

Meet Your Moments!

1. Warm-up Question: Share a favorite Easter memory.
2. Last Sunday we focused on three key characters in the Palm Sunday story – Jesus, the cheering crowd, and the young donkey that Jesus rode. We asked what we can learn from what each does in the story. Read Luke 19:28-40, as printed on p. 3.
3. The first key character in the Palm Sunday story is Jesus himself. Palm Sunday was the greatest day of his life – the pinnacle of his ministry. As he rode into Jerusalem, throngs of followers lined the roadway, waved palm branches, threw their cloaks in front of him, and chanted, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!” Yet Jesus already knew that this festive crowd shouting his praise would soon be replaced by a crowd shouting, “Crucify him! We have no king but Caesar!”
 - a. Put yourself in Jesus’ shoes. On the one hand, a multitude is welcoming you as the long awaited Messianic King. On the other hand, you know that within a few days you’ll be tortured to death. What feelings would be swirling inside you?
 - b. Each of us end up experiencing what Jesus did. Great things happen in our life, but there’s still so much to fret about. A new relationship leads to worries about whether that relationship will last. The gift of a new child leads to worries about bad things that could happen to that child. A job we love leads to worries about losing that job. Good health leads to worries about future sickness and death, etc., etc. What’s one of your greatest worries right now – the thing that most threatens to rob you of your joy?
 - c. Although Jesus’ impending death was hanging over him, he was able to fully embrace the beauty of Palm Sunday and celebrate with his disciples. When “some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, ‘Teacher, order your disciples to stop,’ Jesus answered, ‘I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out!’” Luke 19:39. Have you ever known someone who, like Jesus, was able to experience great joy even in the face of terrible things? Tell us about that person, what they faced, and how they responded.
4. From the example of Jesus, and people we have known, we see that it’s possible to have great joy even in really hard times. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us how. Read Matthew 6:25-34, as printed on p. 3.
 - a. Jeff summed up what Jesus teaches in the foregoing passage in a simple formula: Surrender + Trust = Joy that transcends our worries. In this context, what does it mean to “surrender”? Surrender what? How would you explain it to someone who wants to know?
 - b. In this context, what does it mean to “trust”? Trust what? How would you explain it to someone who wants to know?

5. The second character we studies in the Palm Sunday story was the collective crowd that cheered Jesus. None of the people in the crowd were individually significant in this particular moment, but all of them acting together were a force to be reckoned with who created a decisive moment that challenged the entire city of Jerusalem to sit up and pay attention. Matthew 21:10 says, “When Jesus entered Jerusalem the whole city was in turmoil, asking, ‘Who is this?’”
 - a. The crowd reminds us that we often find our deepest meaning when we join together with others to invest ourselves in something greater than ourselves. Yet a recent Wall Street Journal article reported that the percentage of people who say community involvement is important has dropped from 62% pre-COVID to 27% post-COVID. Has COVID caused us to become more comfortable isolating? If so, how/why?
 - b. Jeff shared how hundreds of ordinary people join together each year to paint a massive, stunning mural backdrop for the Concordia College Christmas Concert. (See photo on p. 3). He compared that to what we’re called to do together. He said, “When you become part of LifeJourney, you’re not becoming part of just ‘any ol’ church.’ You’re becoming part of an innovative congregation that has the potential to help shape what God wants the church of the future to look like. Innovative churches like ours have the potential create trends that draw modern Christianity back to its authentic roots in Jesus.” What do you think? Does our church have the potential to be a powerful change agent for God? In what ways does our church look like the church of the future?
 - c. Jeff challenged each of us to “paint our part of the mosaic” by embracing a service role at LifeJourney. Do you have a service role? If so, what’s that role? If not, is there a service role you’re considering?

6. The last character we focused on was the young donkey that Jesus rode into the city. One moment the donkey was hitched to a post not doing anything important. The next moment it was transporting the King of Kings and Lord of Lords through the streets of the holy city, making history. Jeff said, “That’s how things usually work. We don’t get to pick our moments; our moments pick us. We don’t get to choose our life, life chooses us. We just have to be ready when those moments come.”
 - a. Do you agree that life choose us rather than the other way around?
 - b. Share an example of a moment that has “chosen you,” giving you an opportunity to do something, large or small, that you found very meaningful.

7. Which of the three lessons we’ve discussed most speaks to you – and why?

Jesus: Don’t let tomorrow’s worries rob you of today’s joy (surrender & trust).

Crowd: Dare to invest yourself in something greater than yourself.

Donkey: Life chooses us, we don’t choose life; be ready when your moments come.

Luke 19:28-41

28 After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29 When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰saying, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹If anyone asks you, "Why are you untying it?" just say this: "The Lord needs it." ' ³²So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. ³³As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, 'Why are you untying the colt?' ³⁴They said, 'The Lord needs it.' ³⁵Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. ³⁶As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. ³⁷As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, ³⁸saying, 'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!' Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, order your disciples to stop.' ⁴⁰He answered, 'I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out!'

Matthew 6:25-34

25 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? ²⁸And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹Therefore do not worry, saying, "What will we eat?" or "What will we drink?" or "What will we wear?" ³²For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

34 So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.

