

**Lent to Easter 2015**

**Palm Sunday**

# Upside uMOI & Inside



**The God Who Is Still Present When The Party Is Over**

# Focus of Lent to Easter 2015

What does **renewal** look like for those already committed to Christ and his church (CMF)? Committed believers may not so much need a “reset” as **an invitation not to settle**.

God often turns our **expectations** “Upside Down & Inside Out” and calls us to **rethink** what we thought we knew, what we thought we were done with, and to discover more.

It was the “religious” who thought they had arrived and could learn nothing new about God and his plans for them.

So, what God needs from the faithful is **a willingness to be teachable** and to give ourselves to the way of **deep change**.

# **Upside Down & Inside Out**

Lent 1 – The God Who Initiates Deep Change

Lent 2 – The God Who Does the Spectacular

Lent 3 – The God Who Hides His Wisdom In A Cross

Lent 4 – The God Who Isn't Scared of the Dark

Lent 5 – The God Who Creates New Hearts

**Palm Sunday – The God Who Is Still Present  
When the Party is Over**

Easter Sunday – The God Who Raises the Dead

## Matthew 21:1-5 NIV

<sup>1</sup> As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. <sup>3</sup> If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”

<sup>4</sup> This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

<sup>5</sup> “Say to Daughter Zion,  
‘See, your king comes to you,  
gentle and riding on a donkey,  
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”

## **Matthew 21:6-11 NIV**

<sup>6</sup> The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them.

<sup>7</sup> They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. <sup>8</sup> A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup> The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

“Hosanna to the Son of David!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

<sup>10</sup> When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?”

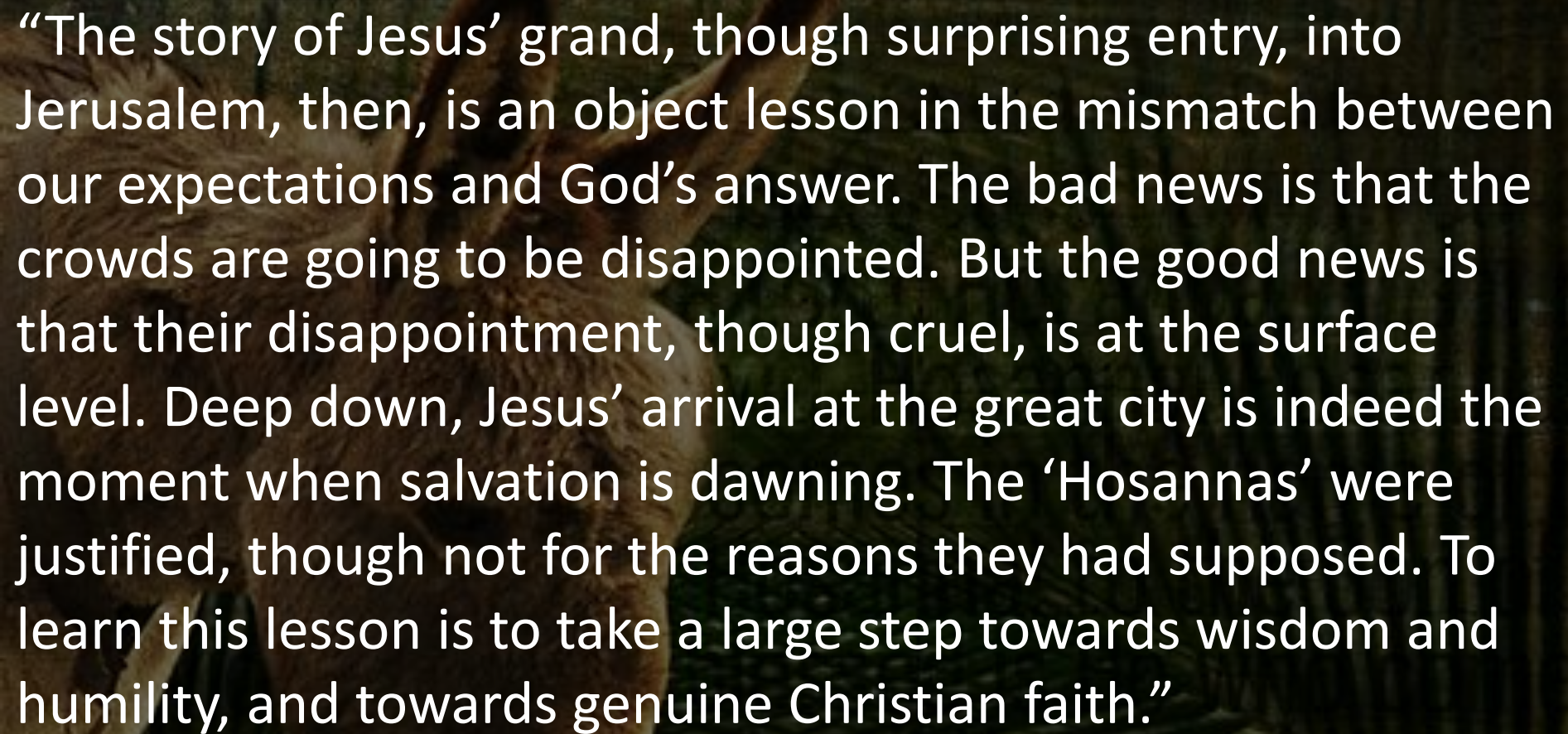
<sup>11</sup> The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”





