

***Christ To The World -
In The Name Of The Lord***

Mark 11:1-11

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As Jesus is to the Church, so the Church is to be to the world.

This one sentence summarizes everything that we as a church are about.
Please keep that sentence in your mind as we read this week's passage.

MARK 11:1-11, p.47 (NT)

The part of the story that resonates with our series theme is the phrase that the people called out:
"Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord!"

I wonder if the people who shouted these words knew what they meant.
And what the implications were.

If you pay attention to earlier passages from Mark, and sections from other gospels, it is pretty clear what the people wanted.

They wanted a political leader.
They wanted a strong figure who would stand up to the Romans.
They wanted someone who would give them a better, free-er life.

They dreamed about this desire.
They passed the hope down from parents to children.
And now - now it looked like Jesus was the One.
Hence the celebration.

They got one little detail wrong, though.
They were confusing their **own** desires with **God's** desires.
They were confusing **their** dreams for the future with **God's** plan for the future.
So, they shouted *"in the name of the Lord"*
What they really meant was *"in the name of the people of Israel."*

Jesus, however, couldn't afford to be confused as they were.
No matter what others wanted or thought or said, he was ultimately responsible for his own thinking and acting.

He, after all, was the one coming *In the name of the Lord*.
And so he would have to carry that out properly.

In the name of.....
Are we clear on what that means?

This week Manitoba Premier Gary Doer was named as Canadian ambassador-designate to USA. He'll go to Washington in the name of Canada.

He'll be there as the voice of Canada.
He'll be there to represent and promote Canadian interests.
He'll be there as an important communication link between Canada and the States.
In the name of Canada.

So, Jesus enters Jerusalem *In the name of the Lord*.
He came as the voice of God.
He came to carry out the will of God.
He came as the vital and primary link between God and the people.
No matter what others may want or expect, he had to be about **God's** business.
He would be successful if he fulfilled **God's** expectations, no one else's.
No matter how disappointed they'd be.
Which, it seems, many were.

Jesus couldn't bow to their wishes.
And he couldn't check out - **even though** he knew that to step forward *in the name of the Lord* meant he was stepping towards a violent confrontation with evil, and suffering, and death. Coming *in the name of the Lord*

would cost him absolutely everything he had.

Which is why the gospel writer Luke records in 9:51 that Jesus *resolutely set out towards Jerusalem*. He needed to be **focused**, and **committed** and **determined** in order to be effective in service *in the name of the Lord*.

So what?

Well, here's the what.

As Jesus is to the Church, so the Church is to be to the world.

Hear these words from Colossians 3:17 -

*And whatever you do, in word or deed, do **EVERYTHING**
in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

Do everything *in the name of the Lord Jesus...*

Pretend that you are Gary Doer going to Washington.

Newly appointed.

Ready and eager to serve.

On duty in every respect.

Instead of serving Ottawa, though, we serve the Kingdom of Heaven.

That could mean all sorts of things for our lives.

And like last week, where someone came up to me after the service with a wonderful insight into the reading from Mark 10 - one that I'd never even considered, but was sparkling and valid - I'm sure you'll think of much more than I'll toss your way this morning.

But let me offer up four implications that I believe come as a result of our commitment to follow Jesus as his apprentices, as a result of our willingness to pick up the call of the Scriptures to - *do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

Living life in the name of the Lord is:

- a privilege
- an opportunity
- a responsibility
- a lifestyle

Living in the name of the Lord is, then, **A PRIVILEGE.**

What a wonderful and awesome thing it is to be allowed to represent God.

Think of it.

The almighty Creator. Appointing people like us to do his work.

And trusting us to do it well.

Part of me wonders how wise a decision that was on his part.

Letting me in on his work?

Trusting me?

Hmmmm.

I've spent some time this summer doing renovation work on my son's house. One of the tasks involved painting. Epoxy paint on the bathtub.

Now, in my own defense I have to say that epoxy paint is challenging to work with. It is thin and sags easily. Work it too much and it becomes viscous and shows every brush mark. Needs to be prepped carefully and mixed accurately.

I did my best. Honest.

Sweated profusely.

And the job turned out not half bad. Saved the tub from a trip to the dump.

But there are little runs along the one side. And a couple of uneven surfaces where I didn't roll and tip out quite evenly enough.

And that's about par for the course.

Took me three attempts before I got the toilet flushing without squirting water everywhere.

That's how my whole life goes.

And God knows that.

Yet **still** he invites me into a partnership of service.

To live *in the name of the Lord*.

Wow!

And you, too!

What an honour.

What grace!

What a privilege!

My life gets filled up with eternal and divine purpose.

What I do will in some mysterious way get rolled up into the great and cosmic plan of God.

My life matters because God makes it matter.

