

# I'm A Donkey

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*Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey. —Mt 21:5*

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Today is Palm Sunday, where we celebrate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, where he was greeted with joyful shouts of Hosanna, and palms and clothes were laid before him like a red carpet. Though it would not last long, as we know from the final events of Holy Week, on this day, Palm Sunday, Jesus and his Apostles received a royal reception. It must have felt good to them, that all their work on all those sleepless nights, preaching, teaching and healing those throngs of suffering and needy people, had finally paid off. Who doesn't need to be appreciated for their work?

In fact, I think we could go so far as to say that we all regularly fantasize of receiving such royal receptions, with praise, and gratitude for all we do-be it at work, at home or at church. We say to ourselves; "If only people at work realized my contribution, they would greet my efforts with due respect and demonstrations of gratitude." "If only when I came home from a long day of work, my family greeted me with shouts of joy, thanking me for my hard work, bringing me the mail and my slippers." "If only this church saw all I have done for it behind the scenes, my name would be posted everywhere and I would be greeted with due deference and respect, like Jesus was." Well we know how Jesus was treated, and we also that Jesus saw this fickle praise for what it was, the devil whispering in His ear.

So when the devil whispers in our ear, and our egos get caught up in self-fancy and ambitions, the question of a certain pastor in his Palm Sunday sermon can cut us back down to size. This pastor asked his congregation: "What if the donkey on which Jesus was riding had thought all the cheering was for him? What if that small animal had believed that the hosannas and the branches were in his honor?" That is a funny, but challenging question. That is a question that we could ask of ourselves at work, at home and at church. Maybe I am not deserving of special applause at work, after all I am a part of a greater team, they deserve the applause. Maybe I am not deserving of special applause at home, after all my spouse works just as hard as me, he or she deserves more applause. Maybe I am not deserving of special praise in church, many have worked as hard before me, and nothing I've done amounts to a hill of beans without God's blessing.

This minister then pointed to himself and said: "I'm a donkey. The longer I'm here the more you'll come to realize that. I am only a Christ-bearer and not the object of praise." "I'm a donkey." (Wow, I think this is the most people who have ever listened to a sermon). I think most of you realized that I am a donkey rather early on, and I have come to realize that, Biblically speaking, you are to be the same. The hard part though is not seeing others as donkeys- as carrying something greater than them-the hard part is seeing yourself as one.

Because after working so hard and carrying such heaven burdens at work, at home and at church-the truly hard part is remembering that it is not about you and me. That the recognition, the applause, the praise is not for you, it is for the treasure you are carrying, be that the good of the team, the health of the family, the sanctity of God's church. And despite our best intentions, such humility is impossible for anyone to get on their own. But what is impossible for us, is possible with God, or to be very precise, it is possible under God.

On this Palm Sunday, let us remember who we are in relation to God. We are like donkeys bearing the Son of God, bringing him into the places- at work, at home, at church-where Jesus can transform us and all who see Him, into humble servants, showing great love. My prayer on this Palm Sunday, through Holy Week and throughout this year, is that we remember how small we are compared to the great treasure we carry. That, instead of wondering what people think of us, our concern might be, "Can they see Christ Jesus, the King?" That, rather than seeking credit for service rendered, we would be content to lift up the Lord. That, in place of seeking our own praise, we would be content to offer Him fitting praise, together with the Father and Holy Spirit, now and always; amen.