

Palm Sunday

What different story would we be telling today if the unnamed owners of the donkey had refused to give it up? Maybe we would have no story of the triumphal entry, at least not in the way Jesus wanted it. No matter how unknown a person is, he or she can still play a crucial role in the unfolding of God's plan. The Lord needs each one of us as he needed the unnamed owners of the donkey in the reading. We are not told who these owners of the donkey are but the fact that they understood that "the Lord" refers to Jesus and voluntarily gave up the donkey shows that they could be his secret disciples or admirers. Otherwise one would have expected them to answer, "But who is this Lord who needs my donkey?"

A donkey was a very big thing in those days. The donkey was the equivalent of a car, a truck and a tractor all in one. It was a car because people used it to move around and do their shopping, a truck because it was used to carry load, and a tractor because it was used in cultivating the land. Add to this the fact that the donkey had never been ridden, that means it was brand new and had a very high market value. You can see that giving up the donkey just because the Lord needed it was a very big sacrifice. It was a generous and heroic act of faith.

Now, compare the faith response of the owners of the donkey to that of some of the faithful in our churches today.

A visiting preacher was really getting the congregation moving. Near the end of his sermon he said, "This church has really got to walk," to which someone in the back yelled, "Let her walk preacher." The preacher then said, "If this church is going to go it's got to get up and run," to which someone again yelled with gusto, "Let her run preacher." Feeling the surge of the church, the preacher then said with even louder gusto, "If this church is going to go it's got to really fly," and once again with ever greater gusto, someone yelled, "Let her fly preacher, let her fly." The preacher then seized the moment and stated with even greater gusto, "If this church is really going to fly it's going to need money." There was silence. Then someone in the back seat cried, "Let her walk preacher, let her walk."

Max Lucado reminds us that each of us has got a donkey that the Lord needs. Here is his reflection on using our donkey for the service of the Lord:

Sometimes I get the impression that God wants me to give him something and sometimes I don't give it because I don't know for sure, and then I feel bad because I've missed my chance. Other times I know he wants something but I don't give it because I'm too selfish. And other times, too few times, I hear him and I obey him and feel honoured that a gift of mine would be used to carry Jesus to another place. And still other times I wonder if my little deeds today will make a difference in the long haul.

Maybe you have those questions, too. All of us have a donkey. You and I each have something in our lives, which, if given back to God, could, like the donkey, move Jesus and his story further down the road. Maybe you can sing or hug or program a computer or speak a second language or write a check. Whichever, that's your donkey.

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Whichever, your donkey belongs to him. It really does belong to him. Your gifts are his and the donkey was his. The original wording of the instructions Jesus gave to his disciples is proof: "If anyone asks you why you are taking the donkeys, you are to say, 'Its Lord is in need.'" [Lucado, *And the Angels were Silent*, p. 54]

So, what is the name of your donkey? The Lord has need of it.