

引言 INTRODUCTION

According to church tradition, today is Palm Sunday. About two thousand years ago, Jesus entered Jerusalem and was welcomed like a king. He rode on the back of a young donkey while the crowd laid palm branches along the road. That is where the name “Palm Sunday” comes from. At that time, Jerusalem was crowded. Jews from all over the Roman Empire came to celebrate the Passover. It is a festival that remembers God’s rescue of their ancestors from slavery in Egypt. In verse 1, the gospel writer Mark tells us where the event took place. Bethphage, Bethany and the Mount of Olives are a couple miles east of Jerusalem. The crowd cheered for Jesus. You can feel the joyful atmosphere from the passage. But people celebrated for the wrong reason. They were excited about Jesus, but they misunderstood who He really was. People today can be confused about Jesus too. Easter is coming. People know it is important but misplace the focus. Some think it is about bunnies and chickens. Merchants see it as an opportunity to make profits. Kids look forward to candies like it is another Halloween. Others just see it as a long weekend to rest. How do you feel as Easter approaches? Jesus came into the world two thousand years ago. What does that mean to you? As we shall see, the crowd completely missed the point on the first Palm Sunday. Let us not make the same mistake. Instead of expecting Jesus to be the kind of king we want, let us accept Him for who He truly is.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 預備 Preparation

Let us explore this passage along three themes. The first one is preparation. As Jesus was approaching Jerusalem, He sent two disciples ahead to prepare a donkey for Him. In those days, travelers could borrow an animal for a fee as a means of transportation. It is like getting a rental car nowadays. But Jesus asked for a ride not because He was tired or the road was rough. He had a purpose, which we shall see later. For now, notice that the Lord gave the disciples specific instructions and information. (1) He told them where to find the animal. It would be right there as they entered the village ahead of them. (2) Jesus asked for a colt, not a horse or a camel. (3) He also described the condition of it. It was a donkey that no one has ever ridden. (4) Jesus told the disciples how to answer if someone asked why they were taking it. How did things turn out? Everything unfolded exactly as Jesus said. The owner allowed them to take the colt, and every detail matched Jesus’ words. We are not told how the two disciples felt. Maybe by this point, they were used to the fact that Jesus somehow knew everything ahead of time. But imagine you were standing there watching this happen. You would probably be amazed. How could someone predict all of this so precisely? Because Jesus is the all-knowing God. Moreover, Jesus did not do things randomly. Everything He did was intentional. His earthly mission was to save people from sin. Every step He took, every place He went, every person He met was leading to the cross. At that time, the disciples did not think much about the significance of the donkey. But everything clicked later, as John 12:16 tells us: **His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him.** The twelve men had no clue about the meaning of what was taking

place – getting a colt, Jesus entering Jerusalem and the crowd’s reaction, etc. They finally connected the dots when Jesus rose from the dead. For now, they just obeyed. Jesus looks for the same response from us today. He asks us to remain faithful even before we understand everything. Sometimes life feels repetitive. You go through the same routines, and it can get boring. But the fact is that no two days are the same. God gives us new grace every morning. He does not have any leftover blessing! He is constantly at work through what you see, the people you meet, and the things you do. Every day is an exciting adventure to know Him more and to discover what He is doing in your life. You read the Bible to understand His general will. Then, through daily life, you experience His specific will for you. Therefore, do not be bogged down by people’s demands, expectations and stress. Instead, stay curious and be thankful. God cares about you. He is guiding you. He gives you wisdom for every decision. And sometimes, He will send you to an unknown territory just like He dispatched those two disciples. Maybe it is a new responsibility that feels too big for you. Perhaps Jesus asks you to share the gospel to a stranger. In those moments, God is growing your faith. He is inviting you to trust Him. So you must rely on His strength, not your own. You see, life is not a series of meaningless events. Jesus is in control, just like He guided the disciples to find the colt. He is weaving together all the seemingly unrelated events to accomplish His purpose. To God, there is no such thing as luck. He plans everything for your benefit, and He invites you to walk with Him step by step, in trust and obedience.

