

# One Week to Go...

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well if we could this morning with the Lord's help and the Lord's guidance if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read the gospel according to Mark and chapter 11 page 1021 in the pew bible Mark chapter 11 and if we read again at verse 7 and they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it and he sat on it and many spread their cloaks on the road and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields and those who went before and those who followed were shouting Hosanna blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David Hosanna in the highest and so on when the weekend passes so quickly and Monday comes round again do you not often find yourself thinking there's not much in a week time seems to be passing so quickly I mean that's the summer holidays nearly over and the children they're all going back to school this week those six or seven weeks which everyone was looking forward to they have now passed in a flash and now it's back to reality it's back to the routine but it seems to be passing us so quickly once one week seems to merge into another week where the weekend comes and then before you know it it's Monday again and for many people Monday means back to work back to the office back to the work site and for the teachers tomorrow it's back to school and I don't mean to depress you at the thought of it but do you ever stop and wonder what that week will hold for you I'm sure that we all make plans for our week we plan ahead we plan our day we plan we plan our weeks ahead nothing wrong with that unless we're doing it from the pew but as you know there are many things which we don't plan for there are many things which we can't plan for and you know I often think on the evening of a lord's day

I often think what will this week hold for us what will happen this week in our lives even the question I ask myself well who will be in eternity next why next Sunday and you might think well that's an imaginative thought but that's reality because we often say that we don't know what a day nor an hour will bring in our life and because we don't know what's in the week ahead it's always good to begin our week in the lord's house it's always good for us to begin a new week worshipping the lord and committing this week ahead into his hands because what better hands to put our lives into than the hands of the god who knows us and he knows what's ahead of us in this week we don't know what's around the corner for us there are many things that we we don't put into our diary but it's these things which often remind us that our days are numbered and these days which we have been given they're short and the bible urges us it urges us time and again to number our days that we might apply our hearts to wisdom that we may consider the week ahead and commit everything to the lord in prayer because there's not much in a week and as many of you know a lot can change in our homes and in our lives and in our families from one sunday to the next but that's not only true in our experience it was also true in the experience of jesus because when we come to this chapter in mark 11 it's a sunday afternoon it's the sunday which our calendar refers to us palm sunday and it's the beginning of what we now call passion week and it was an important week because it was the final week in jesus's life and ministry and from one sunday to the next everything would change not only in the experience of jesus but also in the experience of the entire world because the events of this one week would bring salvation to a fallen world and when we consider mark's gospel as a as a whole we realize the importance of this one week because mark and all the other gospel writers they all do the same but mark he has brought us through three years of jesus's life and ministry in only 10 chapters and for mark in those 10 chapters everything happens immediately his favorite word which he keeps using is immediately immediately jesus does this and then immediately jesus does that and immediately jesus goes here and he's been running through these three years of jesus's ministry in 10 chapters but then for the his final six chapters mark slows everything right down almost to give us a day by day and an hour by hour account of what happened in this final week where on sunday afternoon jesus he enters into jerusalem riding on a

