

Monday: Seen by the King

In a Nutshell

Pastor Reuben reminded us that Jesus rode a humble donkey into Jerusalem, fulfilling prophecy. This illustrates how God sees, chooses, and has a purpose for the seemingly ordinary and overlooked, just like He sees and has a purpose for you.

Anchor Verse

1 Corinthians 1:27-28 (NIV): "But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are,"

Unpacking the Word

Do you ever feel like a "donkey"? Maybe not literally, but perhaps you identify with feeling ordinary, unremarkable, or even a bit stubborn and foolish at times, as Pastor Reuben described. We might feel tied up in our routines, unnoticed in our workplaces or homes, just carrying the burdens of daily life. It's easy to think, "Why would God notice *me*? What could He possibly use *me* for?"

The story of Palm Sunday offers a powerful counter-narrative. Jesus didn't choose a warhorse, a symbol of power and prestige. He specifically requested a donkey, an animal known more for humility and burden-bearing than for glory. Even more specifically, a young colt that had never been ridden – inexperienced, untested. This wasn't an accident; it fulfilled Zechariah's prophecy, but it also reveals the heart of God.

Just as Jesus saw that specific donkey tied up *before* the disciples even got there, He sees you. He saw Nathaniel under the fig tree before they met. He knows your location, your situation, your feelings of being "tied up" or overlooked. He doesn't just see you; He *chooses* you.

As 1 Corinthians highlights, God intentionally selects what the world might consider foolish, weak, insignificant, or despised. Why? To demonstrate that the power and glory belong to Him alone. Our perceived weaknesses or lack of worldly status don't disqualify us; in fact, they often *qualify* us in God's economy. He isn't looking for self-sufficient superstars; He's looking for humble hearts willing to carry His presence.

So, if you feel like "just a donkey," take heart. The King sees you. He knows you. And He has a divine purpose waiting for you, not based on your own merits, but on His incredible grace and His desire to work through you.

Pause and Reflect

- In what areas of your life do you feel most like the "ordinary donkey" – overlooked, tied up, or inadequate?
- How does the truth that God *intentionally* chooses the "foolish" and "weak" challenge your perspective on your own perceived limitations?
- Can you recall a time when you felt unseen, and how might meditating on Jesus seeing the donkey (and Nathaniel) bring comfort or change your view?

Faith in Action

- Identify one area where you feel inadequate. Spend a few minutes thanking God that He chooses the weak and asking Him to show you His strength in that area this week.
- Write down 1 Corinthians 1:27-28 and place it somewhere visible (like your desk or mirror) as a reminder that God sees value where the world might not.
- Take a moment today to consciously "see" someone who might feel overlooked and offer them a word of encouragement.

A Moment With God

Ask God to help you see yourself through His eyes – not as insignificant, but as seen, chosen, and deeply valued by Him. Pray for the humility to recognise that your qualification comes from Him, not yourself.

Tuesday: Untied for His Purpose

In a Nutshell

The sermon highlighted that the donkey Jesus chose was "tied up." Jesus sent disciples to untie it, declaring, "The Lord has need of it," showing God's desire to set us free from what binds us, not for our own pleasure, but for His divine purpose.

Anchor Verse

Luke 4:18 (NIV): "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free,"

Unpacking the Word

Imagine the scene: a young donkey, tied up, likely unaware of the significant role it was about to play. Then, strangers arrive with a specific instruction: "Untie it." Why? "The Lord has need of it." This simple command carries profound spiritual weight for us. Like that donkey, we can find ourselves "tied up" by various things – fear, anxiety, past hurts, sin, limiting beliefs, or simply the mundane routines that keep us tethered.

Pastor Reuben emphasized that God's primary desire is to set us free. Jesus Himself declared His mission in Luke 4:18 – proclaiming release to the captives and setting the oppressed free. This freedom isn't just a vague spiritual concept; it's a tangible reality God wants for each of us. He sees the ropes that bind us, the things that hold us back from living fully in His purpose.

Crucially, this freedom isn't granted merely for our own comfort or enjoyment. The donkey wasn't untied to simply wander off and graze freely wherever it pleased. It was untied *because the Lord had need of it*. Our freedom in Christ has a divine objective: to be available for the Master's use. We are set free *to serve, to carry His presence, to participate in His kingdom work*.

Sometimes we resist this idea, thinking following God is restrictive. Pastor Reuben used the analogy of a train on tracks – the tracks might seem confining, but they are essential for the train to fulfill its purpose. Outside the tracks, it derails. Similarly, living within God's will, guided by His Spirit, isn't restriction; it's the path to true freedom and purpose. It's aligning ourselves with how we were designed to function best.

