

“Mission Impossible”

Mark 11:1-11

1 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, 2 saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. 3 If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ tell him, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.’” 4 They went and found the colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, 5 some people standing there asked, “What are you doing, untying that colt?” 6 They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. 7 When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. 8 Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. 9 Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, “Hosanna!” “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” 10 “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!” “Hosanna in the highest!” 11 Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve. (NIV)

Today is Palm Sunday! We celebrate today the one time in Jesus’ life when He truly was treated as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. But we must also remember that on this day Jesus chose to ride on the back of a donkey rather than on a large white horse. On the one day Jesus was treated as King of Kings and Lord of Lords he chose humility over grandeur. During this Lenten season we need to be thankful for Jesus’ resoluteness and tenacity as He obeyed the Father’s Will. He set His face toward Jerusalem and besides one brief hesitation that occurred in the garden where Jesus asked His Father if the cup of suffering might be taken away but quickly following that with “Not my will, but Your will be done.” Outside of that moment there wasn’t even a hint of a waver. Jesus sends His disciples in to town to get a donkey colt and then rides into Jerusalem. This is the one instance where He allows people to treat Him as the King He is. The problem was that the people were thinking of Him as a conqueror of the Romans instead of the conqueror of sin and death. We have been going through the Places of the Passion and it is on this day that we look at the road to Jerusalem on which Jesus rode a donkey colt in to the city! It is the beginning of Holy Week so we sometimes call it Passion Sunday as well as Palm Sunday because it marks the beginning of the end of Jesus’ earthly human existence. We know that a few days later the crowd was shouting “Crucify Him.” We still call it Good Friday. Isn’t that amazing? We can call it good Friday because it was on that day that Jesus paid our debt. He paid the debt we owed for sins past, present, and future. Jesus paid it all! **[NOTE 1]**

Have you ever had a broken arm, hand, leg or finger? Then you know how hard it suddenly becomes to do even the simplest of tasks. Every try to tie your shoe with one hand? Or open a jar with one hand? Or fold a shirt with one hand? Things we are used

to performing with utter ease using two hands become agonizingly slow and take all our concentration when only one is available. Even then, the results are sloppy and embarrassing. Or how about this one? Ever try to go up or down stairs with only one leg? It is very difficult. Some tasks take two ... two hands, two wills, two hearts, two legs. One simply isn't enough to get the job done.

In our text for today, in the gospel of Mark chapter 11, when Jesus sends His disciples after the young colt that HE will ride into Jerusalem, He sends out a team to get the job done. Just as when Jesus sent His disciples out to preach and heal and exorcise demons (He sent them two by two), Jesus continues to keep His disciples operating as teams. Do you think of two as a team? We tend to think of bigger numbers when we hear the word team. But without teamwork, even a duo accomplishes little.

Do you think the two disciples chosen for this latest duty looked forward to this "mission" with the same sort of anticipation that they had enjoyed when venturing into Galilee? Not on your life! Instead of miraculous healings and exorcisms, they have now been appointed basically "horse thieves for Jesus." A young colt was a valuable commodity in those days. As a pack animal, it even offered the means of a livelihood as a mode of transportation, it offered a certain amount of status and afforded some income like a fuel-efficient car used for Shipt grocery deliveries, Door-dash deliveries or Uber rides. Sashaying into the big city and simply helping themselves to some stranger's property hardly sounded like a mission for the sake of the Messiah. **[NOTE 2]**

But Jesus makes this impossible sounding mission possible, by anticipating every question, every quibble, every quandary these disciples might face. First, they are sent as a team of two so that they might lend one another strength and companionship along the way. As team members, they could take turns feeling confident or scared, leading or following, doubting or believing. As two, they also presented a more plausible picture to those who would question them about taking the colt. One man skulking up to untie an animal that was not his own was surely a thief. But two men, engaged in conversation while confidently untying the colt, looked like a ... a...well, a mission.

When the bystanders asked the two disciples exactly what they were doing, as Jesus had foretold they would, the disciples are not only prepared with the answer Jesus gave them; they can corroborate each other's story. A strange story sounds less odd when two witnesses testify to its truth.

In May of last year Tom Cruise starred in the last iteration of the "Mission: Impossible" story. Moviegoers flocked to see it. Yes, it was full of in your face special effects, nail-biting cliffhangers and nonstop action. But for those who remembered the old 1960's "Mission: Impossible" show, something was not quite right. That jazzy theme music was back, but something else was missing.

Actually, the fatal mistake of the movie series was that something, some One, was the focal point. Big name, big star, superhero, Tom Cruise was the focal point. What made the old "Mission: Impossible" such a great show was that every story, every mission, was a team effort. No one was the runaway "star" of the show. The complex

schemes they cooked up to fulfill their “impossible missions” were utterly dependent on the performance of every single member of the team doing his/her job. Some of the team members obviously had more glamorous roles than others. But at the end of the successful mission, it was the team that had pulled it off. The final take in each show was always of all the teams coming back together and acknowledging that it was only because of team effort that the impossible had been made possible. Now there was some of that and I think that is why the movies were fairly popular. There is some of that teamwork, people relying on one another, and as a result, the mission becomes possible.

The point that I want us to take away from this is teamwork. You and Jesus equals a majority. Me and Jesus equals a majority. Apart from Jesus, we can do nothing of consequence for the Kingdom of God. But in Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit WE can do all things.