donkey's colt on monday jesus is teaching in jerusalem and facing opposition by wednesday judas is planning to betray jesus on thursday night judas betrays jesus and all the other disciples desert him in the early hours of friday morning peter denies jesus and jesus is brought before pilate and mocked and beaten at nine o'clock friday morning jesus is crucified between two criminals by 12 o'clock on that friday the world is in darkness the world is in darkness then three o'clock that day jesus dies later that evening on friday jesus is buried in a borrowed grave and he's he has a funeral with only two people present on saturday it's the jewish sabbath the day of rest and then the following sunday morning there are women standing at an empty tomb with an angel declaring to them he is not here for he is risen we don't know what will happen from one sunday to the next but jesus certainly knew what would happen to him because he says as it is in the previous chapter the son of man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many and so as we resume our study of mark's gospel we come to the first day of jesus's last days and i want i want us to see that there are three lessons we can learn from what took place on this sunday afternoon as jesus rode into jerusalem on a donkey and i want to say that we can learn lessons from the command which jesus gave the colt which jesus rode on and the crowd which followed jesus the command the colt and the crowd the command the colt and the crowd so if we look firstly at the command look again with me at verse 1 and 2 in chapter 11 now when they drew near to jerusalem to bethphage and bethany at the mount of olives jesus sent two of his disciples and said to them go into the village in front of you and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied on which no one has ever has ever sat untie it and bring it and so the opening verse of this chapter verse 1 in that verse mark literally he sets the scene for us he tells us where jesus and his disciples are in relation to jerusalem in the previous section which we read earlier mark told us that jesus was passing through jericho which was about 20 miles from jerusalem and now in chapter 11 we read that jesus and his disciples were drawing nearer to jerusalem and they're passing through places called bethphage and bethany which are only a couple of miles outside the city and when we know that the overarching reason as to why jesus was going to jerusalem was to die we know that's why he was going there but that wasn't the reason why everyone else was traveling to jerusalem the reason everyone else in the land of israel was traveling to jerusalem was because it was the festival of passover and during that week-long festival of passover the pilgrims would come from all over the nation of israel and they would ascend towards jerusalem because jerusalem was situated on a mountain they would ascend towards jerusalem and that's what we were singing about in psalm 122 because psalm 122 is one of those songs of ascents it's an ascending song a song of of the goings up and it's part of a group of psalms which were sung by all these pilgrims who ascended towards jerusalem for the festival of passover they would gather together in all their families with all their their friends and all their neighbors and they would all come together and congregate together and they would set off on their journey towards jerusalem in this great great throng of people but it's interesting that just before these pilgrims would set off on their journey from all their their homes throughout the land of israel someone would shout from within their traveling group let us go up let us go up and there would be a response that comes from all the pilgrims who are traveling and they would all say together we will go up we will go up and that's the experience which is portrayed to us in psalm 122 where the psalmist is saying i joyed went to the house of god go up they said to me jerusalem within thy gates our feet shall standing be that was the the joy of of the pilgrims going to jerusalem for the festivals but with jerusalem now in the distance and jesus and his disciples all traveling with these large crowds of people around them jesus takes the opportunity to command two of his disciples to do something for him and we have to notice that jesus his request is very specific and that's what we ought to notice from the narrative because mark is vague about the identity of the village to which the disciples are commanded to go just the village over there he says and he's equally vague about the identity of the disciples it's just two disciples who were commanded to carry out the request of jesus but what isn't vague is where the disciples would find the colt and who would speak to the disciples and what the disciples were to say because we're told in verse 2 it's said he said to them go into the village in front of you and immediately as you enter it you'll find a colt tied on which no one has ever sat untie it and bring it if anyone says to you why are you doing this say the lord has need of it and we'll send it back here immediately and what we see here is that jesus gives a very specific command but what's unclear is how jesus knew about the colt well of course we can conclude that jesus knew everything he is both god and man he knows everything he knows every situation he knows our situation he knows our heart today but it's