What is tying you up today? Is it fear of failure? The weight of past mistakes? Worry about the future? The pursuit of worldly acceptance? Jesus wants to untie those ropes. He sends His Spirit, His Word, and His people to bring release. He has need of *you* – your unique gifts, experiences, and heart – for His kingdom purposes. Allow Him to untie you, not so you can run your own way, but so you can walk in step with Him.

Pause and Reflect

- What specific "ropes" (fears, habits, beliefs, past hurts) do you feel are currently tying you up and hindering your availability for God's use?
- How does the idea that freedom is *for God's purpose* shift your understanding of why He wants to set you free?
- Consider the train analogy: In what ways might seeing God's guidance as "tracks" rather than "restrictions" change how you approach obedience?

Faith in Action

- Identify one specific "rope" that binds you. Today, consciously bring it to Jesus in prayer, asking Him to untie it based on Luke 4:18. Declare, "Lord, I want to be free for Your use."
- Read the story of the donkey in Luke 19:29-35 again. Imagine yourself as the donkey being untied and ask God what purpose He might have for your newfound freedom.
- Think of someone else who seems "tied up." Pray for their release and ask God if there's any way you can be like one of the disciples, helping to bring them freedom in Christ.

A Moment With God

Pray specifically about the things that bind you. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any hidden ropes and grant you the courage to be untied. Surrender your freedom back to God, telling Him you are available for His use.

Wednesday: The Great Exchange: Burdens for Rest

In a Nutshell

Following the sermon's theme, we explored how donkeys are known for carrying burdens, much like we carry stress and worry. Jesus invites us to exchange our heavy loads for His easy yoke and light burden, finding rest by casting our cares upon Him in humility.

Anchor Verse

Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV): "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Unpacking the Word

Donkeys are synonymous with carrying loads. Pastor Reuben pointed out how this mirrors our human tendency to carry heavy burdens – stress from work, worries about family, financial pressures, anxieties about the future, the weight of past regrets. We often trudge through life feeling weary and overloaded, much like a donkey straining under its pack. Do you feel that weight today?

Jesus offers a radical alternative. He doesn't just sympathize with our burdens; He invites us to exchange them. "Come to me," He says, "all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." This isn't just a nap; it's deep, soul-level rest. The key lies in the exchange: "Take *my* yoke upon you... for *my* yoke is easy and *my* burden is light." He wants to take our crushing load and give us His manageable one.

How does this exchange happen? Pastor Reuben connected this to 1 Peter 5:6-7: "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand... Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." Humility is the prerequisite. We must acknowledge that we *can't* carry these burdens effectively on our own. Pride tells us we can handle it, that we don't need help. Humility admits our need and turns to God.

Casting our cares isn't a one-time event; it's an ongoing act of trust. It means consciously identifying our anxieties, worries, and stresses, and deliberately handing them over to God in prayer. When we refuse to let go, when we cling to our worries, Pastor Reuben warned, we make ourselves vulnerable. 1 Peter 5:8 follows immediately: "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." The context suggests the lion targets those weighed down by un-cast cares, those trying to manage life in their own strength.

Imagine the colt carrying Jesus. Was Jesus a heavy burden? Pastor Reuben suggested it probably felt surprisingly light! When we carry His presence, when we operate under His yoke (His guidance and will), the burden feels different. It's not weightless, but it's infused with His strength and grace. It's a shared load.

Are you weary today? Are you carrying burdens that weren't meant for you? The invitation stands: Humble yourself. Cast your specific cares upon Him because He genuinely cares for you. Take His yoke – His way of doing things, His priorities – and discover the soul-rest He promises. It's the best exchange you'll ever make.

Pause and Reflect

- What specific burdens (worries, stresses, anxieties) are you carrying today that feel heavy?
- How does pride sometimes prevent you from casting your cares upon God? What does humbling yourself look like in this context?
- Reflect on the connection between holding onto cares and vulnerability to the enemy (1 Peter 5:7-8). How have you experienced this?

Faith in Action

- Take 5 minutes today specifically to "cast your cares." Name the burdens one by one and verbally (even in a whisper) say, "Lord, I give this burden to You. I receive Your rest."
- Read Matthew 11:28-30 slowly. Meditate on the words "easy" and "light." Ask God to show you what His yoke looks like for your current situation.
- When a worry pops into your head today, practice immediately turning it into a prayer, casting that specific care onto God the moment it arises.

