“Just Wanted to Ride the Donkey”

March 25, 2018

Mark 11:1-11, Mark 15:1-47

There is one miracle of Jesus that no one talks about. That he has 12 friends while he is in his early thirties. That is a true miracle. Starting around age twenty-five, research shows that we being to lose more friends than we make. Once you hit 30, we add some casual friends, but adding close friends is a challenge. There likely won’t be any more best friends. William Rawlins a professor at Ohio State says: “There is a certain kind of poignancy in young adulthood, when we’ve come to develop a mature regard for friends at the very same time that somehow they’ve started to slip away. It seems out of control.” We long for the days of college when making friends was so easy. Some were lucky enough to be paired with a random roommate that they were best friends with right away. That didn’t work with me, me and my roommate only lasted till Christmas. But I am still good friends with many of the guys who were on my floor. And also with many of the guys on the football team and from my fraternity. After college I decided to go to seminary in Minneapolis to stay close to my college friends. We hung out all the time. But I always had this love-hate relationship with the Twin Cities. It never felt like home and I wanted to live in a smaller town. I also knew that with this call to ministry I would be traveling around. A lull that hits around thirty stands in stark contrast to the friendmaking we do in our 20s in part because of it. Rawlins continues, “The irony is at the end of this period and as a result of the decisions that our friends have helped us make, there is a lot less time for friends.” When I got to Greensboro, I tried to make friends, but it was hard because I was only going to be there for 2 years. I am also in the position of pastor, so whatever church members I want to be friends with, I have to be cautious. I ultimately have to be your pastor first. Ultimately we idolize our childhood and early adulthood friends. They are associated with special times in our lives. And it is hard work to try and stay in touch with our long distance friends. We’re busy. I am the first one in my friends group with kids, so they just don’t get it yet. Sure I have a nice group that I meet with every week with Bill and Jay. But they are older than me and it is not quite the same. I am sure that many of you have felt this phenomenon. It is strange. So that is why I am so excited to see a bunch of my friends in a couple weeks when we head down to Charleston, SC.

Miraculously, Jesus was able to summon his own friends and followers. All he had to say was follow me and I will make you fishers of men. I wish it was that easy here in Logan. I could find someone on the street about my age and say “Follow me, and let’s get a beer and be friends.” He would probably run for the hills. With his group of twelve friends Jesus was approaching Jerusalem. This group had been traveling with Jesus for 3 years. They were probably terrified because they knew what was going to happen to their friend and teacher. “For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many.” They were near the Mount of Olives and he sent two of his disciples ahead. “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, why are you doing this? Just say this, The Lord needs it and will send It back immediately.” How does Jesus know where this colt is going to be? Good question. It is significant to note that the majority of this passage deals with the arrangements for the entry to Jerusalem and not the parade entry itself. He arranged for the colt and provided answers for the questions that the disciples would get when retrieving the animal. He knows exactly what he is doing. He is arranging a piece of street theater.

The disciples found the colt right where Jesus said it would be, next to a door. What the heck are you guys doing? That is what the bystanders imply. The disciples replied exactly as Jesus told them to. They brought the colt to Jesus