2. 行列 Procession

As it was, the two disciples made preparation as Jesus told them to. They brought back the colt and laid their clothes on it, probably to make a simple seat for Jesus. Then Jesus rode into Jerusalem like a royal procession. After all, He came as a King. But there is something odd in the picture. In ancient times, a king was a warrior who led soldiers into battles. Jesus was wearing an ordinary robe, not an armor; He did not have a sword; not to mention that He was riding a lowly donkey, not a muscular horse! That was not an accident. Jesus was making a statement. He was showing that He is not a king of war, but a King of peace. He was not a mighty general, but a humble servant. In doing this, Jesus was fulfilling a prophecy. Matthew 21:4-5 fills in the details: **4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, 5 “Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’”** That prophecy comes from Zechariah 9:9. Matthew was writing to his Jewish peers. Therefore, he keeps repeating “this happened to fulfill what the prophet said” or similar statements. He does so to help readers understand that Jesus is the promised Messiah, namely, the Savior. When the Jewish folks on the scene saw Jesus riding on a colt, many of them probably remembered that prophecy. That was why they were so excited. They observed what was happening through the lens of Scripture. That is something we can learn. The Bible is not an ancient religious book that is irrelevant to our lives. It is the record of what God has done—and is still doing—in human history. Some theologians describe that we are living in the “already, but not yet” moments. Jesus has completed salvation through the cross. But He has not yet returned to judge the world and bring believers into eternity. We are in the in-between time. No one knows exactly when or how the world will end. But we should pay attention to what is happening around us. Yes, life can feel stressful. Prices go up, and the economy feels uncertain. There are natural disasters and wars too. But our hope is not in the here and now, but in the Lord. We trust that He is guiding history according to His plan. We should not fix our eyes only on the

present and feel upset like those who do not believe. Instead, we look at current events through what the Bible tells us. Scripture reminds us that as Jesus' return draws near, the world will grow darker. Sin will increase. But at the same time, the gospel will keep moving forward. Everything God has said will come true if it has not taken place yet. God could accomplish His plans all by Himself. But most of the time, He chooses to work through people. Perhaps you are thinking that you are unimportant because you do not play a big role in the society. But do not forget the donkey in this story. It was just a young and untrained animal. And yet, it was chosen and used by Jesus. In the same way, God can use anyone no matter how ordinary we are. Even little kids and newer Christians have something to offer. God is not looking at how big your work is. He is looking at your heart. If you have a regular, everyday job—do it wholeheartedly for the Lord. If you serve in church—even in small ways—do it with joy. Washing dishes or vacuuming the floor. Simple things matter. If you are greeting people or ushering, remember that you are not just representing our church. You are welcoming people on behalf of God. Give them your biggest smile and a sincere welcome. Even the smallest role in God's hands has a great purpose.

3. 宣告 Profession

On that day, Jesus entered Jerusalem. The crowd responded with a loud profession of who they thought Jesus was. They shouted with joy in verses 9 and 10: **9 ...“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!”** “Hosanna!” basically means “save us, please!” It was quoted from Psalm 118. In that psalm, a king enters the temple in victory, and people are cheering for him. Therefore, the crowd was not crying for help, but they were shouting for a celebration. It was because they believed Jesus was the Messiah—but only based on their own understanding. They saw Jesus' power from God. They heard Him preach about the Kingdom of Heaven. But they did not fully understand who He really was. They did not see Jesus as God. Matthew 21:10-11 gives us a glimpse of their view on Jesus: **10 And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, “Who is this?” 11 And the crowds said, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.”** To them, Jesus was a prophet—a great man, yes—but still just a man. Part of the confusion came from their expectations. At that time, they were under the oppression of the Romans. So they were hoping for a Messiah who would be a military leader that would overthrow Rome and restore their nation. Now Jesus had come. That was why they celebrated. They thought their problems were about to end. But Jesus did not come to fulfill their expectations. He came to finish God's plan. God sent Him to be the true Passover Lamb. The people were preparing to celebrate the Passover. A lamb was sacrificed in Egypt so their ancestors could be saved. But they did not realize that all along, that lamb was pointing to Jesus. He was about to go to the cross to take away the sins of the world. That was not the kind of Messiah they were looking for. Because of that, their excitement quickly turned into disappointment. Just a few days later, they fell for the conspiracy of the religious leaders. On Sunday, they shouted, “Glorify Him!” By Friday of the same week, they shouted, “Crucify Him!” What a dramatic change! Today, we see the bigger picture as we look back. We know it was all part of God's plan. He turned what looked like a tragedy into the greatest victory. Because if Jesus had not died, we would still be in our sins. So we have every reason to be thankful. But what can we learn from the crowd? First, do not reshape Jesus into the kind of God you want. You can bring your needs to Him, for example health issues, job, immigration application and other struggles. But do not go to Him only when you are in trouble. Jesus is not a