A Moment With God

Talk to God honestly about the weight you feel. Confess any pride that keeps you from releasing your burdens. Ask for His grace to truly cast your cares onto Him and receive His promised rest for your soul.

Thursday: Dressed for Honor: Carrying His Presence

In a Nutshell

The sermon pointed out that before Jesus sat on the colt, the disciples put their garments on it. This act symbolizes being clothed in praise and righteousness, reminding us that any honor we receive comes not from ourselves, but from carrying the presence of the King.

Anchor Verse

Isaiah 61:10 (NIV): "I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels."

Unpacking the Word

Picture the scene again: the untied colt is brought to Jesus. But before the King sits, there's an intermediary step – the disciples lay their cloaks, their outer garments, across its back. This wasn't just for comfort; it was an act of honor, preparing a makeshift saddle worthy of royalty. Pastor Reuben drew a beautiful parallel between these garments and the spiritual "clothing" God provides for us.

The Bible often uses clothing imagery. We're told to put on the "garment of praise" (Isaiah 61:3) and, as our anchor verse declares, God clothes us with "garments of salvation" and a "robe of righteousness." When the disciples placed their cloaks on the donkey, it became, as Pastor Reuben quipped, a V.I.D. – a Very Important Donkey! Why? Not because of the donkey itself, but because of Who it was about to carry and the garments that signified readiness and honor.

As the donkey carried Jesus through the praising crowds, any honor, any special treatment, any palm branches laid down, were directed at Jesus. The donkey was simply the vessel. Pastor Reuben cautioned against the "foolish donkey" mindset – thinking the praise and favor are because of *us*. How easy it is, when God uses us or blesses us, to start thinking, "Wow, I must be really special! Look at what *I'm* achieving." We forget that any true significance, any lasting honor, comes solely from hosting the presence of Jesus in our lives.

Being "clothed" in salvation and righteousness isn't something we earn; it's a gift received through faith in Christ. Living in praise and thanksgiving is like wearing those garments daily. It positions us to receive God's favor and presence. Praise, as the sermon noted, shifts our focus from our problems to God's power. It acknowledges His goodness and past faithfulness (testimonies), building faith for the future. When we are "dressed" in praise and aware of His righteousness covering us, we become vessels ready for Him to use.

Let's strive to be donkeys who understand where the honor truly belongs. Let's consciously "put on" the garments of salvation, righteousness, and praise each day. By focusing on Him, thanking Him for His work in us and through us, we rightly attribute the glory to the One riding on, dwelling within – Jesus Christ Himself. It's His presence that makes us significant.

Pause and Reflect

- When have you been tempted to take credit or feel pride for something God accomplished through you? How can remembering the donkey help keep you humble?
- What does it practically mean for you to "put on the garment of praise" or live clothed in His righteousness throughout your day?
- How does focusing on gratitude for God's past actions (testimonies) affect your ability to carry His presence and face current challenges?

Faith in Action

- Start your day by intentionally "putting on" your spiritual garments. Pray Isaiah 61:10 over yourself, thanking God for salvation and righteousness. Then, spend a few minutes praising Him for specific things.
- Choose one testimony of God's faithfulness in your life. Share it with someone today, giving God the glory.
- When you receive a compliment or achieve success today, consciously redirect the honor to God in your heart or even verbally if appropriate (e.g., "Thank you, I'm grateful for how God helped me").

A Moment With God

Thank God for clothing you with salvation and righteousness through Jesus. Ask Him to help you live a life of praise and thanksgiving, always remembering that any honor comes from carrying His presence. Pray against the temptation to seek glory for yourself.

Friday: The Purpose of the Ride: Journey to the Cross (Good Friday)

In a Nutshell

While Palm Sunday celebrated Jesus' entry as King on a donkey, today, Good Friday, we remember the ultimate purpose of that journey. The ride towards Jerusalem was a determined step towards the cross, where He would bear the greatest burden for our freedom.

Anchor Verse

Isaiah 53:5 (NIV): "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed."

Unpacking the Word

On Palm Sunday, the crowds shouted "Hosanna!" celebrating the arrival of a King. Jesus rode on a humble donkey, a sign of peace and humility, fulfilling prophecy. But that triumphant entry, filled with palms and praise, was not the final destination. It was a significant stop on a determined journey – a journey leading directly to the cross.

