

Following the Saviour King

1. Intro

- Continuing our series > Road of Discipleship
- Jesus heading south to Jerusalem
- Along the way teaching his disciples
 - What it means for him to be the Christ
 - What it means for them to be disciples of the Christ
- In effect he is discipling his disciples

2. The blind man sees and follows (10:46-52)

- Jesus and the disciples are now down in Jericho > about 30km north east of Jerusalem
- A large crowd also following Jesus as they make their way to Jerusalem for the Passover festival
- As they leave Jericho they pass by a blind man called Bartimaeus > begging by side of road
- He no doubt hears from the crowd that Jesus is coming along the road
 - Obviously heard about Jesus before
 - Heard that he can heal the sick and give sight to the blind
 - Heard or worked out that Jesus is the Christ ...
 - So he shouts out
 - "Jesus Son of David, have mercy on me"
- This the first time anyone has referred to Jesus as the Son of David
 - We know he was born of Mary and Joseph ... so why refer to him as the Son of David
- It's significance goes back to the promises God made to King David 1000yrs before Jesus – you can read about them in 2 Sam 7
- What God promised was that one of his descendants would
 - be the king of God's kingdom
 - that he would be God's son and
 - that he would rule over this kingdom for eternity / forever
- So in the years after King David, the Jews anticipated that this promise would be fulfilled by the Christ who would restore God's kingdom and be the king of God's kingdom
- Blind Bartimeaus is declaring Jesus is that promised son of David

- Jesus is the king of God's kingdom who reign forever
- Clearly Bart knew his OT
 - The prophets prophesied that when the Christ came then the ...
 - *the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy.*¹
 - He knew that as the promised Christ, Jesus could heal him of his blindness
- When Bart hears Jesus is coming he calls out to him for mercy
 - He was rebuked by the crowd > shouted all the more
- In v49 Jesus has compassion on Bartimaeus and calls him over
 - Bartimaeus throws off his cloak > jumps to his feet > comes to Jesus
 - To throw off his cloak is a bold move for a beggar like Bartimaeus
 - it's the thing that keeps him warm
 - it was the instrument of his income > normally spread out on the ground in front of him to receive the donations of the pilgrims
 - Bit like a busker at Circular Quay throwing his guitar case or hat full of money into the harbour
 - It shows a willingness to put aside his worldly possessions in order to come to Jesus
 - And it stands in complete contrast to the rich man who was unwilling to part with his wealth to follow Jesus
- In v51 Jesus asks "What do you want me to do for you"
 - Notice this is the **exact** same question Jesus asked James and John in v36
 - Again the contrast couldn't be greater
 - Disciples want glory and power > sit at left and right of Jesus in his glory
 - Bartimaeus wants to see
 - They wanted glory >
 - Bartimaeus comes to Jesus child-like
 - humble > dependent > knowing he needs mercy > knowing he can't do anything himself to be saved

¹ Is 35:5

- Seeing the man's faith ... Jesus heals him
 - Jesus literally says ... your faith has saved you
 - Not that faith itself is what saves ...
 - It's what Bartimaeus has faith **IN** that matters > Jesus!
 - It's the object of our faith that saves ... not faith itself
 - And Bartimaeus has faith in Jesus

- And we're told immediately, Bartimaeus followed Jesus on the road ... which is of course is the road that is leading to Jesus suffering and death

- **Implication**
- It's no accident that just before Jesus gets to Jerusalem where Jesus is going to fulfill his mission at the cross that he has this encounter with Bartimaeus
 - Remember all along, Jesus has been teaching his disciples
 - what it means for him to be the Christ – he must suffer and die
 - what it means to be a disciple of the Christ – deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Jesus
 - All along the road to Jerusalem, the disciples haven't been seeing clearly
 - Haven't seen that Jesus has to die > they think when he gets to Jerusalem he's going to be enthroned and glorified as the King
 - Haven't seen what discipleship is all about > they think it's all about glory and power and greatness

- Now ... we get to Jerusalem ... and finally we meet someone who
 - Even though he is blind
 - Even though he is a beggar and one of the least in the eyes of the world
 - He shows what it means to be a disciple of Jesus
 - Bartimaeus is a model of what's expected of Jesus disciples

- Here's what Bartimaeus does
 - Sees Jesus for who he truly is ... the Christ > the King of God's kingdom
 - Cries out to Jesus for mercy
 - Hears Jesus call to come to him
 - He has faith that Jesus can save him
 - Throws away his attachment to worldly possessions
 - Follows Jesus

