

3.24.2024 Palm Sunday Sermon

The Lord Has Need of You! | Luke 19:29-40

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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Speaker

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Good morning, as Pastor Bady said, I am Sandra Anderson, and I am glad to be before you this morning. This week we are going to take a break from the sermon series, The Heroes of Faith. I honestly did not want to preach this sermon today because I said it's Palm Sunday. It's a grand old day. And I said, Pastor Tracy, you put the wrong person on the schedule, because that's for a more seasoned elder. And I said, you know, I think you need to switch that around. And she looked at me and laughed, so thank you.

So, since I was lost, she didn't even give me a scripture, I did what any smart person would do. And I went to our YouTube channel. So, if you do not know, we have a YouTube channel, follow us there. And I went and re-watched the last three Palm Sunday sermons. So, thank you to all the elders before me who have paved the way. So, I got an idea of what I should be doing. All four gospels talk about this triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. And since we have heard enough of John for the last three years, I thought we'd give Luke a chance. So, our scripture for the day is Luke chapter 19, verses 29 through 40. And I'll be reading from the New Living Translation.

After telling this story, Jesus went on toward Jerusalem, walking with his disciples. As he came to the towns of Bethpage and Bethany on the Mount of Olives, He sent two disciples ahead. "Go into the village over there," he told them, "as you enter it, you will see a young donkey tied there that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks, 'Why are you untying this colt?' just say, 'The Lord needs it.'" So, they went and found the colt just as Jesus had said. And sure enough, as they were untying it, the owners asked him, "Why are you untying that colt?" and the disciples simply replied, "The Lord needs it."

So, they brought the colt to Jesus and threw the garments over it for him to ride on. As he rode along, the crowds spread their garments on the road ahead of him. When he reached the place where the roads started down the Mount of Olives, all of the followers began to shout

and sing as they walked along, praising God for all the wonderful miracles they had seen. "Blessings on the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heaven!"

But some of the Pharisees among the crowd said, "Teacher, rebuke your followers for they are saying things like that." He replied, "If they keep quiet, the stones along the road would burst into tears."

So, I decided to veer off from the usual angle of Palm Sunday, not too far, so don't get alarmed. But I wanted to get this text from a different perspective. I thought about telling you about the palm leaves and their significance or this pivotal moment where Jesus entered Jerusalem and publicly accepted his claim as the Messiah. You see, everything in life has a purpose and a plan and perfect timing.

And throughout Jesus' ministry, he kept saying, "The time has not come." But now it's time for him to fulfill prophecy. And God does what He always does; he keeps his promises. We call this moment in time, the triumphal entry, but in order to fulfill this particular prophecy, something was missing. Jesus was there, check. We are the people, check. We are in the right city, check. But there was something else missing. According to Zechariah 9:9, it says, "See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey." So, the missing thing needed to fulfill this prophecy is a donkey.

Well, what's so great about a donkey? The donkey doesn't seem significant at all, or at least not to me the many times that I read this story. To me, it was just another mode of transportation. So, when I looked at this text, I said, "God, what are you wanting us to hear this Palm Sunday? What is the hidden message you're sending?"

And what I could hear was the question of what stands out to you? Who do you relate to in this story? So, I said, "Well, I'm not Jesus, so we can move on from that. I'm not a crowd person. So, I am not identified as the person in the crowd." So, I said, "I guess the only thing left is the donkey." And what stood out to me was repeatedly it kept saying, "The Lord has need of it." So, what I want to submit to you this morning is the Lord has need of you. So much so that the invitation to humans is to have this relationship with God, in order to help facilitate the purposes and plans. We all have a part in the plan. And God is constantly speaking and working through His creation. And just like the text says, if the people be quiet, the stones will do it. There is something in the details. And this morning I want to focus on the details of this donkey in the text.