interesting one commentator made the point that jesus's knowledge of the cult and its location and its owner it indicates that jesus saw it beforehand that's what he says jesus saw it beforehand i'm thinking about it whether jesus had passed through this village beforehand and was acquainted with the owners of this cult we're not sure but what we do know is that jesus saw everything beforehand and i want to labor that point because i think it's marvelous just what that commentator said because the lesson which the disciples of jesus were going to learn and a lesson which we all need to learn is the lesson to trust the lord of providence trust the lord of providence because the word providence means seen beforehand and so the chosen disciples who had been issued the command to go they had to go by faith trusting in the lord who had seen it all beforehand they had to trust the word of the lord and go in the assurance that he is the lord of providence and my friend i want to say to you today that that that that it's it's good to read the bible because there is no better book in all the world to read that will speak into your situation and give you help and strength and peace and comfort when you need it most but there's also another book which you must read alongside the bible and that's the book of providence because when we read the book of providence and we consider our own lives we are enabled to see that nothing happens by chance there are no chance meetings in our lives there are no random events nothing takes place by accident but it's all ordered and governed and commanded by the lord of providence the lord who has seen it all take place beforehand and maybe for you your particular book of providence it's been a hard read and it may be difficult for you to turn the pages because you just don't know what's coming next and maybe you're afraid about what's coming next you've experienced so much already in your life and you just don't know what's around the corner you don't know what's written in your story your story of providence yet at the same time is it not true that the greatest comfort and the greatest assurance to you is that the lord of providence knows he knows what you're going through today and he knows what this week ahead holds for you he knows what's in your cup he knows what's in your experience he knows what you need because he knows you knows you personally was that not the experience of job and was that not what job confessed when he experienced the darkness the darkness in his life he had lost everything his family and his wealth and all his livestock he lost everything and yet he could say he knows the way that i take and when he has tried me i shall come forth as gold my friend jesus is the lord of providence he has seen what will take place beforehand but like these two disciples we must trust the lord of providence we must trust his command to go and step out in faith we must act upon his command to go in his name we must be obedient to his command to go and do what he's asking us to do and you know i look at some of you here and i'm convinced that you know what you have to do in order to become a christian i'm convinced of it but the issue is commitment because you need to act upon what you know you need to commit yourself to what jesus is telling you just like these disciples did they did as jesus said because it's no use hearing the command to go and doing nothing they had to act they had to respond to the command they had to go in faith and it's the same with you my friend you need to do what jesus is commanding you you need to trust in the lord of providence because when you do you're in safe hands you know who you are and i long for the day that will be said of you that was what was said of these disciples in verse six they did as jesus said they did as jesus commanded they just stepped out in faith and did what he was asking and so the first lesson we learn is from the command of jesus trust the lord of providence but the second lesson we learn is from the colt the colt look at verse four they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street and they untied it and some of those standing there said to them what are you doing untying the colt and they told them that what jesus had said and they let them go and they brought the colt to jesus and threw their cloaks on it [18:57] and he sat on it of all the commands which jesus could give to his disciples the request for this colt was probably not the first thing that they would have thought of and yet the disciples they didn't ask why they didn't question jesus as to his request nor did they refuse to obey him they just followed orders and did as they were commanded to do they were obedient to their master but the first lesson lesson we learn from the colt is that more often than not we are like the colt rather than the disciples because because as you know a disciple is someone who is learning and someone who is willing to learn but a colt was a young male donkey which had not yet been ridden and that's what we're told in the passage but we're also told that the colt was tied which is a very significant indicator that the the colt wasn't tame it had never been ridden and it had never been trained to work the colt was wild stubborn and unwilling to listen and more often than not we are like the colt rather than the disciples we don't want to do what jesus commands us but we want to do

our own thing and we want to go our own way and we want to live as we please and you know that's what the psalmist was referring to in psalm 32 which we were also seeing earlier on because the psalmist he became a christian and when he became a christian he he experienced the blessedness of having his sins forgiven and his heart changed and when he became a christian the lord promised to him as we sang in verse 8 i will instruct thee and thee teach the way that thou shalt go and with mine eye upon thee set i will direction show but then the lord went on to say to the psalmist then be not like the horse or mule which do not understand whose mouth lest they come near to thee a bridle must command and the lord was saying to the psalmist don't be stubborn don't go your own way don't do your own thing and so the lesson is don't be a cold be a disciple be willing to learn and obey rather than be headstrong and determined but as we see here in this passage jesus is able to tame even the wildest of animals he's able to loose them from their ignorance and stubbornness and bring them to himself and the same is true when jesus calls a sinner to himself by grace he's able to tame the wildest and the most headstrong and the most stubborn and determined of people and if that was true of any man it was true of the well-known preacher john newton he was the 18th century african slave trader who spent his life abusing people and drinking excessively and gambling incessantly and sleeping around persistently and yet he became a famous preacher of god's amazing grace and of course john newton he's remembered for that his amazing grace but in one of his letters john newton wrote of the occasion when a circus lion came to his parish the parish of olney and he wrote he wrote this letter he said he was wonderfully tame as familiar with his keeper

