

# The Only Adult in the Room

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## Introduction

### The Text

<sup>28</sup> And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. <sup>29</sup> When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, <sup>30</sup> saying, “Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>31</sup> If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘The Lord has need of it.’” <sup>32</sup> So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. <sup>33</sup> And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?” <sup>34</sup> And they said, “The Lord has need of it.” <sup>35</sup> And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. (Luke 19:28–35)

### Doctrine and Deconversion

- A. One of the books I’ve had the Elder Candidates begin reading is a book called [Nine Marks of a Healthy Church](#) by Mark Dever. It’s a great book. I highly recommend it. If you want to see the sorts of things I’m aiming for in our church here, you should check that out.
- B. But, anyways, knowing that we were going to be discussing a few things from it, I picked up my own copy again, and, as I did, I was immediately struck by something that hadn’t stood out to me when I read it years before. I was humbled, saddened, and even troubled by this observation.
  - 1. I noticed that in my copy of the book, published back in 2004 (the second edition of it to my knowledge), there is a foreword written by a man named Joshua Harris. Now some of you, of course, may know who he is. Others probably have no idea.
    - a. For quite a while he had been a pastor of some prominence in the evangelical stream that I flow in—hence, he was asked to write the foreword for Dever’s book.
- C. But now it is because of recent events that I say seeing his name there had something a bit ominous and tragic about it.
  - 1. Those of you that do know of him, probably also heard that a few months back, he publicly renounced the faith. He’s yet another example of what’s been termed a “deconversion story”—where a person deconverts from Christianity, they step away from it: “It’s no longer for me.”
- D. As for the reason why, to my knowledge he hasn’t come out and explicitly stated it, but it’s quite clear that, whatever else was in play, the Bible’s take on marriage and sexuality had a key role in this for him.
  - 1. It seems from the announcement he posted on Instagram that his decision to renounce Christianity coincided with his decision to divorce his wife.

2. And in this post he also apologizes to the LGBTQ+ community for the things he's believed and taught regarding sexuality for so long.
  - a. And then one his next posts after this was one of him marching in a gay pride parade there in Vancouver, Canada where he now resides.
  
- E. I don't think it's too difficult to see what's going on here. Sometimes what the Bible says is hard. It doesn't always feel nice. We don't always see how it's good. We question whether this could really be something a God who "is love" would say or do.
  1. Sometimes we may resent God for saying we have to stick with a hard marriage. "I don't want to. I'm not happy in this. This isn't fulfilling. I want to go be with someone else."
  2. Sometimes we may resent God for what He says about homosexuality and things—maybe that's even a personal struggle of yours and you're thinking: "I just want to be true to myself. God, You don't love me as I am. You want me to be alone for the rest of my time here on earth? That is cruel. If this is who God is, I'm out!"
  
- F. You know, as a pastor committed to expositional, verse-by-verse preaching of God's Word in the Bible, you've got to know I feel this too sometimes. If I'm honest, I felt it the last time I was up here a couple Sundays ago.
  1. Look up at the verses just above our text for this morning. Jesus is telling that parable about going away to receive a kingdom and then coming back to see how His servants fared with the resources He had called them to steward while He was away.
    - a. It's a picture of His second coming, His return at the end of the age, and all seems relatively okay until you come to the last verse of that parable and it just gets brutal: ["But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me" \(Luke 19:27\).](#)
      - i. Now, I read that in my preparation and I thought, "Really?! That's the line I have to end on?! Talk about a mood-killer! Jesus is going to die, rise, ascend to the Father, receive His kingdom, come back, reward His faithful servants . . . but oh yeah, for those of you who aren't faithful, He's going to have you brought before Him and slaughtered. . . . Okay, well, that concludes my message. Would you please stand for the benediction!"
  
- G. At least for us here in the West, this doctrine of hell and God's judgment, it just feels like a hard pill to swallow. We don't like it.
  1. It is most definitely a part of the good news, and I am sure it will seem right to us on that day (as I've tried to make the case for at other times), but, nevertheless, when we come to those verses, initially at least, it sounds bad.
  
- H. I'm sure you have your own list of things that are kind of hard to get what God is saying or doing and how it's good.

1. And we may be tempted to gloss over these things or reinterpret them. We may even leave the Christian faith—at least the historically orthodox Christian faith—because of them.