- He does exactly what Jesus said right back in 8:34 his disciples must do
 - *Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me*

- **Application**

- Here Mark is showing us what is required to be a disciple of Jesus
 - acknowledge Jesus as the Christ .. the promised king of God's kingdom
 - call upon him for mercy
 - come to him in faith
 - follow him

- **Illustration – Brian and Mark**

- Let me tell you about two brothers I know who did just this
- They weren't blind men, but they were lawyers [I'm sure there's a joke in there somewhere!]
 - Law students, top of class at Law school
 - At university they heard the gospel – that Jesus is Lord & Saviour and he died for their sin
 - They received God's mercy & grace
 - And they followed him
 - And in following Jesus they genuinely did deny themselves
 - So despite being senior associates at a top law firm and on the way to partnership and big salaries
 - They turned their back on a career and lifestyle that would have been very comfortable so they could best serve Jesus
 - One of them went to Bible college and is a full time minister
 - The other is the administrator of his church
- There's discipleship in action
 - Not that everyone has to go into ministry to be a disciple
 - But they put their ambitions second so they could best serve and follow Jesus

- **Application**

- There may be some of you here today who have not yet acknowledged Jesus as the Christ ... as the king of God's kingdom
 - Friends, let me encourage you ... ask Jesus to help you see him for who he truly is
 - Blind Bartimaeus knew it
 - My two lawyer friends understood it
 - Millions and millions of people throughout history have believed it
 - What's stopping you from acknowledging Jesus and following him?
- Friends, know today that Jesus mercy is on offer

- He went to the cross to die for your sin ... for your rebellion against God
- Won't you take that offer?
- Be like Bartimaeus and take the opportunity to call out to Jesus and ask him for his mercy, so that you too may be saved

- **Follow him & Deny Yourself**

- If your trust is already in Jesus and you are following him ... let me ask are you following like Bartimaeus?
 - Humble, child like, dependent on Jesus for grace and mercy
 - Willing to let go of your worldly possessions
 - Willing to follow Jesus to the cross
- That what Jesus calls on each of us
 - Your want to be my disciple ... well you must deny yourself, take you your cross and follow me
- That may mean
 - letting go of your desire to have the lifestyle your friends have ... because you're following Jesus now
 - re-prioritising your schedule so you can be at church / GG / share the gospel with ppl you know ... because you're a disciple of Jesus now
 - being willing to cop a bit of criticism from ppl ... because you follow Jesus
- When Jesus opens your eyes so you can see ... the only way to respond is to faithfully follow him

3. The saviour king arrives and is worshipped (11:1-11)

- After his encounter with Bartimaeus ... Jesus and the disciples continue moving closer to Jerusalem
 - get to Bethpage² and Bethany
 - just a couple of km's outside of Jerusalem
- Jesus is aware of the excitement and expectation that is building among the crowd about him as the promised Christ
 - But they have the wrong expectations
 - The Jews were hoping for a military or a political leader who would
 - come to Jerusalem,
 - pronounce himself king of the Jews
 - kick out the Romans and

² We are unsure where it is. Somewhere between Jerusalem and Bethany

- restore Israel to its glory days
- So, in order to make it clear that this ISN'T the true nature of the Christ, Jesus symbolically acts this what it means for him to be the Christ in what he does next
- So Jesus sends the disciples to find a donkey and come back to him so he can ride it into Jerusalem
- When we think donkey – we think Shrek > Haha funny donkey > does it talk
 - But this was a deliberate and highly symbolic thing Jesus about to do
- Firstly ... we need to realise this wouldn't have been a graceful experience for Jesus
 - Riding on the colt of a donkey ... probably would have been sitting so low that his feet would have been dragging along the ground!
 - You kind hope that Jesus wasn't as tall as me ☺
- Secondly, it was very undignified, especially for a king who is the Son of David to come riding on a donkey
 - It would be like President Obama turning up to his inauguration in a Datsun 120Y / Mazda 121 instead of a limo
 - It's hardly an appropriate appearance for a king – is it?
- So why does Jesus do it?
 - He does it deliberately ... in order to fulfill the scriptures
 - **Zechariah 9:9-11** ⁹ *Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey [...] He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.*
¹¹ *As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit.*
- Zechariah was an OT prophet of Israel who prophesied about 500 yrs before Jesus
 - Zech 9³ he prophesied that the Christ would be
 - Like a king
 - Be righteous and bringing salvation for Israel
 - Gentle and riding on a donkey

