

THE 'Diverse Excellencies' OF CHRIST

Mark 11:1-11

Sunday | April 9th, 2017 | Pastor Patrick Bowler

CONSULT THE SCRIPTURES

Mark 11:1-11 "Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.'" And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. And some of those standing there said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!" And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve."

Revelation 5:1-6 "Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. And one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals. And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain..."

(See also Ps. 118:25-26, Zech. 9:9, Malachi 3:1-3, Col. 1:15-23)

CONSULT THE SCHOLARS

[Jonathan Edwards] "A lion is a devourer, one that is able and desires to make terrible slaughter of others; and no creature more easily falls a prey to him than a lamb. And Christ is here represented not only as a Lamb, a creature very likely to be slain, but a 'Lamb as it had been slain,' that is, with the marks of its deadly wounds appearing on it. That which I would observe from the words, for the subject of my present discourse, is this, namely—There is an admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies in Jesus Christ."

"The lion and the lamb, though very diverse kinds of creatures... have each their particular excellencies. The lion excels in strength, and in the majesty of his appearance

and voice. The lamb excels in meekness and patience, besides the excellent nature of the creature as good for food, and yielding that which is fit for our clothing and being suitable to be offered in sacrifice to God. But we see that Christ is in the text compared to both, because the diverse excellencies of both wonderfully meet in him."

"Christ, as he is God, is infinitely great and high above all. He is higher than the kings of earth; for he is King of kings, and Lord of lords. He is higher than the heavens, and higher than the highest angels of heaven. So great is he, that all men, all kings and princes, are as worms of the dust before him... He is so high that he is infinitely above any need of us; above our reach, that we cannot be profitable to him; and above our conceptions, that we cannot comprehend him... And yet he is one of infinite condescension. None are so low and inferior, but Christ's condescension is sufficient to take a gracious notice of them. He condescends not only to the angels... but he also condescends to such poor creatures as men; and that not only so as to take notice of princes and great men, but of those that are of meanest of rank and degree... such as are commonly despised by their fellow creatures, Christ does not despise."

"As Christ is a divine person, he is infinitely holy and just, hating sin, and deposed to execute [fitting] punishment for sin. He is the Judge of the world, and the infinitely just Judge of it, and will not at all acquit the wicked, or by any means clear the guilty. And yet he is infinitely gracious and merciful. Though his justice be so strict with respect to all sin, and every breach of the law, yet he has grace sufficient for every sinner, and even the chief of sinners. And it is not only sufficient for the most unworthy to show them mercy, and bestow some good upon them, but to bestow the greatest good; yea, it is sufficient to bestow all good upon them, and to do all things for them."

DISCUSS

1. (Opener) Share a time when you encountered a celebrity. Culturally, what is it about celebrities that almost make them appear super-human?
2. Read excerpts from Jonathan Edwards sermon (above), along with Rev. 5:1-6a and discuss. What stands out to you?
3. As a group, identify some of the "Diverse Excellencies" of Jesus from Scripture.
4. David Garland wrote, "God does not win by sending armies into bloody battles but by sending his Son to the cross."² What are some of the other ways God chooses "what is foolish in the world to shame the wise" (1 Cor. 1:27)? Why is this significant?
5. What immediate applications can be made in light of this text?
6. We enter the "passion week" of Christ this week. What are you particularly thankful for with both Good Friday and Easter on the horizon?
7. As a group, continue fix your gaze on Good Friday and Easter and spend time in prayer in anticipation.

¹Excerpts from Jonathan Edwards's sermon, *The Excellency of Christ*.

²David Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), p. 431.