

Topic: “Donkey One – How to Get the Job Done” **Text:** Luke 19:28-40 HPC 3/28/10

INTRO: One of the joys of serving here at HPC is your “get the job done, can do attitude!”

In the past seven years you have:

- Paid off the FLC and Solomon House to become a debt free church.
- Retrofitted the sanctuary for 21st century ministry
- Acquired the back corner to position yourself to expand our educational space
- Hired Directors for Discipleship, Worship Arts, and Youth Ministry.
- Added high speed Internet, website, server and e-communications.
- Facilitated a growing Life Group Ministry.
- Created numerous opportunities to grow disciples toward spiritual maturity.
- Become Purpose Driven with a permission giving delegated leadership model
- Played key roles in birthing Solomon House, Angels and Sparrows, and our joint Embrace Haiti mission in Bayaha.

Segue: Friends in our passage this morning, Jesus shows us how to get the job done as we explore 6 principles relevant to us today.

1. PREPARE PLAN

- A. Simple Plan - K.I.S.S. Keep It Simple Savior.** Jesus is meticulous in his arrangements and simple in implementation. At the right time, two of his disciples are to ask the owner for his donkey. Call it Donkey One! Just like our President has Air Force One, Jesus has Donkey One. Both are leading figures and both very much in the news these Holy Week days. The only difference is their ride!

Air Force One has 8 jet engines to get it airborne quickly when security is an issue, can fly at 630 knots, and travel 6,800 miles without refueling. It has multiple electronic and material countermeasures to ward off an aerial attack. Our president’s cabin is located in the forward section with couches that fold out into beds. At his service are 80 phones linked by 238 miles of communications cable along with Internet and satellite links. In case of emergency there is a medical room on board complete with a pharmacy, an X-ray machine, an operating table and a surgeon. Hungry? It has two galleys staffed by 5 chefs who can serve up to 100 meals per flight, the average size entourage on board.

Donkey One, meanwhile, comes equipped with 4 sometimes undersized sturdy legs, no galley, and an uncomfortable perch to straddle. It has a stubborn on again off again locomotion that is a cross between a run-a-way Toyota and a clunker that refuses to run. With it comes a communications system of two ears that may or may not heed your commands. **The real question** is why Jesus desires conveyance at all. He’s been walking for 3-years and has just completed the 90-mile hike from Galilee to Bethany. And why get one for this short trip up to Jerusalem – get one with unlimited mileage!

- B. Unconventional Plan** – The incongruity of Jesus plan involves 3 parts:

1. **Angaria** - the owner is familiar with “**Angaria**” – a custom by which a dignitary such as a rabbi like Jesus can procure the use of someone’s property for personal use. Certainly after 3-years of miracles and confrontations, Jesus is well known. No need for an *Enterprise* rental when you can get a free loaner!
2. **Father’s wishes** – Jesus is implementing a plan that will precisely expedite his Father’s wishes by fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah.

Zechariah 9:9 – “Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

Jesus plan is in concert with his Father’s plan and hour. He is lodging in his favorite **Bed and Breakfast, MLM’s**, with proprietors Mary, Lazarus, and Martha to serve him.

3. **Secrecy Motif** - Jesus breaks from his “**Secrecy Motif**.” Over again to this point, he often tells those he heals to “*go and tell no one*” and avoids crowds. Now he is planning his own parade! All of this to say: Jesus is working a Prepared Plan that is part of a greater Divine Plan from his Father in heaven.

APPLY: Friends here at the Patch you have a Prepared Plan to get the job done! It is driven by the 5 Biblical purposes on the banners behind me, the Great Commission and Commandments, and our vision “to take Jesus as he is to people as they are from the heart of Huntersville.” To expedite this, we are currently building momentum with our “*Connecting...Growing...Serving*” plan to double our youth and education space. It is overwhelming - until we realize we can do this together with each other and God.