as docile and obedient as a spaniel then newton went on to say i could trace every feature of myself in the lion as wild and fierce by nature but grace has tamed me grace has tamed me and that meeting with the tame circus lion when he saw him it was the inspiration for newton writing a poem called taming the lion and in one of the stanzas of his poem it's written in the intimations newton is emphasizing the power of jesus in taming the wildest of people because he writes there the love thy bleeding cross displays the hardest heart subdues hear furious lions while they gaze their rage and fierceness lose my friend john newton knew the fierceness of his own heart but through the cross he came to discover the taming power of god's amazing grace and so the lesson is don't be a cult be a disciple don't be stubborn don't go your own way don't continue to do your own thing submit yourself to the lord and be willing to learn from him and obey his commands because there's no other like this jesus he is king jesus and that's the other lesson i'd like to draw it from this cult because on this occasion when jesus he's entering into jerusalem he doesn't arrive in the finery of royalty he doesn't appear in pomp and ceremony he doesn't come sitting on a royal chariot with all the horses out front and the soldiers and the entourage around him instead we're told that jesus arrived on a borrowed colt sitting upon the garments of his disciples for a saddle and you know this act of jesus it was in keeping with the tone of his ministry because even as the king of glory jesus he never had any riches in the world foxes had holes birds of the air had nests to rest in but the son of man he had nowhere to lay his head and when jesus we've seen it before when he crossed the sea of galilee it was in a borrowed boat when he rode into jerusalem it was on a borrowed beast and when he was buried it was in a borrowed grave and it was jc ryle who says says in his commentary and you know how much i love him he said we have in this simple fact an instance of that marvelous union between weakness and power riches and poverty the godhead and manhood and ryle says that when we read the gospels carefully we cannot fail to observe that this king really was both god and man because he's able to feed thousands he says with only a few loaves yet he himself experienced hunger he could heal the sick and infirm yet he himself was weary he could cast out devils with a word yet he himself was tempted he could raise the dead but he himself was subjected to death in this king says ryle we see divine strength and human weakness united in one person we cannot explain the mystery but we can take comfort from the fact that this jesus is our savior a savior who is able to sympathize with all our weaknesses because he is man but he's also mighty to save because he is god my friend this jesus is like no other and he entered into the city of jerusalem on that sunday afternoon for one purpose to seek and to save the lost therefore the question for you is do you see that jesus is king and that he needs to be king over your life do you see jesus as king and do you see him as your king because that's the lesson which the crowds learned as they traveled with jesus that's what i'd like us to consider lastly the first lesson on the sunday afternoon was the command from jesus the command to trust the lord of providence the second lesson from the cult don't be a cult be a disciple because the cult was tamed

by king jesus and the cult revealed the true humility of jesus but the third lesson we learn from this situation is from the crowd the crowd look at verse 8 and many spread their cloaks on the road and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields and those who went before and those who followed were shouting hosanna blessed is he who comes in the name of the lord blessed is the coming kingdom of our father and so as jesus rode into jerusalem on this this cult who had been tamed and he's he's in amongst the throng of all these traveling pilgrims who are going to the festival of passover they recognize that jesus is a king therefore the reason why jesus commanded the cult to be brought to him was not only to display his humility it was to display his royalty because the presence of a cult was to leave in the minds of all these traveling jews that there was absolutely no doubt that jesus was the messiah because in the act of riding into jerusalem on a cult jesus was directly fulfilling the words of the prophet zechariah because in zechariah chapter 9 the jews are told rejoice oh greatly oh daughter of zion shout oh daughter of jerusalem see your king comes to you righteous and having salvation gently and riding on a donkey on a colt the foal of a donkey and these crowds they recognize who jesus is they recognize jesus as a king and out of respect and honor towards their king they begin to lay their garments and palm trees on the road towards jerusalem and they begin to do as zechariah prophesied they would do they begin to sing and rejoice at the arrival of their king and we're told that some went ahead of jesus and some went some followed behind him and they were all shouting hosanna blessed is he who comes in the name of the lord blessed is the coming kingdom of our father david hosanna in the highest and the words of these traveling pilgrims that they were singing as we said earlier they're the words of psalm 118 and psalm 118 it's one of the the great hallel psalms that were always sung at the end of the festival of passover and psalm 118 just like we were singing earlier it's a it's a hymn of thanksgiving in which it praises the lord it gives its hallelujah for the provision of god's salvation and it begins and ends