So, before you think that I'm trying to call you a donkey, other words are used for it. I didn't say the word because mama Bady is here. So, I want to take you on this journey with me through

my revelation of what Jesus did with this donkey, and how we can relate to this text. I believe God wants us to learn three things from this donkey. First, he released the donkey. He then reclaimed the donkey. And then he joined this donkey in fulfilling its purpose. So, the first thing is release. The first thing that stood out to me was that this donkey was tied up. It was restricted from its capabilities or full potential. If you look at this picture of this donkey, it is limited in its range of motion. It can only go so far, can only turn its head so far. Its defense lifts if something came to try to attack it. Because this restraint doesn't seem to be a good spot to be stuck in.

How many of you ever felt like this donkey? It also made me think of animals at the zoo. How many of you been to the zoo? I love the zoo. However, when I go to the zoo, it's a reminder to me that when I see a caged animal, that it means that he's not living in his natural habitat. The Circle of Life can't naturally happen there. It's one thing to give a lion something to eat versus the lion using its instincts to naturally hunt for his food. So, we restrict and limit the full capabilities of what this animal can do. Like a prisoner in jail, you are limited to who you can become and what you can do because somebody else is controlling you and your capabilities.

Studies have shown that in both animals and humans, the mental effect that being caged or restricted can have on the individual along with psychological, physical, and sensory deprivation. So, in this text, Jesus doesn't just choose any donkey. He doesn't choose a free donkey roaming around. The scripture says one indicator that this would be the donkey that he wants is that one that would have an owner. It's going to be tied up. It's going to be young and never ridden. Not one from a king, not one that's clean or decorated, or trained. Jesus chooses a donkey that was tied up and someone saw fit to limit this donkey. It is connected to something that refuses to let it go.

Can anybody relate to being tied to something that refuses to let it go? Dave said that's, that's for him. I remember when I was 17, I thought that my parents were refusing to let me go. I think every teenager feels this at some point in their life. But just like this text, the Army has this slogan that Uncle Sam wants you. And that "you" was me. So, I told my parents that Uncle Sam wants me. And my mom said, "No" and refused to let me go. But thanks be to God with a lot of prayer and supplications, she decided to sign the papers and release me. Now I'm bound to Uncle Sam 21 years later.

But what binds us? What ties us down? What refuses to let us go? Things like worry, fear, anxiety, grief, they grab a hold of us and sometimes seem to never want to let us go. It stays in our mind constantly trying to keep us trapped in a cycle of chaos and worry, fear, and anxiety. It consumes us and weighs us down. Because anything that binds you stops you from being able to do what you are capable of doing. So, it got me thinking about, you know, limited

capabilities. So, I thought a couple of weeks ago, Joe come up here. Joe was in a cast on his arm. And I said, I wanted to know, was there any limitations or how was life being in that cast?

It wasn't easy. When they came back into the examining room, they told me that my wrist was broken. I was like, "Okay, I wasn't expecting that, I just sprained it." But then they put the cast on, and it came only up my arm. And immediately I was limited in my movement. I couldn't bring my hand up to my face and I would say, "How am I going to eat? How am I going to brush my teeth? How am I going to draw?" And I got up to the car and figured out a way to get the gear shift and to steer the car and it slid like, I had to learn how to use my left hand to do things I normally did with my right hand. You know, I had to shave with my left hand had to brush my teeth with my left hand. And I was like, "God help me. Help me figure this out, you know, and he did. You know, I learned to floss my teeth with my left hand with one of those little things, one-handed things using. And it's funny, after I got my cast off, I found out that I floss better with my left hand.

You know, God will make a way. You know, when we're challenged with something, God will make a way. God has never not answered my call for help. And I've learned to do things on my left hand will actually do now better with my left hand than I did with my right hand. So, it's like we meet these challenges, but I'm just amazed at how God's in the details of our lives. God, who created the universe, took the time to help me learn how to floss my pen. And that's so amazing to me. If that's not the definition of grace, I don't know what it is. You know, he God wants us to be in the details of our lives, if we let it.