genie in a lamp. He is not your personal assistant either. He does not take our orders. Rather, we should follow His orders. When He answers our prayers, it is part of His plan. He calls us to keep trusting Him, not just when things go south, but also in good times. Second, the crowd also reminds us of something about worship. We should worship God in the way He deserves and not in ways we prefer. Sometimes the songs we sing may not be on your playlist, and the messages can be dry and boring. But worship is not about us—it is about Him. Do not come here to fulfill your family's expectation and definitely not to avoid your pastor from bugging you due to your absence. We come to honor God. Like the psalmist says, we enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Your attitude matters, so do your singing and heartfelt "amen." They can even be contagious. For those who are assigned to serve: give your best to the Lord. Practice, prepare and serve with joy. Everything we do—our words, our actions, our worship—is meant to profess that Jesus is Lord.

結論 CONCLUSION

That is the Palm Sunday account according to the Bible. It teaches us not to expect Jesus to be the kind of King we want. Instead, we should accept Him for who He truly is. We have looked at different characters. Where do you see yourself in the story? Perhaps you can relate to the two disciples. They obeyed Jesus faithfully and went to get the colt. They did not know what would happen, but they followed the Lord's instructions anyway. Sometimes God asks you to do something new. Perhaps He calls you to serve in a new ministry or to share the gospel with a friend who does not even know you are a Christian. Will you listen to the Lord? Or maybe you feel like the donkey in the story. It served Jesus quietly. The cheers were not for the donkey, but for the One riding on it. Sometimes you give your best in church ministries. But no one seems to notice. There is no recognition and no appreciation. Do not be discouraged. If you are doing it for the Lord, He sees it. He will remember your diligence. Or perhaps you are like someone in the crowd. You are just going with the flow. A friend told you the church is a good place. It is full of nice people. So here you are. You sing when everyone sings. You close your eyes when others pray. However, the Bible sounds like a foreign language to you. If that is you, keep an open mind. Take time to find out who Jesus really is. He went to the cross five days after He entered Jerusalem. He died for the sins of the world, including yours. If you are willing to confess your sins and receive Jesus by faith, He will become your Savior and your Lord. He entered the Holy City on that first Palm Sunday. And He will enter your life too if you invite Him.

引言 INTRODUCTION

根據教會的傳統，今天是棕櫚主日。大約兩千年前，耶穌進入耶路撒冷，受到如同君王般的歡迎。祂騎著一匹小驢駒，群眾把棕櫚樹枝鋪在路上迎接祂，這就是「棕櫚主日」名稱的由來。當時，耶路撒冷聚集了很多人。猶太人從羅馬帝國各地回到聖城慶祝逾越節。這個節期是為了紀念神拯救他們的祖先脫離埃及為奴之地。在第一節中，福音書作者馬可告訴事情發生的地點。伯法其、伯大尼和橄欖山都位於耶路撒冷東邊幾英里之處。當時群眾為耶穌歡呼，你可以從經文中感受到那種歡樂的氣氛。但問題是，他們慶祝的原因是不正確的。他們對耶穌充滿熱情，卻誤解了祂真正的身份。今天的人對耶穌也有錯覺。復活節快到了。人們知道這是一個重要的節日，卻常常把焦點放錯了。有些人以為重點是兔子和小雞；商人把它看作賺錢的機會；孩子們期待糖果，就像另一個萬聖節；還有人只把它當作一個可以休息的長週末。當復活節臨近時，你有什麼感受？兩千年前，耶穌來到這個世界。這對你來說有何特別意義？我們將要看到的，在第一個棕櫚主日，群眾完全錯過了重點。讓我們不要犯同樣的錯誤。我們不應該把耶穌塑造成我們心中想要的神，乃是要接納祂真正的身份。