Absolutely, unbelievably **amazing!!**

No wonder Colossians 3 calls us to live in the name of the Lord

giving thanks to God the Father.

Living in the name of the Lord is not just a privilege.

It is also **AN OPPORTUNITY**.

One of the things that I simply don't understand about contemporary culture is the need some people seem to have for watching thriller movies. Or doing stuff like, say, tying yourself in on the end of an ubber-long elastic band and jumping off the top of a perfectly good building.

Bungie jumping.

Why?

For the thrill, they tell me. You're on the edge. Out of control. The rush.

What?

Am I missing something?

Does life not offer enough moments of excitement and challenge?

Want a challenge and thrill?

Want to face situations where things will be *really* out of control and unpredictable?

Look for opportunities to represent Jesus in our city.

You'll be able to stand up and be a voice for people who have no voice.

Like Jesus did.

You'll be able to sit down and hear out someone who carries a burden inside.

Like Jesus did.

You'll be able to share the way to salvation to someone uncertain of what's after death.

Through Jesus.

You'll be able to offer some bread and meat to the hungry.

Like Jesus did.

You'll be able to challenge and correct people who are headed down a destructive path, and offer a constructive option.

Like Jesus did.

What opportunities!!!

When you deliberately make the prayerful commitment to Christ to live your life as his ambassador, you have NO idea what will come your way.

Let me assure you it will include the unexpected.

But when you seize those opportunities that God's wise providence places before you, the rewards are unbelievable.

Yes - it may be exhausting and demanding.

But the rewards? Can't beat em!

Living in the name of the Lord is a privilege. It is an opportunity.

It is also **A RESPONSIBILITY**

Because people **DO** watch.

When you are identified as a Christian, people **DO** notice.

And what you do **DOES** in some way colour the reputation of Jesus Christ in our city.

I love the words of the Heidelberg Catechism, Q/A 122, in response to the petition of the Lord's Prayer that says "*Hallowed be your name*"

In wondering what that might mean the Catechism suggests this as an interpretive prayer:

"Lord, Help us to direct all our living -

what we think, say and do -

so that your name will never be blasphemed

because of us

but always honoured and praised."

Does your life paint a picture of a relationship with Jesus as being an inviting thing or not?

As a burden or a joy?

As significant, or incidental?

As life-restoring or life-destroying?

As selfish or generous?

Yes, there is a responsibility.

Also because when God gives us a task the outcome does, in part at least, depend on our efforts. Yes, he keeps the final word for himself. But what we do certainly colours the process, and has tangible effects along the way.

Just like the work of the Canadian High Commission officials in Kenya.

Suaad Hagi Mohamud had her passport revoked by authorities who acted *In the name* of Canada. And ended up in jail. Whatever else you say about the case, it is certainly clear that the actions of official Canadian representatives had **real** consequences.

So do our actions.

They may be negative.

They may be positive.

But there **will** be consequences.

We carry responsibility when we sign on to living in the name of the Lord.

It is a privilege.

It is an opportunity.

It is a responsibility.

And, living in the name of the Lord is, then, **A LIFESTYLE**.

We can't do it part-time.

And it is not only about formally religious matters.

And it is not only about the private corners of our lives.

It is a lifestyle.

In big events and little moments.
On Sunday - and Wednesday afternoon.
With our spouse, and in our political debates.
When we pray at church. And when we go on vacation.

Earlier this week I was in a bit of group conversation along with someone who honestly does want to life in the name of the Lord.

This person shared a burden of wondering about what next chapter God may be calling this person toward in order to be truly a servant for Him. Wanting to know, but unsure. Doesn't feel to be really serving right now.

And yet, somewhere else in the conversation it came out how this same individual had just come from being a support to a person in a very challenging and anxious situation - taking the time to give encouragement and a hug.

I submit to you that this individual **IS** living a lifestyle in the name of the Lord!

And there's Joe - manager of a Catholic Aboriginal Retreat Centre near Arnprior. Who laid down his wrench, giving up the necessary repair of his pickup truck and opening the door of his home to a stranded boater.

Doing so because, as he put it. *after all the Good Lord has done for me, rescuing me from the bottle and giving me the gift of life, that is the LEAST I can do for Him.*

And, with a grin and a wave, saying to the boater after a morning together driving all over Ottawa for spare parts to repair a busted outboard, *"Now you be sure to pass the favour on to the next one who needs some sunshine!"*

Nothing that would make headlines in the *Ottawa Citizen*.

But part of a lifestyle *in the name of the Lord*.

What have these apprentices of Jesus learned?

They've learned to pause and wonder,

"How might God be looking at this person?"

"What would God's heart be towards this situation?"

And then they act accordingly.

And their lives become an example and challenge for us...

...for us....

.....in the name of the Lord.