

Willow River Parish: Clear Lake, Deer Park, and Faith Family

Title: 102 Micro Ducks and the Cross

Lesson: Matthew 21:1-11

21 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ² 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. ³ If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away." ⁴ This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: ⁵ "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.'" ⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. ⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. ⁸ A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ 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!" ¹⁰ When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" ¹¹ The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

(Slide 1) Friends, today, as we observe Palm Sunday, we hear the story of Jesus entering Jerusalem.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the people rejoiced. They spread their cloaks on the road, waved palm branches, and shouted: "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!"

For them, it was a day of joy. It was a day of victory. It was a day filled with expectations and hope.

The people welcomed Jesus with their own expectations. They believed that something was about to change, that their lives would be different. But if we take a closer look, their expectations were a little misdirected.

They wanted to be freed from Roman oppression. They wanted a strong king. They wanted visible change. In other words, they wanted what they believed they needed. However, Jesus did not go the way they expected. The path Jesus walked was not a path leading to a throne, but a path leading to the cross.

(Slide 2) The letter to the Philippians says: "Though he was in the form of God, he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, and humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross."

The people expected a rising king, but Jesus chose the path of humility. The people expected power, but Jesus chose sacrifice. The people expected their problems to be solved, but Jesus walked toward the cross for the salvation of our souls.

Friends, here we discover an important truth: Our thoughts are different from God's thoughts.

(Slide 3) I would like to share a small story that happened in my family this week. My son is six years old, and as you know, he is in kindergarten. It was Wednesday morning, and one of his classmates brought several small micro duck toys from home to share with the class.

But unfortunately, there were not enough for everyone. So my son did not receive one.

That evening, he kept talking to me about it. He even said, "Dad, why didn't I get one?" "Did I do something wrong?" For him, it was a very big deal.

To adults, it may seem small and insignificant, but to a six-year-old child, it was a real experience of hurt and exclusion.

No matter how much I tried to comfort him, telling him it was not his fault, that it was simply because the other child did not bring enough, he had already been hurt.

I also realized that last Sunday, I forgot to ask for prayer regarding my wife's spiritual retreat.

From Monday to Friday, she attended a five-day spiritual retreat for Korean pastors' wives in Tucson, Arizona. For those who were born and raised here, traveling alone by plane may not feel like a big deal. But for others, it can be quite an adventure.

For my wife, this trip to Arizona was a big step. It was her first time flying alone in the United States, so she must have felt quite nervous. Still, she chose to go—not as someone's wife, not as someone's mom, but as herself—to meet others in similar situations, to build relationships, and to experience a meaningful time.

Anyway, on Thursday, my son was still expressing his disappointment even during a video call with her at the retreat. Hoping that this micro duck would not become a deep wound for him, I suggested that we try ordering one from Amazon. So we looked at many options together, but he was very careful, trying to choose the best one.

We checked Amazon, Walmart, and Target websites, but in the end, he couldn't decide. So I told him that on Friday evening, on our way to pick up his mom from the airport, we could stop by Walmart and see if they had the micro ducks.

And thankfully, although it was not exactly what he wanted, we found a set of 50 micro ducks at the store. He was still hesitant—whether to get that or order from Amazon—but I told him I would order more online as well, and after some convincing, he agreed. So we bought the ducks, went to the airport, picked up my wife, and returned home.

The next morning, he came to me and asked me to order 50 glow-in-the-dark micro ducks from Amazon. And after placing the order, he finally looked satisfied and smiled.

Then suddenly, my wife said something: “Now that I think about it, there was a welcome note on the desk in my room at the retreat, and there were two small ducks on it. They were gifts for the participants, and I thought they were cute, so I brought them home.”

So we checked, and indeed, there were two micro ducks. If you look at the picture, you can see the two small ducks—those are the ones she brought.

What is interesting is this: Those two ducks did not appear after Wednesday's incident. They had already been there since Monday.

Friends, through this small experience, I realized something. God is already at work even before we are aware of it. God prepares even before we recognize our needs.

In the end, my son did not receive one duck at school on Wednesday morning, but eventually, he ended up with 102 ducks. How many times more is that? 102 times.

But what is important is not the number of ducks. What truly matters is this: God's way of working is different from our expectations. God's work is deeper and greater than we can imagine.

Friends, the people in Jerusalem also welcomed Jesus with their own needs. They wanted a political king. They wanted visible solutions. But Jesus did not come in the way they expected.

Instead, he went toward the cross for what they truly needed—the salvation of their souls.

On that day, the people shouted “Hosanna,” but the end of that road was the cross. And that cross was not failure. It was the deepest expression of God’s love, the most complete path of salvation, and what we all truly needed.

Friends, sometimes we also say to God, “God, this is what I need.” “God, please do this.”

But God often leads us in a different way than we expect. Sometimes that path is hard to understand. Sometimes it feels painful. But this is what we believe: God is already at work. God prepares before us. God works more deeply than we can ever imagine.

Today, we worship shouting “Hosanna.” But at the same time, we remember that this road leads to the cross. So today, we are not simply invited to remain in celebration, but to walk the path of Jesus.

(Slide 4) Beyond saying, “I welcome Jesus,” we are invited to confess, “I will follow that path.”

Now, we will take a moment to walk that journey together. From “Hosanna” to the cross, let us reflect on that path together. Amen.