Palm Sunday: A Way of Looking at Life
by BGAV Executive Director John Upton

I have just discovered an aspect of Jesus’ life that I have seemed to miss until recently. When I thought about Palm Sunday and Jesus borrowing—more like commandeering—a colt to ride on through Jerusalem, it suddenly occurred to me just how often Jesus actually borrowed things. Think about it: Jesus borrowed the water he turned into wine and the jars along with it. He borrowed a boat to teach from. He borrowed houses in which to teach and heal, and some of those houses even had their roofs ripped open. He borrowed the lunch of a young boy to feed 5,000 people. He borrowed all kinds of family members to follow him. He even borrowed Matthew from the IRS. On the last night of his life, he borrowed an upper room to share a meal. That same night, he borrowed a garden for prayer. He was born in a borrowed barn, died on a borrowed cross, and was buried in a borrowed tomb. That is quite a list.

We always speak of Jesus as a giver, which, of course, he was. No one gave more than he, and he gave because of his love for us. So, what was he trying to teach us in the borrowing? I suppose he was trying to remind us we are all borrowers in this life. Very little actually belongs to us. I even live with the legalized fiction that I own my own home, though my bank might take issue with that.
I live a life that is loaned to me for a brief time, and one day I will give it back. Even now, it is in God's hands.

I guess Jesus is reminding all of us that our living is pure grace; it's all a gift. We didn't buy this life or even earn it. All we can do is hold it lightly for a while and try to do something with it that is worthy and glad and thankful. Unfortunately, most days we don't live that way at all. We have chosen, instead, to live lives that are anxious, fisted, and ungenerous. We live among a people now who are living anxious, fisted, and entitled lives. We need “good news.” We need another way.

It is actually comforting to be reminded that we ride through life on borrowed colts. Don't try to pay for it; don't try to beat it to death. Just accept it and ride, knowing it isn't yours. Be thankful and be free. Maybe with that spirit we can lend some grace to others. Maybe we can learn to be more generous with others. So if someone asks you for your coat, you can give it to them. Give them your cloak as well. Lend, expecting nothing in return, even with your enemies. Jesus said that our reward will be great. If we do this, he said we will be called sons and daughters of the Most High.

Wear your life like a bargain garment that fits you perfectly, and when your Messiah comes riding by on his borrowed colt, lay down your garment and sing your praises, as if you are someone who is glad and free.

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