## What Does This Have to Do with Our Text?!

- A. Now, I know most of you are asking yourselves: “What in the world does this have to do with our text this morning?! Jesus is talking about going to pick up a donkey so he can roll into Jerusalem with His boys and you’re talking about Joshua Harris, deconversion, biblical sexuality, hell? Did I miss something?!”
- B. Well, it may surprise you, but I think our text is intended to speak into precisely the sort of things I’ve just opened with. I think it’s meant to help us navigate the confusion, the tension, we often experience when what God says and does seems to collide with what we would have otherwise expected and wanted—when things from God’s end don’t “feel” good and loving to us.
  1. Now, you’ll have to give me time to develop this, but I hope and trust, by the end, you will see precisely what I mean.
- C. So let’s give our attention to the text now. And as we do, you should know that I’ll be organizing my thoughts here under three headings: (1) Signals of Sovereignty; (2) Shadows of Calvary; and (3) Stones of Memory.
  1. I anticipate moving somewhat quickly through the first two and we’ll come to rest on the third together for a bit longer. It’s really with the third point, I think, that all that I’ve been saying thus far will come together for us.

## (1) Signals of Sovereignty

- A. Our text for this morning on first read, I think at least, seems a bit unusual. There’s a certain redundancy to the narrative, and in some ways it may even seem to us, at first, to be somewhat irrelevant or unnecessary.
  1. The gist of it, if you noticed, is simply this:
    - a. Jesus and His disciples are drawing ever closer to Jerusalem, and they’re now just a few miles away, coming in from the east side of the city, there on the Mount of Olives.
    - b. Jesus issues a simple command to a couple of His guys: “Go into this village, you’re going to find a young unriden donkey tied up, untie it, someone’s going to ask why are you untying it, you tell them: ‘The Lord has need of it.’”
    - c. Then the disciples go into the village, find a young unriden donkey tied up, they untie it, the owners ask why they’re untying it, and so they tell them: “The Lord has need of it.” And they bring it back to Him.
      - i. Well okay. Now, Nick, really? A whole sermon on this? It does seem redundant at first, right? Maybe a bit superfluous. But that’s until you really press into it and gather what’s going on.

- B. The first thing I think we are intended to see here is what I'm referring to as "Signals of Sovereignty." Yes, the narrative here is redundant, but upon closer evaluation, we come to realize that therein lies the point. We are supposed to see in this, I think, the sovereignty of our Savior.
1. He says: "This is where you must go, this is what you will find, this is what they will say," and so forth . . . and that is precisely what takes place. The emphasis for us in all of this is found there in v. 32: "So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them."
    - a. Jesus knew. Jesus foretold. Jesus flexed for His disciples here just a wee little bit of His sovereignty. He said it would be so . . . and it was so. That's not vain repetition. That's profoundly significant.
- C. Now, some commentators have seen this chain of events here and presumed that Jesus must have made some prearrangement with the owners of this colt and perhaps the password agreed upon between them was "The Lord has need of it."
1. But this is, I think, to miss the point. I think we are supposed to see our Savior's sovereignty here—especially His sovereignty over all that is about to go down in the next few days there in Jerusalem.
- D. I agree with commentator James Edwards when he writes: "Particularly in the Third Gospel Jesus' prescience increases in proportion to his proximity to the cross. [Julius Wellhausen notes:] 'We must not rationalize here. . . . Jesus has not already ordered the colt, nor made an arrangement with its owners, but he knows beforehand what will happen, because God, who directs what is to happen, is with him.' Jesus is not unaware of the storm clouds gathering before him, nor is he an unwilling victim of them. Rather, he possesses foreknowledge and sovereignty over all that 'must' transpire in Jerusalem" (PNTC).
- E. And if we doubt that this is how we ought to take our text here this morning, all we need to do, I think, is make note of other places where the same sort of signaling occurs. Again, as Edwards noted: "Jesus' prescience increases in proportion to his proximity to the cross."
1. So in Luke 22:7-13, in a manner very similar to this, Jesus sends Peter and John ahead of them to prepare the Passover for them, and He tells them: "Enter the city, and some dude with a jar of water will walk by, and he'll lead you to a house, and you tell the master of that house: 'The Teacher needs your guest room'" . . . and then again v. 13 we read: "And they went and found it just as he had told them . . ."
  2. And in Luke 22:21-22, it is there in that guest room around the table of that last Passover meal that He foretells Judas' betrayal: " <sup>21</sup> [B]ehold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. <sup>22</sup> For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!"
  3. And soon after that, in Luke 22:34, He speaks of Peter's denial: "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me."
- F. So Jesus, all throughout the last week of His life is signaling to His disciples of His sovereignty. He wants them to know that the cross is no accident but a part of the divine plan.

1. “When we get to Good Friday in just a few days, don’t you think for a second that the Jewish leaders have outsmarted Me. Don’t you think for a second that the Roman authorities have overpowered Me.” No! As He says to His disciples in [John 10:18a](#): “No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.”

## (2) Shadows of Calvary

- A. Which is why, by the way, in our text, even as Jesus is signaling of His sovereignty He is also at the same time foreshadowing the things of Calvary. Let me quickly point out just a couple examples for you.