So as Joe said that when you are tied to something, or restricted to something that limits your mobility, your range of motion, and certain things you can't do. You may feel stuck, unproductive, uncomfortable. That's how it feels to be tied up. Have you ever been so sad that you can't get out of bed? The grief physically makes you ill and all of a sudden it wraps you so tight that you get comfortable being stuck. Do you embrace being stuck? Do you embrace being alone? So much anxiety that you can engage with others or do simple tasks like going to work or school bound? What about other things like addictions and phones and drugs and jobs. Friends, people who try to control us and hinder us from moving into our destiny because we are stuck in fear. Fear of moving, fear of leaving people behind, fear of starting over, fear of letting go.

Religion. Religion can also have us bound. Ironically, we call this the bounded set, restricted and limited, stuck in fear, shame, guilt, rejection, tied to traditions and beliefs that holds us and limits us and limits our thinking, keeps us under control, limits our view of God and how we experience God. But isn't it just like God that knows our struggles. He knows what ties us down.

God didn't go for the donkey that was free. But this loving God that we serve, it's like the Good Shepherd yet again, leaving the 99 going to search for the one. This time the one is bound, the one who needs to be set free, and sadly enough, maybe it doesn't even know what freedom is. Maybe it's all the donkey knows, maybe has been tied up for so long that it thinks that this is all that life has to offer. Maybe it doesn't know that it can be ridden. Or that it can carry loads or do something besides standing and being tired. Unless the master decides to move it. Maybe all it knows is control. But Jesus doesn't control us, He sets us free in this particular donkey. No, God knows his situation and sent someone to go and get this donkey because the Lord had a need for it for more than what this donkey could have imagined. What I also like about this passage is that we always see the image of God chasing us down. But this time God sends help. I see this as showing the disciples how to be like Christ, Jesus could have gone and got this donkey himself, it didn't say that he was busy or had something else better to do. But instead he sends these two disciples, because there was something that he had a need of.

And he wanted him to go find this donkey, not just any donkey. But this donkey had some details of how it would be found and the condition that it would be in. It was also in the city of Bethpage, which is a place that just like Jesus, people probably thought what could ever come from this place. But God would send people to help us be free. That's the importance of community and connection with others. Someone else can help you get untied through their music, their art, their therapy, speech and comfort, and obedience to the small voices that ignites them. But what about when you have the capability to be free, but you're so used to being bound, that you don't even know how to be free. And maybe you've gotten so comfortable with being bound that you just accept it that this is how life is the thing that bounds us becomes our friend. How many of you had people that control you smile in your face and make you feel comfortable make you feel like it's a good thing for them to control you.

People like to control how you think and what you believe in, and anything that's outside of that they try to will you back into that restriction, their way of thinking, and it made me think of this story about the elephant and the rope. This imagery of this elephant tied to a rope. The story goes like this it says a man was passing the elephants and he suddenly stopped, confused at the fact that these huge creatures were being held by only a small rope tied to their front leg. No chains, no cages. It was obvious that the elephants could at any time break away from that bond, but for some reason, they did not. He saw a trainer nearby and asked, "Why these animals just stood there and made no attempt to get away?" Well, the trainer said when they were very young and much smaller, we use the same size rope to tie them. And at that age, it's enough to hold them. And as they grew up, they are conditioned to believe that they cannot break away, they believe that the rope can still hold them. So, they never tried to break free.

The man was amazed these animals could at any time break free from their bonds, but because they believe that they couldn't, they were stuck, right where they were. What belief

system is holding you back? How many of us are held by somebody else's beliefs or our own limiting beliefs? Religion also has beliefs that hold us back. And some of them are as like ropes that tie you and refuse to let you go. And sometimes you've been tied for so long that you don't know that the Greater One lives inside of you and that you're able to break free. You're just like this elephant that's stuck. And God has increased you and gave you the capacity to move on. But because you are conditioned and trained for years on years of religion and restricted beliefs that you have the power to break through, but you choose to stay down. And it's interesting of how tiny that rope is compared to you. Because the Greater One lives in you, however, we stay down. Some of us are tied up, have no idea that we're tied up.