The donkey carried Jesus towards the temple, where He would confront hypocrisy. But ultimately, it carried Him towards Calvary. The cheers of the crowd would soon turn to cries of "Crucify Him!" The King who arrived in humility would embrace the ultimate humiliation. The One who offered an easy yoke would take upon Himself the crushing weight of the world's sin.

Today, Good Friday, we shift our focus from the outward celebration to the profound sacrifice it foreshadowed. The donkey, known for bearing burdens, carried the One who would soon become the ultimate Burden-Bearer. As Isaiah prophesied centuries earlier, He would be pierced for *our* transgressions, crushed for *our* iniquities. The peace we long for, the healing we desperately need, was purchased at an immense cost – His suffering, His wounds, His death.

The freedom Pastor Reuben spoke about – freedom from being tied up, freedom from fear, freedom from the penalty of sin – finds its source here, at the foot of the cross. Jesus didn't just talk about setting captives free; He paid the ransom with His own blood. He didn't just offer a light burden; He took the unbearable burden of our guilt and shame upon Himself.

The donkey carried a King moving willingly towards sacrifice. Jesus knew what awaited Him in Jerusalem. His ride wasn't one of blissful ignorance but of resolute love and obedience to the Father's will. He rode towards suffering so that we could ride into eternal life. He endured the darkness so we could walk in His light.

As we reflect today, let the image of the humble donkey carrying Jesus remind us of the greater journey He undertook. Let us remember the depth of His love, the pain He endured, and the incredible exchange made on the cross – our sin for His righteousness, our bondage for His freedom, our death for His life. The King who rode the donkey gave His all, for us.

Pause and Reflect

- How does understanding the ultimate destination (the cross) add depth to the story of Jesus riding the donkey into Jerusalem?
- Reflect on Isaiah 53:5. Personalize it: "He was pierced for *my* transgressions, crushed for *my* iniquities." What emotions or thoughts does this stir in you?
- Considering the immense burden Jesus carried on the cross, how does it reframe the burdens you are tempted to cling to yourself?

Faith in Action

- Spend dedicated time today reading one of the Gospel accounts of the crucifixion (e.g., Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 19). Meditate on the details and thank Jesus for specific aspects of His sacrifice.
- Listen to a worship song focused on the cross (e.g., "The Wonderful Cross," "How Deep the Father's Love For Us," "Man of Sorrows"). Let the music guide your heart in gratitude and awe.
- Reflect on one specific sin or burden Jesus took for you on the cross. Verbally thank Him for bearing it and releasing you from its power and penalty.

A Moment With God

Approach God with a heart full of gratitude for the sacrifice of Jesus. Thank Him for bearing your sins, for the punishment He took, and for the peace and healing offered through His wounds. Ask for a deeper understanding and appreciation of the cross this Good Friday.

Saturday: The Transformed Donkey: Living Our Calling

In a Nutshell

This week, reflecting on "Donkeys for Jesus," we've journeyed from feeling overlooked yet seen by God (Mon), to being untied for His purpose (Tue), exchanging our heavy burdens for His rest (Wed), realizing our honor comes from carrying His presence (Thu), and remembering the ultimate sacrifice that makes it all possible (Fri). Today, we embrace the call to live as transformed people, carrying His presence into the world.

Anchor Verse

Romans 12:2 (NIV): "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

Unpacking the Word

Our week began contemplating the humble donkey – seemingly ordinary, perhaps stubborn, definitely a burden-bearer. Yet, this creature was specifically chosen by the King (Monday). We saw how Jesus desires to untie us from everything that holds us back, not just for relief, but for His divine purpose (Tuesday). This freedom involves a beautiful exchange: handing over our anxieties and stresses to receive His soul-rest and manageable yoke (Wednesday).

We then considered the garments placed on the donkey, reminding us that our true significance and honor derive not from ourselves, but from being clothed in His righteousness and praise, carrying His presence into the world (Thursday). All of this – the choosing, the untying, the exchange, the clothing – finds its ultimate meaning and power in the sacrifice Jesus willingly made, the destination of His Jerusalem journey (Friday).

So, what now? We are called to live as *transformed* donkeys. The donkey that carried Jesus wasn't the same afterwards; it had participated in a royal procession, hosted the King of Kings. Likewise, encountering Jesus, being set free by Him, and understanding His sacrifice should change us fundamentally. As Romans 12:2 urges, we are not to conform to the world's patterns (of self-reliance, pride, worry, seeking worldly honor) but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

This transformation enables us to discern and do God's will, as Pastor Reuben highlighted when discussing Matthew 7. It's not just about performing religious acts, but about knowing the Father's heart, hearing His voice, and walking in obedience fueled by love and gratitude. A renewed mind sees burdens as opportunities to trust, weaknesses as platforms for God's strength, and daily life as a chance to carry His presence.