2. KNOW YOURSELF

- A. **Jesus is secure in his being** – he knows himself. In fact in “**the hour motif**” from John’s gospel, he lives his Father’s purposes to the hour in his ministry as we hear him often say: “*My hour has not yet come.*” Now the hour is drawing near as the cross looms before him. The Parade into Jerusalem is but a prelude to Passion and his ugly death on Good Friday. Three times he tells his disciples he must die and in 3 days be rise again.

- He understands his mission to be a servant messiah not a conquering messiah.
- He understands his Palm Sunday parade is the beginning of the end not a new Davidic Kingdom. Jesus knows what the late Bill Bright once said:

Quote: The way each day will look to you, all starts with who you are looking to.”

Jesus looks to his Father daily and hourly for direction – his spiritual compass is internal and not subject to external winds and forces.

B. Jesus is solid in his doing – he never takes his eye off the cross - his destiny and purpose is to fulfill his Father’s will in our behalf.

APPLY: Friends there is a culture of secure, solid leaders here at HPC who are humbled by the fact that God is bigger than all of us, and some of us are bigger than one of us. With God leading, we are moving forward even in these tough times and trusting God to guide us in our journey of faith.

3. ENLIST HELP

A. Delegate to others– Jesus is not afraid to share the load with others. He is a secure leader who trusts his disciples and gives them authority. He asks two of them to go ahead and secure the colt for him. His confidence spills over on them. It is contagious. For 3-years he has trained them up, and is preparing to pass the baton to them so the early church can emerge from the cross empty tomb and Pentecost.

Mark Twain says it well:

Quote: “Never learn to do anything. If you don’t learn, you will always find someone else to do it for you. If you can’t find someone to delegate to, you aren’t looking hard enough.”

The “I’d rather do it myself” mentality is often the Pride that goes before the fall as we fall from exhaustion and burnout. We are always better together. That is a unique strength of a multi-generational church like HPC.

B. Direct what you expect – Jesus is direct in his instructions. Look at the verbs: Go the village ahead. Find a colt tied there which no one has ever ridden. Untie it. Bring it here.

APPLY: Here at the Patch our Leaders try to keep it simple and involve you.

- The Gale Life Group created a way for us to collect over **\$1,600** with their baby bottle offerings in January. This provides support and counsel for expectant moms to keep or find adoptive homes for their babies rather than aborting them.
- Kristin Mack is wrapping up her HPC “**Give Kids a Book**” drive for schools in poverty areas of Charlotte.
- Today Lindsey McCreary is inviting us to help with her Gold Award Mission to children at Levine Children’s Hospital with coloring books and crayons.
- Linda and Keith Jock involved our Haiti Team in the “Ham for Haiti” with clear direct instructions at our rehearsal meeting the Friday before the Sat. event.

4. ANTICIPATE QUESTIONS

A. Visualize the task – Jesus visualizes the task he has assigned and sees some possible problems. For Ex: What if the owner objects? After all, there are thousands of pilgrims in the holy city for Passover and the owner wants to be sure his colt is available for Jesus and not someone else. Jesus is a known rabbi good to his word. He will borrow Donkey One and see that it is properly returned. He is not greedy – he has no personal motive beyond humble conveyance into the city. Because of the **Angaria principle** and anticipating the problems, his ride will be there for him.

Password: So he works out a password that will authenticate his disciples unloosing the colt and not somebody else. If someone objects, the two disciples are to say: **“The Lord needs it”** and they will be able to take it to their Lord.

B. Realize the goal – Because Jesus anticipates the problems his disciples might face and addresses them, they realize their goal without a hitch.

- **Steve Wright** did the same thing with the sanctuary retrofit as he guided the design team to listen to all the questions and feedback from the various stakeholders in the project and held a town meeting.
- **Steve Green** did the same thing with the Vision Team including a Town meeting several weeks ago to answer questions and concerns.
- **Holly Johnson** did the same thing in convening the interview team for an Afterschool Director to walk through the process we would use before we begin our interviews. They are taking a page from Jesus. It is much easier to ask the questions up front than answer for the mistakes at the end.

