give and with whatever ability you have to hear.  
There's no right way to go through the difficult stuff other than to go through it with Jesus.*

What are you left with? The donkey is gone. Jesus is gone. All hope is gone.

Or is it?

*Consider coming to worship on Easter (8, 9:30 or 11) with the thought that you have stuck with Jesus  
through his journey . . . that you have participated with him in the events of Holy Week  
. . . that you even gave your donkey so that he could be hailed as king.*

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again!

What does it matter now that you let Jesus have your donkey?  
How have your feelings and attitudes changed since last Sunday, since Friday?  
How have your feelings and attitudes remained the same?