Living as a "donkey for Jesus" today means embracing our God-given identity: chosen, freed, burden-lifted, clothed in Him. It means consciously rejecting the pull towards self-importance or crippling insecurity. It means allowing His presence within us to guide our steps, shape our responses, and overflow into the lives of others. It's about humbly carrying the King, letting His light shine through our ordinary lives, and pointing others towards the One who brings true transformation and hope. Let's walk in that calling today.

Pause and Reflect

- Looking back over the week's themes (chosen, freed, burden-exchanged, clothed, redeemed), which aspect resonated most deeply with you and why?
- How does the call to be "transformed by the renewing of your mind" connect with the journey from being a 'tied-up donkey' to one carrying the King?
- In what practical ways can you live out your calling to "carry His presence" in your interactions and activities today?

Faith in Action

- Review your notes or reflections from the week. Identify one key takeaway and pray about how to integrate it more fully into your life starting today.
- Practice "mind renewal": When a negative or worldly thought pattern arises (e.g., worry, comparison, pride), consciously replace it with a truth from this week's devotionals or Scripture (e.g., "I am chosen," "His yoke is easy," "My worth is in Christ").
- Look for an opportunity today to serve someone humbly, seeing it as an act of "carrying Jesus" to them through kindness or help.

A Moment With God

Pray for ongoing transformation. Ask the Holy Spirit to continue renewing your mind so you can better discern and follow God's will. Thank Him for the privilege of being chosen and used by Him, and ask for grace to carry His presence faithfully today.

Sunday: Risen King, Ready Hearts! (Easter Sunday)

In a Nutshell

From Palm Sunday's donkey ride to the darkness of Good Friday, today we celebrate the glorious climax: Easter! The King who humbly entered Jerusalem has conquered death, and as we gather for worship, we come with expectant hearts to meet the Risen Lord.

Anchor Verse

Psalm 100:4 (NKJV): "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name."

Unpacking the Word

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! Today is the day death was defeated, hope was resurrected, and the promise of eternal life burst forth from an empty tomb. The journey that began with a humble donkey carrying a King into Jerusalem, which passed through the shadows of betrayal, denial, and crucifixion, culminates today in glorious, world-changing victory. The One the donkey carried, the One who bore our sins, lives!

As we prepare to gather this morning, our hearts should echo the explosive joy of that first Easter morning. We aren't just coming for a routine service; we are coming to celebrate and encounter the living King Jesus. Psalm 100:4 gives us a beautiful entrance strategy: "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise." Our approach matters. Let's not rush into His presence preoccupied or burdened, but consciously choose to enter with hearts overflowing with gratitude for His sacrifice and His resurrection.

Thanksgiving prepares the way. Think of it: What are you thankful for this Easter? Forgiveness of sins? The promise of heaven? His presence with you right now? Victory over death? Let gratitude well up within you. And let that gratitude burst forth into praise! Praise Him for who He is – the Risen Lord, the conquering King, the Lamb who was slain and is worthy!

Today, as we come together as the body of Christ, let's do so with expectation. Expect to sense His presence. Expect His Word to speak deeply to your spirit. Expect the Holy Spirit to move among us, bringing healing, encouragement, and fresh purpose. Let's lay aside distractions, silence the competing voices in our minds, and focus wholeheartedly on Him. Surrender your plans, your worries, your preconceived notions, and simply be open to what the Risen Lord wants to do in and through us today.

The King who rode the donkey reigns victorious. Let us, His people, enter His courts with loud shouts of praise and deep wells of thanksgiving, ready to worship Him in spirit and in truth. He is worthy!

A Moment With God

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, thank You for the miracle of Easter! Thank You, Jesus, for conquering sin and death. As I prepare for worship, fill my heart with overwhelming thanksgiving and joyful praise. Quiet my mind from distractions and make me expectant to encounter You, the Risen King. Prepare our hearts as a church family to receive Your word and respond in faith. Let Your presence be tangible among us today.

Invitation

We look forward to worshipping with you this morning. Join us at 10am for coffee and fellowship and 10:30am for our weekly Sunday gathering. You can find us on Level 8 at Tanjung Point, here in Tanjung Tokong, Penang, Malaysia. To read this entire devotional, or more information, please visit our website, ghapm.org.