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 預備 Preparation

讓我們從三個主題來看這段經文。第一個是「預備」。當耶穌接近耶路撒冷時，祂差派兩個門徒走在前面，為祂預備一匹驢駒。在那個時代，旅客可以租用動物作為交通工具，就像我們今天租車一樣。但耶穌騎驢子，並不是因為祂累了或是道路崎嶇難行。稍後我們會看到，祂是有特別用意的。在目前，我們可以注意主給門徒非常具體的指示與訊息。(1) 祂告訴他們在哪裡可以找到這匹驢——就在他們進入前面的村莊時。(2) 耶穌要求的是一匹驢駒，不是馬，也不是駱駝。(3) 祂還描述了牠的狀況——是一匹從來沒有人騎過的驢。(4) 如果有人問為什麼要牽走牠，耶穌也告訴門徒該如何回答。結果如何呢？一切都照著耶穌所說的發生了。主人允許他們把驢駒牽走，其他細節都完全吻合。經文沒有告訴我們這兩個門徒當時的反應。也許到了這個時候，他們已經習慣了耶穌似乎能預先知道一切。但如果你當時在現場，你一定會感到驚訝：怎麼可能有人把事情預測得這麼準確？當然，答案是因為耶穌是全知的神。而且，祂從來不會隨意做事。祂所做的一切都是有祂的心意。祂在世上的使命，是要拯救人脫離罪。祂走的每一步、去的每一個地方、遇見的每一個人，都指向十字架。當時，門徒並沒有太在意這匹驢的意義。但他們後來才了解，正如

約翰福音 12:16 所說：這些事門徒起先不明白，等到耶穌得了榮耀以後才想起這話是指著他寫的，並且眾人果然向他這樣行了。這十二個人當時搞不清楚所發生的一切：牽驢駒、耶穌進入耶路撒冷、群眾的反應等等。直到耶穌從死裡復活，他們才把這些事情連貫起來。在這個時候，他們只是順服主的吩咐。今天，耶穌也期待我們有同樣的回應。祂希望我們就算不完全明白，但仍然選擇順服。有時候，生活會讓人覺得單調。每天做著相同的事情，難免感到枯燥。但事實是，每一天都不一樣。神每天早晨都賜下新的恩典，祂從來沒有隔夜的祝福。祂不斷透過你所看見的事物、遇見的人、以及所做的事情在動工。每一天，都是更認識祂、發現祂在你生命中作為的精彩旅程。你透過讀聖經來明白祂的一般旨意；然後在日常生活中，經歷祂在你身上獨特的帶領。所以，不要被人的要求、期望和壓力使你失去方向。要保持好奇心，並且常存感恩的心。神關心你，祂正在引導你，也會在每一個決定上賜給你智慧。有時候，祂也許會帶你進入新的領域，就像祂差派那兩個門徒一樣。也許是一個讓你覺得超出能力的新任務；或是感動你向一個陌生人傳福音。在這些時刻，神正在建立你的信心，邀請你信靠祂。因此，你要倚靠祂的力量，而不是自己的能力。因此，人生並不是一連串毫無意義的事件。耶穌掌管一切，就像祂引導門徒找到那匹驢駒一樣。祂把那些看起來不相關的事情連在一起，成就祂的旨意。在神的眼中，沒有「運氣」這回事。祂為你的益處計畫一切，並邀請你一步一步，以信心與順服與祂同行。