### Shadow #1: “A Colt”

- A. In the first place, we should consider what sort of animal it is that Jesus tells His disciples to get: “a colt” ([v. 30](#)).
  1. Now the word in the Greek can refer to any young animal really, but we know from Matthew and John’s account that we are talking about the colt of a donkey.
- B. Now, here’s why this is significant. You’ll recall, from last time, perhaps, that the people are starting to get a bit fired up about the idea that Jesus might be the Messiah and coming King in the line of David. And with this idea has come certain expectations of a nationalistic variety—that this King would overthrow Rome and restore land and power and glory to Israel after years of shame.
  1. And yet here, Jesus is preparing to enter the city not on a warhorse, as would be typical of a king, but on a beast of burden, a donkey. It is symbolic of a man who’s come not in armament ready for battle, but in humility looking to make peace.
    - a. And, of course, we know how He will make this peace, don’t we? As Paul tells us in [Col 1:20](#): “[He will make] peace by the blood of his cross.” The fact that He comes into Jerusalem riding on this colt is, in many ways, a foreshadowing of what’s to come at Calvary.

### Shadow #2: “On Which No One Has Ever Sat”

- A. But there’s more. For it’s not just any colt that is to be used for this task is it? Look at how Christ describes it in [v. 30](#): “[O]n entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat.”
- B. All the commentators point out that such a note is meant to mark this animal out as suitable for sacred purposes. There is something pure, unsullied, unblemished about it.
  1. We get this idea from OT texts like [Num 19](#) where the people of Israel are told to bring a young cow to the priests “without defect, in which there is no blemish, and on which a yoke has never come” ([v. 2](#)). And what are they to do with it? “<sup>3</sup> And it shall be taken outside the camp and slaughtered. . . .<sup>9</sup> [I]t is a sin offering” ([vv. 3, 9](#)).

2. Or in [Deut 21](#), the elders of Israel are told, similarly, to take a young cow “that has never been worked and that has not pulled in a yoke” (v. 3). And what are they to do with it? “And the elders of that city shall bring the heifer down to a valley with running water, which is neither plowed nor sown, and shall break the heifer’s neck there in the valley” (v. 4). And they shall say “Accept atonement, O Lord, for your people Israel, whom you have redeemed” (v. 8).
- C. That they find this colt in just the way Jesus described is not only a signal of His sovereignty it is a shadow of Calvary.
1. The cross is now just days away, where Jesus Himself—pure, unsullied, sinless, as He is—will, nevertheless be offered up as an offering to make atonement for sinners like you and I that we might at long last have peace with God!

### (3) Stones of Memory

Why?!

- A. Now, we come to this third heading, and the point to which all of this has been moving. We again take in the scene of our text, hopefully now with fresh eyes and perspective, and we’re ready, I think, to ask: Why?
1. Why does Jesus put on this display of His sovereignty here? Is He just showing off a bit? Does He simply want His disciples to marvel at His ability to forecast and predict?
  2. Why on the front end of His entrance to Jerusalem, why a few days out from His run in with the cross, is He taking the time to impress upon them His sovereignty over all things, so that even the minutest details about this colt are shown to be under His Kingly control? What is the point in all of this?!
- B. Well, I can tell you what I think. I think He’s trying to help them. I think He knows that the cross is going to be a stumbling block for them. They have no category for a crucified Christ. They keep thinking He’s going to enter into Jerusalem here and take up His place on the throne.
1. You remember, don’t you? That’s why He told that last parable we’ve already referenced. Back up in [Luke 19:11](#), Luke tells us: “He proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately.”
    - a. They think the kingdom is coming in right away here—and it’s not, at least not in full. And it is going to throw them off—big time!
      - i. As Jesus says to His disciples in [Matt 26:31](#): “You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’” They won’t get it. They won’t see it. They will think that it is over, that all their hopes have come to nothing.

C. It is so painfully ironic what the two disciples are saying on the road to Emmaus there after Jesus had been crucified. It's now Sunday and Jesus has been raised, but they don't know this. And Jesus appears to them there on this road, but their eyes are kept from recognizing Him. And, understandably, they seem all sad and bent over with care. So Jesus asks, "What's up with you guys?"

1. And here's how they respond: "<sup>18</sup> 'Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?' <sup>19</sup> And [Jesus] said to them, 'What things?' And they said to him, 'Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup> and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. <sup>21</sup> But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel'" (Luke 24:18–21).

a. Do you hear what they are saying?! "We had hoped He would redeem, but He's dead." I mean, you see the irony, right? Now, on the far side of the cross, we say that it's precisely because of His death that we are redeemed! "[Christ] gave himself for us to redeem us" (Titus 2:14).