Antonia Fortress (military barracks at Eastern gate)





“The story of Jesus’ grand, though surprising entry, into Jerusalem, then, is an object lesson in the mismatch between our expectations and God’s answer. The bad news is that the crowds are going to be disappointed. But the good news is that their disappointment, though cruel, is at the surface level. Deep down, Jesus’ arrival at the great city is indeed the moment when salvation is dawning. The ‘Hosannas’ were justified, though not for the reasons they had supposed. To learn this lesson is to take a large step towards wisdom and humility, and towards genuine Christian faith.”

N.T. Wright, *Matthew For Everyone* (pg.69)

## **Matthew 21:12-13 NIV**

<sup>12</sup> Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves.  
<sup>13</sup> “It is written,” he said to them, “‘My house will be called a house of prayer,’ but you are making it ‘a den of robbers.’”

## **John 2:15**

“So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle”





Second Temple built by Herod the Great



Brian Zahnd, pastor of Word of Life Church & author of *Farewell to Mars*

“His [Jesus] actions are not impulsive, they are planned. What Jesus did was creative prophetic theater. It was very dangerous. In fact, in four days he would be dead. What Jesus did was not losing his temper. What Jesus did was creative prophetic theater. He knew what he was going to do. He planned it out. Jesus was not *cleansing* the temple for continued use, he was protesting temple corruption and predicting its imminent destruction. Jesus was preparing the way for a radically new temple...”

“The temple had become thoroughly corrupt. It had some to do with what was being done in the temple, but it was more about how people *thought* of the temple. People thought, ‘As long as we keep the sacrifices going, we can do whatever we want.’ It’s kind of like those who think they can go to church on Sunday and act however they want the rest of the week and they’ll be just fine.”

*Jesus the Prophet*

sermon (3-8-15)



# Just Like in the Days of Jeremiah

- Scribes and Pharisees would have recognized what Jesus was doing, “Oh, he thinks the Temple is just as bad as it was in the days of Jeremiah.” (see Jeremiah 7:1-29)
- Jeremiah protested the first Temple practices in the 6<sup>th</sup> century before its destruction in 587 BC. He proclaimed that God disapproved of the Temple leadership and the careless attitudes of its worshippers.
- There was a lack of concern for holiness, justice, and they were indifferent toward outsiders. Therefore, their worship was empty and was being rejected by God. If they didn’t repent, it would inevitably come to an end.
- The Temple had become a “den of robbers” (a hideout) and gave the mere illusion of safety and God’s blessing.

“When a church exists for comfort to the exclusion of challenge, for grace and not ever for judgment, she becomes a hideout for thieves rather than a house of God. She also abandons the faithful exposition of Scripture, which regularly treats both grace *and* judgment.”

Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary* (2007)

C.S. Lewis once said: "there exists in every church something that sooner or later works against the very purpose for which it came into existence. So we must strive very hard, by the grace of God to keep the church focused on the mission that Christ originally gave to it."



“Being the church that Jesus intended means that we must participate in God’s eternal purposes for his world. Renewal means more than reinventing ourselves; it means rediscovering the primal power of the Spirit and the gospel already present in the life of the church—reconnecting with this purpose and recovering the forgotten ways. This purpose and potential have always been there, but individuals and communities have largely lost touch with them.”

Alan Hirsch, *The Permanent Revolution*

## John 2:18-22 NLT

<sup>18</sup> But the Jewish leaders demanded, “What are you doing? If God gave you authority to do this, show us a miraculous sign to prove it.”

<sup>19</sup> “All right,” Jesus replied. “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

<sup>20</sup> “What!” they exclaimed. “It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you can rebuild it in three days?” <sup>21</sup> But when Jesus said “this temple,” he meant his own body. <sup>22</sup> After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered he had said this, and they believed both the Scriptures and what Jesus had said.

# Celebrating the Christ Who Rides a Donkey & Turns Over Tables—*Summary & Application*

- The Jesus we celebrate is the Messiah sent by the Father, reflecting *his* perfect image and not our own;
- Don't be surprised if God doesn't meet your expectations, he has something even better in mind, so trust him;
- God wants a people (church) that is passionate in worship, prayer, mercy, justice, and sharing his love with outsiders;
- Judgment and grace are two sides of the same coin; God's judgment is always meant to bring us into right relationship
- The party might end and the lights may go out, but God will deliver his faithful servants, even from death!





# Upside uMOI & Inside



Sermon audio & slides can be downloaded at:  
[www.christiansburgmennonite.org](http://www.christiansburgmennonite.org)

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