5. EXAMINE MOTIVES

A. Pure motive – Jesus’ motive is pure without an ulterior hidden agenda and the two disciples follow suit. We don’t have a case of self-serving glory but a servant-hearted Savior seeking only to humbly do his Father’s will for our sake. This celebration of this Palm Parade will soon fade to the bloody cross. The **“secrecy motif”** is off and Jesus is signing his own death warrant by boldly going public with his mission ride into Jerusalem in the frenzy of Passover.

B. Humble spirit - Donkey One is no Roman General’s white horse in regal military dress or an Air Force One type ride either. He is laughable as an overgrown man on an under-sized never-ridden bucking donkey - a beast of burden known for its stupidity and being a butt of jokes. **Ex.** No need to spend **\$78,000** in lease money to have the choice of riding in a Bentley or a Rolls Royce on his next pastoral visit as the pastor and wife in the front page of *The Herald Weekly* last Thursday. To Jesus, less is more.

6. EXPECT RESPONSE

A. Gather support - Good plans gather support – the disciples and pilgrims receive a Facebook or faith twitter & quickly form a “**flash mob**” in the celebrative entrance of Jesus into the city as 1000’s wave palms and throw down their garments before him. And why not – you too would celebrate the miracles of Jesus and shout for more! The Hallmark movie, *Healing Hands* is a case in point. People lined up & finally made the healer’s life miserable with their overwhelming demands upon him. But back to the moment – what a cast of characters who have been maimed, lamed or blamed.

- Look, there is Lazarus who was dead and now alive!
- Out in front is the Woman at the well who discovered Living Water after so many failed relationships.
- Over there is Zachaeus the tax collector who restored 4x what he took!
- Oh, beside me is Bartimaeus, the blind man who now sees . . .

Wow – what an entourage of disciples, walking miracles, and followers. Many recognize **Jesus as Lord and Messiah**, the king of peace and glory – a man upon whom God has his fingerprints for salvation. **It is the ultimate political street theater with Jesus at center stage in a drama of epic eternal implications.**

B. Have courage – Jesus is risking it all going public during the Passover on the turf where the Powerful Sandredin and High Priest have a monopoly and take serious any threat to their money train from the sale of sacrificial animals. Leadership takes courage to stay the course when the stakes are high. Karl Barth said:

Quote: “Courage is fear that has said its prayers”

Jesus displays this in the garden of Gethsemane. John Wayne put it this way:

Quote: “Courage is being scared to death and saddling up anyway.” – Whatever fears he has, Jesus leaves them with his Father in the garden and saddles up Donkey One anyway! His courage is doing the will of the Father.

C. Overcome naysayers – Jesus has them – they are called Pharisees. They implore Jesus to rebuke his disciples into silence with a gag order in v. 39. To them the disciples might as well be waving Jewish flags of independence from the Romans instead of the palm fronds recorded in the gospel of Mark. **What if the crowds hailing Jesus as heir of King David are intent on restoring a Judean Monarchy?** The Pharisees are scandalized by the political implications of this parade that would attract the attention of the authorities. **So how did Jesus address their rebuke? In your face!**

JESUS REPLY: *“If they (disciples) keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”* Jesus already knows their hearts are hardened. Isn’t that why he weeps over the city knowing of its not too distant destruction in 70 A.D.?

Story: When we were at our first church, we had 5th Sunday night hymn sings. The *Freed Up Five Band* that we had heard at the Montreat Leadership Conference was coming from Florence to lead us at our church. The Elders called a special meeting and instructed me to allow no clapping. Well you guessed it, the band played a favorite 1970's praise song and everyone clapped including the Clerk of Session in the front pew. Five days later I was called on the carpet for allowing clapping. When people are praising God, gag orders or no-clapping orders are superfluous!

CLOSE – Friends – 2000 years later we too can join the parade praising God. Like the disciples, we can say yes to Jesus as Savior and Lord – **OR** – Like the Pharisees we can be more enamored with our own agendas and say to Jesus – **“Count me out!”** I hope you will say: **“Count me in! I want to be on your can do team and get the job done!”**