

**Sermon 3-25-2018**  
**Palm Sunday – Mark 11**  
**By**  
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Let's remind ourselves who this Jesus is that we just walked in with.

*Psalm 24*

It has been predicted, it has been told, so let's tell it again.

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**The King of Glory. That's who is riding on the back of a donkey, with people calling out Hosanna. This is a big deal, but looking at what happens in the story of the Triumphal Entry, you think that it would be a *bigger* deal. This is the king, and Mark tells us that "many" people welcomed him. Not "all". Not "most". Many. A decent crowd, but nothing compared to the amount of people that are living in Jerusalem at the time. Perhaps part of it was Jesus' timing. Verse 11 tells us that when he got to the temple, he looked around, but it was already late. Maybe everyone was sleeping. This also tells us that the crowd that gathers on Friday might be a lot different than the crowd that gathers today. But let's focus on that crowd today. When we parade in on Palm Sunday morning, we**

usually are waving the branches in the air, singing All Glory, Laud, and Honor. If you look at Mark, though, it doesn't say anything about waving the branches. What it does say is that the branches get laid down in the road. They get laid down along with the cloaks that people are wearing.

Now, if this is starting to sound familiar, it should. A number of years ago, I had a Palm Sunday sermon here where I talked about laying things down. You may remember taking off a sweater or a coat and laying it in the middle of the aisle, or on the floor at your feet. I remember that I took off my robe and stole and laid them down. At that time, the image was that we were using things to cover up what was happening in our lives and in our hearts, preventing Christ from fully entering in. We had to lay them down for him to come in. This time, I'm going in a different direction. Don't worry, I'm not going to make you lay your clothes on the floor this time.

When we talk about "laying down our weapons", what does that mean? It means war is ending. When we talk about "laying down to sleep", what does that mean? We're giving up the battle for the day. Laying something down means that we are giving up our rights for the sake of peace, and quite often, for the sake of our neighbors. Now, where am I getting

**neighbors from? The people are laying down their cloaks in celebration of Jesus. How does this have anything to do with neighbors? This has everything to do with neighbors, because cloaks being laid down on the road is not the only thing being laid down.**

***Philippians 2:5-11***

**If you know your Bible, you know where I'm going.**

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**The phrase that stands out here is "he made himself nothing". You may have even heard this one translated as "he emptied himself". What is that but laying down his very self? Usually when you empty something, whatever you empty out goes down. We often say that Jesus has laid down his life for his people. The battle is over. The very ones that cause him to die are the ones that he is laying his life down for. That's where the neighbors come in. Jesus laid down his life for his neighbors, us. We are called to do the same. What Jesus laid down was his power, his status, his opportunities. If Christ is our King, that's what he wants us to do as well. But we clutch them so tightly. We like having power, because we get to say what goes, and no one can tell us what to do. We like having status, because people do what we want and listen to what we have to say. We like having opportunities, because the choice lands back in our laps again. But often, our power, status, and opportunities prevent others from having power,**

**status, and opportunities. How do we know that? Because Jesus' power, status, and opportunities would have prevented us from ever being saved at all. He has all the qualities of God, and God cannot stand sin. If God does not lay things down, we are done for. And so, he has set an example for us, in his coming to Jersuaem. He knows what's going to happen here. He knows that he is going to end the battle, because we can't. He shows us that we should set down the battle as well, for the benefit and sake of our neighbors. Because Christ has laid down his power, status, and opportunities, we can lay down our power, status, and opportunities, so that this world can have life, hope, and freedom. Because by laying down his life, that's exactly what Jesus gave to us. AMEN.**