³ Daughter of Zion - Zion the stronghold of Jerusalem, when captured by David. Became synonymous with Jerusalem. Daughter of Zion are therefore the inhabitants / population of Jerusalem

- Bring peace
 - His reign will extend across all nations
 - Salvation would be guaranteed by blood of the covenant
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- And so as he rode into Jerusalem the crowds go nuts ... they treat Jesus like a we would treat a rock star⁴
 - They lay their cloaks and palm branches on the ground
 - They shout out
 - Hosanna – which was an expression of praise and honour⁵
 - Refer to him as the Son of David
 - Quote Psalm 118 - Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord
 - All show the crowd has this heightened expectation of the arrival of the Christ and the coming KoG
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- So by entering Jerusalem on the donkey and fulfilling this prophesy .. Jesus is making it clear that
 - YES ... he IS the promised Christ
 - He IS the promised saviour that Zechariah and the other OT prophets spoke of
 - **But** ... he's NOT the political king or military leader that the Jews had come to expect of the Christ
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- Because unlike a military leader or political king ...
 - Jesus didn't come riding on a thoroughbred or war horse
 - Instead, he came riding on a donkey
 - He didn't come with pomp and ceremony and self importance
 - Instead he came gentle, humble & lowly as a servant of others
 - He didn't come to bring salvation for just one nation Israel
 - Zechariah tells us came to bring salvation for all nations
 - He didn't come to bring political freedom from the Romans by a military coup or political campaign
 - He came to bring peace between God and man by dying on the cross as a ransom for many
 - His coronation as king would not be on a throne in the palace
 - Instead it would be on a cross on Golgotha
 - The crowd has misunderstood who Jesus was and what he had come to do

⁴ Likely that the crowd that rejoices is not the crowd that calls for his crucifixion but rather the crowd that followed him from Galilee towards Jerusalem for the Passover

⁵ a Hebrew expression meaning "Save!" which became an exclamation of praise

- **Illustrate**

- A few years ago when Liana's dad was working one time he had to drive down to Mildura for a business trip
 - And on the way back he tried to amuse himself by seeing how quick he could get back to Sydney ... legally of course
 - Normally it's about a 10.5hr drive and he figured if he came back only pulling over for fuel and nature stops he could do it in 9!!
 - And on the way back as he's driving across the central plains he kept passing these 'Stop Revive Survive' signs
 - But he just ignored them because he had other things on his mind ... like was he on track to be his record
 - That was until he fell asleep at the wheel, slide of the road and nearly crashed into ... you guessed it ... a 'Stop Revive Survive' sign!
 - He said at that point he realised how stupid he was ... he'd completely ignored the signs that are there to save his life
- Like my father-in-law, the Jews has missed the signs
- They hadn't paid attention to nature of the Christ ... the one who was going to save them

- **Application**

- We can miss the signs about who Jesus is
- I mentioned a few weeks we can think of Jesus as
 - NRMA Jesus
 - Piñata Jesus
 - Moral Jesus
- And we can miss the signs that show us that Jesus
 - Is the saviour who came to die as a ransom for many
 - He came to us to go to the cross and die for our sins
 - He deliberately entered Jerusalem in order shed his blood for us
- But I think there's another danger we have in ... missing the signs about Jesus
- We're in danger of forgetting what the crowd did see > that Jesus is
 - The king! > He is the Lord!
 - The great son of David!
 - He is the prince of peace
 - Wonderful counselor
 - Mighty KOK and LOL

- Ruler of H&E > of all ppl and nations
- And we can get a little 'ho-hum' and blasé about Jesus as our king

- But really, we should be pumped up and excited about Jesus
 - We ought to be praising his name
 - Blessed to know him
 - Keen to serve him
 - Eager to tell others about him
- Just like those on the road into Jerusalem

- Think about
 - how excited do you get when your favourite sporting team > Saints, Sharks, Wallabies, Swans ... run out on the field
 - how pumped you get when they score a try or kick a goal
 - how much do you go nuts when they win a premiership!!

