

April 13, 2025 – Palm Sunday

From Ordinary People to Special People by Pastor Julio Romero

Gospel: John 12:12-16

The donkey awakened, his mind still savoring the afterglow of the most exciting day of his life. Never before had he felt such a rush of pleasure and pride.

He walked into town and found a group of people by the well. “I’ll show myself to them,” he thought.

But they didn’t notice him. They went on drawing their water and paid him no attention. “Throw your garments down,” he said. “Don’t you know who I am?”

They just looked at him in amazement. Someone slapped him across the tail and told him to move.

“Miserable heathens!” he muttered to himself. “I’ll just go to the market, where the good people are. They’ll remember me.”

But the same thing happened. No one paid any attention to the donkey as he walked down the main street in front of the marketplace. “The palm branches! Where are the palm branches?” he shouted. “Yesterday, you threw palm branches!”

Hurt and confused, the donkey returned home to his mother.

“Foolish child,” she said gently. “Don’t you realize that without Him, you are just an ordinary donkey?”

We realize that most of us live ordinary lives. We usually start our days with the same routine, going about our business like following a manual. From time to time, our days may look a little different—but most of the time, everything seems the same. Nothing out of the ordinary.

That was not the case for the Lord Jesus during His three years of ministry. Every day, there was something extraordinary: a miracle, an astonishing teaching, crowds following Him everywhere He went, and even the dead being brought back to life. Just as Jesus was not an ordinary man, neither was His life.

And here we have a day in the life of our Lord Jesus that stands out from the script of any author or writer of His time.

The young carpenter from Nazareth comes into Jerusalem just five days before the celebration of Passover. The city is already buzzing with pilgrims from everywhere, gathered to celebrate this sacred feast. Then comes this young man, riding on a donkey—and suddenly, the crowd begins cutting palm branches, waving them, and shouting:

“Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel!”

As we know, the word *Hosanna* means “Save us.” In the streets of Jerusalem, it sounded as if the whole city was shouting in unison, a chorus of *Hosannas*.

If you wonder what kind of salvation the people were crying out for, it was a cry for independence. They wanted to be saved from Roman oppression, from high taxes—Roman tax and Temple tax. They longed for salvation from everything they couldn’t control.

And if we ask the same question today—**What is it that we need to be saved from?**—we’d likely come up with our own list. Some of those things may be deeply personal, unique to each of us. Others are burdens we all carry in common.

But the difference between us and the crowd in Jerusalem is that we **know** what kind of Savior Jesus is.

He came to save us from our sins.

He came to save us from the power of death.

He came to save us from the demons and idols that lead us to worship material things.

He came to save us from workaholicism that convinces us our worth is defined by our jobs.

He came to free us from the lie that says, *“I can do it all on my own—I don’t need God.”*

Jesus came to save us from ourselves. He came to restore us and help us to return to what is truly valuable and worthy to live for. He came to lead us into a life that is going to make us not ordinary but special people.

Let's go back to the story of the donkey that Jesus rode on as He entered the city on Palm Sunday. That story opens our eyes to a powerful truth: apart from Christ Jesus, we are just ordinary people.

We must remember that we are most fulfilled when we are in the service of others. When we help another person in minor or major ways, we are no longer just ordinary people, but key players in the building of the Kingdom of God. That is special!

I always like to remember what the Bible says about Methuselah. It tells us he lived 969 years, had sons and daughters, and then died. That's it. Nothing else. No mention of deeds, accomplishments, or service. If that's all the Bible has to say about the man who lived the longest in history, I imagine not much was said about him at his funeral either.

So yes, we may be ordinary people—but that doesn't mean we can't do **special** things. Special things, like loving and serving God and others.

The Lord Jesus said that by our fruit people will know who we truly are. He didn't say, people will know who you truly are by the size of your bank account, or by the academic title next to your name. He said, by your fruit is what you will truly be known for. Then He said that the branch not connected to the vine cannot produce fruit. And who is the Vine?

Jesus.

Being connected to Him is what allows us to bear fruit—fruit worthy of the Kingdom of God. That's what makes us special.

As Christians, we cannot let go of Christ. Let's remain in Him so we can hear what He is asking us to do, and whom He wants us to reach out to in His name.

Let's not pretend we can do it all by ourselves. Let's not pretend we don't need God in our lives, that without him in our lives we are somebody. Let's not pretend we have nothing to be saved from.

Today, we wave palm branches—symbols of our Savior's coming. Let's take those branches home and let them remind us of something deeper: **We are just branches. And unless we are attached to the Vine, we cannot bear fruit.**

But **with Him**, and in God's eyes, we are not just ordinary—we are **special**.
Amen.