We limit ourselves we allow other people to limit us. Maybe we're afraid to move forward. Some people are not afraid to fail but afraid of what they will become. Sometimes it gets safe. Being stuck, I can remember being overseas and we didn't have many options. And when I got back to stateside it was so many choices to make from food were to go, that I wanted to be back in a restricted place because it was easier. Sometimes we get comfortable being stuck.

Galatians five and one says Christ to find your faith. He is your freedom from anything which the law could never free you find your firm footing in this freedom. Do not let religion trip you up again and harness you to a system of rules and obligations. God still wants this for us. Stop letting religion and system or rules and obligations tie you up. The good news is God already knew that you were going to be tied up before the foundations of the world. When God had the redemption story in mind he prophesied in the Old Testament not just how to identify Jesus, but he also shows the donkey in this prophecy. Before this donkey was even born. God already had a plan to set it free before he formed you in your mother's womb. God already had a plan to set you free. God had you and me and mine and even this donkey.

Now God can set this donkey free. What do you think he can do? For you and me?

If he dresses the lilies in the field, and he feeds the ravens, how much more does God love us? Do you think that God didn't know the situation you were facing before you got there? But I got news for you that God already had a plan to set you free from anything that tries to bind you or tie you up. That leads me to my next point of reclaim.

Now the disciples found this donkey, they started untying it and the owner said, "Hey man, why are you untying my donkey?" It belonged to someone else. And at first I said, "Jesus, these disciples to steal this donkey." If it's tied up, it means that it belongs to somebody else. And Jesus tells them to say that the Lord has need of it. Can you imagine going outside, and somebody is about to go away with your car. And you say, "Hey, that's my car," and they say, "calm down. The Lord has need." I don't know about y'all, but I told y'all, the Lord is still working on me. So, I don't think that I would graciously just let go of my possession.

See, God knew what He was doing when he wrote this years ago. Because this new day and age the story would have went a little different. But whom the sun said free is truly free indeed. And Jesus didn't come like a thief and a night, he didn't come and tell them to steal this donkey in the middle of the night. They did it boldly. And the only thing that they had to say was, "the Lord has need of it." There's something about the name of the Lord that when you speak the name of the Lord, whatever that has you bound has to let you go. This donkey had an owner that wasn't Jesus and its master decided to tie it up in the hands of the wrong owner, you will never reach your full potential. You will never reach your full potential being tied up like Joe said, you're going to have to adjust some things in life, you may be able to adjust, but you can still never be full, and not restricted or limited in certain things. When you are tied up to something. I think that is important to note that the owner indeed saw the disciples and asked them why they were untying this donkey. People who control you don't usually want to let you go. I watch a lot of crime TV and most people who don't want to let people go, it usually ends bad because even if they don't want the person, they are refusing to let somebody else have the person is. It's like Hoarders, you know any hoarders? Yeah, I know a couple to

Some people refuse to let things go. Regardless if it serves them no purpose.

The Lord has needed those things. So, you need to let it go.

There's something else alongside of being set free and letting beings that control you know, that the Lord has needed of it. It's letting that thing know that you've been bought with a price, the blood of Jesus, and therefore you belong to the Lord. You're not free to just roam around lost and aimlessly, you are free for a purpose and a plan. You are set free because the Lord has need of you. The price he paid for you is to glorify God and your body, your spirit, which is God's anyway, the price paid is for you to have communion with the Father, He in you and you and Him and in Him there is no fear there is no anxiety, no worry, no confusion, no limitations.