2. 行列 Procession

於是，兩個門徒照著耶穌的吩咐去預備。他們把驢駒牽來，並把自己的衣服搭在上面，大概是為耶穌做一個簡單的座位。接著，耶穌騎著驢駒進入耶路撒冷，就像君王進城的行列。畢竟，祂是以君王的身份來到世上的。但這個畫面卻有一些不尋常的地方。在古代，君王通常是帶領軍隊打仗的戰士。耶穌穿著普通的袍子，不是盔甲；祂並沒有帶刀劍；而且祂騎的不是駿馬，而是一匹小小的驢駒。當然這並不是偶然的。耶穌是在傳達一個信息：祂不是來打仗的王，而是和平的君王；祂不是威猛的將軍，而是謙卑的僕人。同時，祂這樣做也是在應驗預言。馬太福音 21:4-5 這樣說：4 這事成就是要應驗先知的話，說：5 「要對錫安的居民說：看哪，你的王來到你這裡，是溫柔的，又騎著驢，就是騎著驢駒子。」這段話出自撒迦利亞書 9:9。馬太是寫給猶太人的，因此他常常重複「這是要應驗先知所說的話」或類似的話，為的是幫助讀者明白：耶穌就是那位應許的彌賽亞，也就是救主。當時在場的許多猶太人，看見耶穌騎著驢駒，很可能就想起這段預言。難怪他們如此興奮。他們是從聖經的角度來觀察眼前所發生的事。這一點值得我們學習。聖經不是一本與我們生活無關重要的古老宗教書籍。它記錄了神在歷史中直到今天的作為。有些神學家形容我們現在處於「已經但尚未」的階段。耶穌已經藉著十字架完成了救恩，但祂尚未回來審判世界，並帶領信徒進入天堂。我們正活在一個中間的時期。沒有人知道世界何時並如何結束，但我們應該留意周圍正在發生的事情。生活有時

讓人感到壓力。物價上漲，經濟不穩定；也有天災和戰爭的消息。但我們的盼望不在於眼前的環境，而是在於主。我們相信祂按照自己的計畫掌管歷史。因此，我們不應該像不信的人一樣只專注於目前而感到灰心，而是要透過聖經來看這個世界。聖經提醒我們：隨著耶穌再來的日子臨近，世界會越來越黑暗，罪惡會增加；但同時，福音也會不斷被傳開。神所說的一切，若尚未成就，將來都必定會實現。神當然可以獨自完成祂的計畫，但祂往往選擇透過人的參與來成就祂的心意。也許你會覺得自己微不足道，在社會中沒有什麼重要的角色。但不要忘記這個故事裡的那匹小驢。牠不只是年幼、而且沒有接受過訓練，卻被主揀選並使用。同樣地，不論我們多麼平凡，神都能使用我們。就算是小孩子，或是剛信主不久的人，都可以被主使用。神看重的不是你做事的規模，而是你的心有多真誠。如果你有一份平凡的工作，就全心全意為主去做。如果你在教會服事，縱然是很小的事，也要喜樂去做——像是洗碗、吸地毯，這些工作都很重要。如果你負責招待或迎賓，請記得，你不只是代表教會。你是在代表神歡迎來聚會的人。鼓勵你給人一個最燦爛的笑容，最真誠的問候。在神的手中，就算是最小的角色，也有極大的意義。

3. 宣告 Profession

那一天，耶穌進入耶路撒冷。群眾大聲宣告他們想像中的耶穌。他們在第 9 和第 10 節歡呼說：9 ... 「和散那！奉主名來的是應當稱頌的！10 那將要來的我祖大衛之國是應當稱頌的！高高在上和散那！」「和散那」的本來意思是「求你拯救我們！」這句話出自詩篇 118 篇。在那首詩中，一位君王凱旋進入聖殿，百姓為他歡呼。因此，群眾並不是在求救，而是為慶祝呼喊。為什麼他們歡呼呢？因為他們相信耶穌是彌賽亞。但是只是按照他們的理解。他們看過耶穌行神跡，也聽過祂講論天國的道理，但他們並沒有真正明白祂是誰。他們沒有把耶穌看作神。我們從馬太福音 21:10-11 看到他們對耶穌的認識：10 耶穌既進了耶路撒冷，合城都驚動了，說：「這是誰？」11 眾人說：「這是加利利拿撒勒的先知耶穌。」對他們來說，耶穌是一位先知——是一個很偉大的人，但只是一個人。這種誤解，主要是因為他們的期望。當時他們受羅馬人的壓迫，生活艱難，所以他們盼望彌賽亞是一位軍事領袖，可以推翻羅馬，復興他們的國家。如今耶穌來了，他們就歡呼、慶祝，以為自己的問題終於得到解決了。但耶穌來，不是要達成他們的願望，而是要完成神的計畫。神差祂來，作真正的逾越節羔羊。當時人們正準備慶祝逾越節。在埃及時，一隻羔羊被獻上，使他們的祖先得以存活。但他們沒有意識到，那隻羔羊其實是預表耶穌。祂快要走上十字架，除去世人的罪。這並不是他們所期待的彌賽亞。因此，他們的興奮很快變成失望。幾天之後，他們受到宗教領袖的煽動。他們在星期日呼喊：「榮耀歸給祂！」同一週的星期五，他們卻呼喊：「把祂釘十字架！」這是多麼戲劇性的轉變！今天當我們回頭看，就能看到更完整的畫面。我們知道，這一切都是神的計畫。祂把一場悲劇轉變成最偉大的勝利。因為如果耶穌沒有為我們而死，我們仍然活在罪中。因此，我們應該向祂獻上感恩。那麼，我們可以從群眾身上學