- What about when you go to see your favourite band
 - Listening to the support act > lights go dim > all of a sudden they burst on to stage
 - When they start playing your favourite song
 - When the lead singer stage dives and crowd surfs around the mosh pit
- When you do these things ... you cheer > raise your hands > fist pump

- Yes we need to remember Jesus death in our place ... but I think we may be in danger of missing the signs that remind us of the
 - Glory > majesty > supremacy > sovereignty > of our saviour King Jesus
- It ought to move us to
 - praise him > rejoice in him > worship him > serve him
 - Because he is our saviour king

- We worship and praise our saviour king ... not just in our singing
 - We worship and praise him with our whole lives

4. The religious hypocrites sin and are judged

- Jesus leaves Jerusalem and comes back the next day
- And here we get what's called a Markan sandwich
 - A story within a story

Fig-tree > full of leaf

Jesus clears the temple

Fig-tree > withered and dead

- The section in the middle helps us interpret what's going on

- In v12 Jesus sees a fig-tree
 - Goes over to it and despite it being full of leaf, sees there is no fruit and curses it

- Jesus is not behaving like a spoiled brat here
 - He's deliberately showing his disciples the state of Israel and what will happen to her
 - In the OT Israel was often referred to as a vine or a fig tree that God looked for fruit from⁶
- Jesus cursing of the tree is an enacted parable in that what he is actually judging is Israel and its leaders
- The middle part of the sandwich in the temple which immediately follows makes that clear
- Jesus enters Jerusalem and heads straight to the temple, the focal point of religious life
 - The outer court of the Temple was full ppl selling animals and money changers

- Until AD30 the sellers of animals, doves and the money changers had been located away from the temple on the Mount of Olives
 - But Caiaphas, the high priest of the day had allowed the traders to access the outer court of the temple
- So the issue for Jesus was that this was all happening in the court of the Gentiles
 - So it was preventing the Gentiles from worshipping > coming to God
 - Yet by turning it into a market place the religious leaders have excluded the Gentiles

- They'd turned the temple into Paddy's Market!
 - Meant to be a house of prayer, but the religious leaders had turned it into a market place and den for robbers
- So Jesus goes all Bruce Willis on them all
 - Overturing tables and driving the traders out

- Jesus not cleansing the temple here
 - He's declaring his judgment on Israel and its leaders

⁶ **Hosea 9:10** ¹⁰ "When I found Israel, it was like finding grapes in the desert; when I saw your fathers, it was like seeing the early fruit on the fig tree."

- So the next day when they see the fig tree again and Peter remembers and points out that it has withered
 - The fruitless tree was symbolic of Israel and Jesus judges it for not bearing fruit it should have
- Just as Jesus went to the fig tree looking for fruit and found none ... so he came to Jerusalem and the temple and instead of finding fruit ... he found religious hypocrisy
 - This was exemplified by the actions of the religious leaders
 - v18 *The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him*
- Old Israel and its leaders were spiritually dead
 - Like the fig tree ... their roots were rotten to the core
 - They were flashy ... but fruitless
- **Application**
- Appearances can be deceiving ... and religion can be deceiving ... because it can hide hypocrisy
- Religion is ppl's attempt to get into relationship with God and stay in his good books
 - Though it may be impressive > mega > cathedral like > be robes > incense
 - More often than not ... it's empty and fruitless
- We need on our guard against religious hypocrisy

- Religion says to God that the work of your son on the cross is not enough and it needs to be supplemented with what we can do
- Religion rejects the suffering of Jesus on the cross as the fully sufficient means for the forgiveness of our sins and reconciliation with God
- It's flashy ... but fruitless
 - It's all leaf and no fruit

- It makes you wonder ... if Jesus walked in the door of our church, what fruit would he find?
- Is there anything about our church that would make Jesus react like he did in the Temple?
- There's a challenge here [isn't there] to ensure that as Christians and as a church we're bearing fruit for God and his kingdom
 - Is our church characterised by love, joy, peace, forgiveness?

- Are we are ppl who are generous with our money?
- Do we have a zeal for serving God and his kingdom?
- Are we flashy and fruitless?
- Or are we bearing fruit?

- Because Jesus doesn't want religious hypocrisy
 - He hates it and judges it

- What he wants is ppl like Bartimaeus
 - Ppl who stand in great contrast to the religious hypocrites
 - Because ppl like Bartimaeus
 - acknowledge Jesus as the Christ
 - call upon him for mercy
 - come to him in faith
 - follow him

- Let's pray we will do just that