Jesus has called all of us to join His “impossible mission force” – and be prepared to be offered some pretty crazy-sounding assignments. Your mission and mine—should we choose to accept it—will lead us into some strange situations. We may not find ourselves being donkey thieves for Jesus, but chances are we will find ourselves doing things and saying things we would never have dreamed possible. Being on Christ’s “impossible mission force” may involve “glamour duty”—teaching and preaching and healing. OR it may involve “servant duty”—perhaps as a minister of recycling or minister of building maintenance. Sometimes accomplishing an impossible mission will take comedy—like the sight of a grown man riding a young colt in a ragtag procession. Sometimes an impossible mission is accomplished through tragedy—like a death on a cross. If there were ever any doubt that God can make use of anything and turn any situation for good to accomplish God’s intentions for the world, we have only open our eyes and look around us. It is one thing for today’s gospel text to declare something as dusty and humble as a colt could be put into service for the Lord. What is really astounding is that God has purposefully chosen struggling, sinful, stiff-necked, redneck, blue-collar churches to be the “impossible mission force” for proclaiming the gospel to the world.

We are celebrating the entrance of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem. Knowing what Jesus has done for you, knowing what Jesus entered Jerusalem for, knowing God’s love, makes us want to be a part of the greatest team on earth. The God Squad! IF Jesus is in your heart, if Jesus Christ is your Lord and your Savior, then you are on His “impossible mission force.” God can and will use you, to make a difference in the world. No one can do it on their own. Jesus is quoted as saying, “Apart from Me you can do NOTHING!” But as part of God’s awesome team, the world can be impacted, people can be loved, we can become disciple-makers in the power of the Holy Spirit by standing on the Word, walking in love, and resting in the arms of Jesus. Can someone please tell me why what I just said sounds familiar? (Look at the back of your bulletin) **[NOTE 3]**

Here is an example. You do not see this church filled with people that I have evangelized. I am no expert and I have not exhibited great gifts for evangelism. But God

used me as a part of a team to make a difference at the college I attended. I shared the gospel with my roommate Kevin several times. Two years later I got a message from a girl after the large group Campus Crusade for Christ meeting that Kevin had responded to another person sharing Christ with him and had accepted Jesus into his life as Lord and Savior. It may take 7 different people or more sharing with a person the gospel before they decide to respond and receive Jesus into their life. It doesn't matter if you are number one or number 4 or number 7. What matters is that you are a part of the God Squad. What matters is that you take the call of Jesus upon your life seriously! What matters is that you are part of the "impossible mission" of going into all the world and making disciples. **[NOTE 4]**

Are we ready to be part of the greatest team effort in history? I mean this team effort makes the Super Bowl, the Pennant, the Grey Cup, Stanley Cup, NBA championship, World Series winner, and NCAA National Championship team's efforts look like peanuts in comparison. WE can stay true to our mission and accomplish all that God intends if we do 2 things. Write it down:

- 1) Remember you are part of a team, you aren't called to do anything alone and
- 2) In times of doubt and despair, recite Scripture, remember that "We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us" remember that "those who hope in the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall soar on wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint," remember that "All things work together for the good of those who love Christ and are committed to Him and living His way. **[NOTE 5]**

Remember that Jesus said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you," and "Surely I will be with you always, even to the very end of the age." So you know you are not alone. Are you trying to become a disciple-maker on your own? Stop it! Pray and ask God to point you to a person or two or three other people with whom you can pray, study God's Word, and encourage one another. I don't care if we have to start over 7 times. Start praying for those 3-5 people NOW! Let's pray: Lord God, transform us by the renewing of our minds. Renew our minds and keep them set on that which You command. Help us to step out boldly, accepting the mission you have set before us, relying not on our own strength or understanding but in the company of others, depending on You. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit. Melt our hardened hearts, mold us, make us people of the Word, people of Love, people that glorify You. We pray this in the precious name of our Lord and Savior ... Jesus Christ, AMEN.

**“Sermon Notes for Mission Impossible on Mark 11
given at Doster Community Church March 29, 2026**

- I. Palm/Passion Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week. It is the one instance in which Jesus allowed the people to worship Him. It is the only time in Jesus’ earthly life that He was treated as the King.
- II. Jesus made an impossible mission easy. He does that with us as well! He sent them as a team of two. You plus Jesus equals a majority. God wants us to work together. The mission requires all of us.
- III. Jesus is quoted as saying, “Apart from me you can do nothing.” As part of God’s awesome team the world can be impacted, communities can be transformed, people’s lives can be impacted.
- IV. Think and act like you are a member of the “God Squad”. You are part of the “impossible mission” of going into all the world and making disciples! No one can do it all! Do what you can!
- V. You are part of a team and in times of doubt or despair recite Scripture. What are you going to do about it? You are part of a team! If you are trying to be a disciple-maker on your own, something is wrong? Please pray!!

Benediction: Our mission, should we choose to accept it, is to walk the dusty, rocky path to the Cross; to transform all the fear and pain of the world into everlasting love; to find a way to humbly serve in spite of the pain of everyday existence; to reflect the light of Christ and the love the Holy Spirit grows within us. May He Guide your minds and hearts ever closer to Himself. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit ... AMEN