with this glorious doxology oh give thanks to the lord for he is good for his steadfast love endures forever and that's what these pilgrims are singing about they're singing about the arrival of god's salvation in the person of jesus christ and by discovering the identity of jesus they're acknowledging that he is the king of kings and he is the lord of lords he is the one who will sit upon the throne of his father david and as jesus enters jerusalem they're all singing this is the doing of the lord and wondrous in our eyes this is the day that the lord has made let us rejoice and be glad in it hosanna which means savior blessed is he who comes in the name of the lord blessed is the coming kingdom of our father david hosanna savior in the highest oh give thanks to the lord they're saying for he is good for his steadfast love endures forever but you know this king riding on a donkey he wasn't the king which the disciples or the throng of people had ever anticipated because as a descendant of king david they all thought that the messiah was going to be the conquering king they expected a warrior just like king david was they thought that the messiah was going to be a savior who would overthrow the oppression of the romans and take control of of israel again they thought that jesus was going to be this earthly king with an earthly kingdom and have political power they thought that jesus was going to take control because in their minds he fitted the description of all the old testament prophets that the messiah would be this descendant of david and the messiah would be the king of israel who would sit upon the throne of david in the city of david which was the city of jerusalem they expected a king a king who would come and fight but instead they had before them the prince of peace because when a king rode in the back of a horse it symbolized war but when a king rode in the back of a donkey it symbolized peace and you know i find it interesting that the prince of peace is riding towards the city of jerusalem the name jerusalem means city of peace and the prince of peace is coming into the city of peace to bring peace and reconciliation between god and man that's what jesus said himself i came to bring peace not a sword but the lesson which we learn from the crowd is not only that they recognized and acknowledged that jesus is king that he is the king of kings and the lord of lords he's the promised messiah he is the savior of his people but what's really startling about the way in which mark writes his gospel is that the crowds didn't actually do anything with their knowledge of jesus because they could recognize who jesus is from scripture they could see he is the promised messiah they sang about the fact that he is the savior they acknowledged that he is the king in the kingdom of god and yet they don't do anything about it they don't do anything with all their knowledge because we're told in verse 11 and he entered jerusalem and went into the temple and when he had looked around at everything as it was already late he went out to bethany