D. So, again, why does Jesus flex His sovereignty there with this colt back in [Luke 19](#)?

1. I think He's trying to give them something to hold onto when things get confusing and seem hopeless. I think He's trying to give them a little window into what He's capable of so that when they see Him hanging lifeless there on the cross they can know: "This may seem bad, I may not get it, but do you remember that colt? Do you remember how He knew just where it would be and what they would say and what we should say and all that? He's bigger than this. He's got a plan. He's in control. I know it. I may not see it with my eyes yet. I might not feel how this is good yet. But I know it is. He's going to come through."

E. I use the term "Stones of Memory" here because we see God doing this sort of thing throughout the Scriptures, and one of those times is when Israel is passing through the Jordan river and entering the Promised Land. Do you remember this?

1. God miraculously stops the waters and the people pass through on dry ground. And He says, "Listen take stones from the base of that river bed and bring them up with you to the others side. And stack them up and let them be a memorial to you of what I did today. Because stuff's going to get hard and you're going to think I'm not for you, or that I've abandoned you, but I haven't. And you walk with your family back to these stones and you say, 'No! We may not see how God is good just yet in all this, but we will. Do you remember when He did that?!'"

## The Only Adult in the Room

A. Another way I might put it is like this: I think Jesus is trying to show us here in our text that He's the only adult in the room. Do you know what I mean by that?

1. So often we forget our place in all of this. We act like our interpretation, our understanding of things, our ideas of what would be right or wrong, God needs to bend to.

- a. Do you remember when Peter rebukes Jesus for talking about going to the cross: “Far be it from you Lord!” And Jesus just says: “Get behind me Satan, you have no clue! You have your mind set not on the things of God but on the things of man.”
- B. And we do this sort of thing all the time. We are like toddlers trying to tell our Daddy how to run the home. And every now and then Daddy just needs to flex a little muscle, show off a little wisdom and strength, and remind those kids where their place is in all of this.
  - 1. We don’t know what’s best. We don’t get it. And He’s showing us here: “You don’t get it . . . but I do. I’ve got this. I’ve got you. Even when you don’t understand. Even when it feels hard. Even when you think I’ve abandoned you.”

## Coming Back Full Circle

- A. And I suppose this is what brings us full circle back to what I opened up with at the beginning. No doubt, there are times where you are going to butt up against stuff in the Scripture that just doesn’t feel right to you. You don’t like it. It doesn’t sound good—what He has to say about sexuality, or hell, or money, or whatever else.
  - 1. So what are you going to do about it? Are you going to cut it out, reinterpret it, walk away? Are you going to be the toddler telling Daddy how to run the home?
- B. Listen, my son Levi, sometimes he gets to play on the iPad, and he just loves it. But a lot of times he asks and we tell him no. And lately he’s been responding all dramatically where he lets out this loud wail: “Nobody cares!”
  - 1. It’s honestly humorous. But you see yourself there, right? He thinks I don’t care because I say no to the iPad. “It’s the opposite bro. If I didn’t care, I’d let you waste your day and brain on that thing. It’s because I care that I say no let’s go outside instead, let’s play with your action figures instead, let’s read a book together instead.”
    - a. You see it? He feels like I am crushing his little soul. But I’m trying to love him well.
- C. But we do the same thing with God, you guys. When the hard words or situations come and we don’t like it, sometimes like Levi we just wail: “Nobody cares! You don’t love me. You aren’t good. I don’t get it.”
  - 1. But of course we don’t always get it. He sees way more than we do. Has He shown us enough to trust Him? Can we put our hands over our mouths and just trust Him? “I’ve seen enough. You’ve got this and you’ve got me. I don’t care what the culture is saying. I don’t care how I immediately feel about it. You are the adult in the room. And that’s enough!”
    - a. I don’t want to be like those guys on the road to Emmaus—“We thought He was going to redeem us, but He died.” No I want to be able to say: “Man, I’m confused. I don’t get this. But I’m holding on. I’m not just going to bail as if I know better.”



## Like a Weaned Child with Its Mother

- A. Maybe I could close this out by reading us a little Psalm I love. It just so happened it was where I was in my devotions yesterday, as a matter of fact. [Psa 131](#): “<sup>1</sup> O Lord, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me. <sup>2</sup> But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me. <sup>3</sup> O Israel, hope in the Lord from this time forth and forevermore” (vv. 1–3).
- B. Isn't that a beautiful image. The picture here is that we're like this weaned child. Think about a baby when it's being weaned.
1. It's hard at first. It's confusing. They're mad at the mother because they're not getting what they used to. They think something's wrong.
  2. But they've had enough milk to know that mommy loves them. And they stay close and they slowly find that, even in the midst of the confusion, even in the midst of stuff that's just too much to wrap their little minds around, they can still find rest . . . and hope.
- C. And that is the sort of thing God wants for us. Recall the goodness and power and grace you've already seen of Him. And let that quiet your contentions and lead you to trust in Him even before you get it all.