So, everything that tries to bind you must set you free in the name of Jesus who has already freed you and reclaimed you as his own. The scripture says whatever is bound on Earth to be bound in heaven and whatsoever you lose on earth should be loosed in heaven. And if two or three on this earth ask anything, it will be done by the Father in heaven. And how ironic that he sends two disciples to go and get this donkey. They agreed that that day that donkey was going to be set free because the Lord has need of it.

And my final point is this. Jesus, when it got this donkey to fulfill its purpose, a donkey was considered a means of peace and one of the most common animals of that day. Most probably thought, "Well Why didn't Jesus use a horse?" A horse symbolizes war. And that's not the tent that Jesus was trying to make. But Jesus chose a donkey symbolizing peace, humility and

servitude. Through this gesture and mode of transportation, Jesus demonstrated his dedication to peace and serving others. The donkey was also an affordable animal, unlike a horse. And so, I also think Jesus was making himself accessible to ordinary people, showing them that he was a king of and for the people. In order for this donkey to fulfill its purpose, the Lord had to be in communion with it.

Normally, a donkey that's never been ridden would be bucking and biting because it's never had someone riding on it. But this donkey didn't do any of that. What I see here is that no matter who you are at your natural state in the presence of God, you have to change. The presence of God changes lives, and only God can take something against the norm and change it. Just like the Pharisees, some of the things Jesus was preaching was against the norm, he accepted people and things that are against the norm. He showed his love and turned the kingdom upside down. And if you haven't seen I told you, we have a YouTube go back to 2019, where we talked about a series of the upside-down kingdom. So, go back and watch those series and you will see the prelude to Jesus turning the norm upside down.

But they just a place where the donkey carries Jesus and to his destiny, while at the same time Jesus carried this donkey into his destiny. The donkey also had a purpose to fulfill. It was part of a plan. This passage was powerful for me. Because like I said, I am that donkey a little black girl from Lipscomb, Alabama. And for a long period of time, Lipscomb couldn't even be found on the map. What good can come from a place like that? I tell you one day in October 2018, I got stationed here in West Chester. And the Lord visited me. I got here broken tied up bound to religion. Depressed, going through a divorce. So much going on in life. And the Lord visited me February 2019, I walked through these doors

Something about this place and it was confirmation that the next day I went running around the church and pastor Tracy was staring out her bedroom window.

She said this girl is crazy. Trying to break into church. So, when I met her says something about you. I don't know what it is, but you're going to do something great here.

Later on, she told me. Cornerstone was going through a shift. A bit exclusive. And she said that the Lord told her one day you got a plan and a purpose in this transition.

So, my two disciples that the Lord sent to come alongside me with sort of feel and past choice. That gave me resources and challenged me and slowly untied me and it took years to untie the religious constraints. I didn't know who I was. I don't know where I was going. Shame and guilt and condemnation hit me tied down to me.

But God saw it fit to send somebody, untie me. And untying isn't just something that somebody else does, you got to do some work in it too. You got to choose to get up every day, you got to choose to fight the thoughts in your mind, you got to choose to let some of this stuff go.

Because it was somebody to help untie you from the thing that has you bound. He reclaimed me. And here I stand before you today, walking with God connected into my destiny

I didn't know it at a time. But before I was formed in my mother's womb, He knew me. Just like he knows you. And whether it took 30-some years for me to get to this point, don't get weary of being tied down. Don't get weary wondering if this is all that life has to offer. Because I testify to you today that at some point at the right time, God is gonna come and

Set you free. So, don't get weary wondering when is it my turn?

When do I get to be free? When do I get to walk in my destiny I'm getting all my time has come and gone. I know. God knows the timing for you. Because the Lord has need of every last one of you.

So, don't get tied up by the things that have you bound. Be that for somebody else. Don't be the person that holds them a little tighter and restricts them a little more. Be the person that will help set somebody else free because when the Lord has need of you as nobody, no master take it refused electrical. So, I submit to you today that the Lord has need of you.