到什麼呢？第一，不要把耶穌塑造成你心中想要的神。你當然可以把你的需要帶到主面前，無論是健康問題、工作、移民申請，或各樣的困難。但不要只在遇到困難時才來找祂。耶穌不是神燈裡的精靈，也不是你的私人助理。祂從來不聽我們的指揮。相反地，我們應當順服祂的命令。當主回應我們的禱告時，那是祂計畫的一部分。祂呼召我們在順境與逆境中，都一直信靠祂。第二，群眾也提醒我們關於敬拜的態度。我們要用神配得的方式來敬拜祂，而不是照著自己的喜歡的方式來敬拜祂。有時候，我們唱的詩歌可能不是你最喜歡的；講道也可能讓你覺得有點沉悶。但敬拜的中心不是我們，而是神。我們來這裡，不是要滿足家人的要求，也不是為了避免牧師因你缺席而來煩你。我們是來尊崇神。正如詩人所說，我們要以稱謝進入祂的門，以讚美進入祂的院。你的心態很重要，你的歌聲很重要，你發自內心的「阿們」也很重要，甚至能感染別人。至於那些參與服事的人，要把最好的獻給主。好好練習，認真預備，喜樂服事。因為神配得一切最好的。我們所做的所有事情——我們的言語、行為、敬拜——都是在宣告一件事：耶穌是主。

結論 CONCLUSION

這就是聖經中關於棕櫚主日的記載。它提醒我們不應該把耶穌塑造成我們心中想要的神，乃是要接納祂真正的身份。我們分析了不同的人物。那麼，你認為自己比較像誰呢？也許你像那兩個門徒。他們忠心順服耶穌的吩咐，去找那匹驢駒。雖然他們並不知道會發生什麼事，但他們仍然遵從主的指示。有時候，神也會呼召你去做一些新的事情。也許祂呼召你參與一個新的事工，或是要你向一位從來不知道你是基督徒的朋友分享福音。你願意聽從主的吩咐嗎？或者，你覺得自己像那匹驢？牠默默地服事耶穌。人們的歡呼不是給牠的，而是給坐在牠背上的那一位。有時候，你在教會的服事中盡了全力，卻似乎沒有人注意，也沒有給你肯定或感謝。不要灰心。如果你是為主而做的，祂必然看見，祂也會記念你的忠心擺上。又或者，你覺得自己像群眾中的一員。你只是隨著大家走。朋友告訴你教會很好，裡面的人也很友善，所以你就來了。大家唱歌，你也跟著唱；別人禱告，你也閉上眼睛。但對你來說，聖經可能仍然像陌生的外語。如果這是你的情況，鼓勵你保持一顆開放的心靈，花時間去認識這位耶穌到底是誰。在進入耶路撒冷五天之後，耶穌走上十字架，為世人的罪而死，也包括你的罪。如果你願意承認自己的罪，並憑信心接受耶穌，祂就成為你的救主和你生命的主。耶穌在第一個棕櫚主日進入聖城。如果你願意邀請祂，祂也會進入你的生命。