with the twelve and when you read verse 11 it's almost like this massive anti-climax after all the praising and rejoicing that we've just read in verses 9 and 10 it's like this anti-climax and you're asking well what's happened here and one commentator he highlights why mark does this he says this passage as you can see in the title of the passage it's traditionally called the triumphal entry which is certainly an appropriate designation for what matthew and luke write but not so for mark matthew says that the whole city was stirred by the commotion and asked who is this luke reports that the city was so electrified that the stones were ready to cry out but mark's account is noteworthy for what does not happen the whole scene comes to nothing the crowd disperses as mysteriously as it assembled but the reason mark does this he says is because he is warning us against the mistake of confusing enthusiasm for faith and popularity for discipleship in other words he's saying it's not enough just to know that jesus is the king it's not enough to acknowledge that jesus was the messiah it's not enough to sing about the savior you have to do something about it you have to give up your old ways and your old lifestyle you have to commit your life to following jesus you have to confess that he alone is the king upon the throne of your heart but they didn't do that they didn't do that and riding into jerusalem on an untamed colt was probably the most obvious sign that jesus could have given to them as to who he is and yet they stubbornly refuse to acknowledge jesus they willfully refused to confess him as their lord and savior and this is the reason why jesus goes in as we'll see next week he goes in to the temple and pronounces judgment upon the city because he came to his own people and his own people did not receive him he came to those who knew him those who recognized him those who saw who he is those who knew who he was those who acknowledged him those who sang to him those who sang about him but they did not receive him and my friend the frightening thing about this crowd is that they sang hosanna on sunday and they were crying crucify him crucify him by friday and what mark wants to give to us as we look at this sunday afternoon is that it's no use singing hosanna on sunday if we're going to be crying crucify him on friday it's no use acknowledging that jesus is king on sunday and not acknowledging him the rest of the week it's no use sitting on church on a sunday morning and doing nothing with what you've heard on monday morning it's no use enjoying the presence of jesus and being under the glorious gospel and being confronted with the realities of eternity on a sunday afternoon and by friday by friday afternoon all you're interested in is enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season it's no use praising jesus

[ 39 : 13 ] for his wonderful salvation on sunday and putting off following him until the following sunday my friend it's no use living your life going from week to week acknowledging that jesus is this great saviour but he's not your saviour it's no use leaving him in church leaving him in the pew from monday to saturday it's no use you need to choose which you prefer do you want to be with jesus or without him you need to choose who you'll serve this king or yourself you need to choose what matters to you most jesus as your saviour or the world and all its pleasure you have to decide you have to decide and you have to decide before it's too late before it's too late because who knows who knows who knows what this week ahead will hold for you who knows what will happen between this sunday afternoon and next sunday afternoon who knows i just hope and pray that we'll all learn the lessons from this passage that we'll follow the command to trust the lord of providence that we will be like the cult who was tamed by king jesus and that we will not be like this crowd who acknowledged who jesus was but did nothing with it my friend let's see to it that if the lord spares us to come here next lord's day that we will sing from the depths of our heart hosanna blessed is he who comes in the name of the lord may the lord bless these thoughts to us let us pray oh lord our gracious god we thank and praise thee today for that great salvation which we have and help us we pray thee oh not to leave it here but to take it with us in our heart to cherish it as the treasure laid up for us in heaven that we would know that our heart is with jesus and that jesus is in our heart oh bless us lord we pray thee apply thy word by thy spirit that it would be the arrow from the king to pierce our hearts to bring us into subjection to cause us to fall on our knees and cry as the one of old lord what must i do to be saved do us good lord we plead keep us in the week that lies ahead that thou lord wouldst undertake for us in all things that we would cast every care into thine hand for thou art the god who promises to take care of us do us good then we pray and go before us for jesus sake amen we shall conclude by singing in psalm 24 psalm 24 psalm 24 that's in the scottish psalter singing from verse 7 down to the end of the psalm and this psalm well these verses in particular they portray to us

the arrival of a king coming into a city his own city or his own kingdom his palace and when you sing it you can hear the one leading calling to the one on the gate ye gates lift up your heads on high ye doors that last foray be lifted up that so the king of glory enter me and the one on the gate is speaking back saying but who of glory is the king and he says the mighty lord is this in that same lord that great and might and strong in battle is and then he speaks again ye gates lift up your heads ye doors doors that do last foray be lifted up that so the king of glory enter me and the voice again but who is he that is the king of glory who is this and he says the lord of hosts are none but he the king of glory is it's a beautiful psalm psalm 24 to god's praise ye gates lift up your heads on high ye doors that last foray be lifted up that so the king of glory enter me but to all glory is the king the mighty lord is this in that same lord that great and might and strong in battle is ye gates lift up your head ye doors doors that do that fall of glory be lifted up that so the king of glory enter me but who is he that is the king of glory who is this the lord of hosts and none but he the king of glory is the grace of our lord jesus christ the love of god the father and the fellowship of the holy spirit be with you all now and forevermore amen