

Luke 19:28-40

“Neither a borrower nor a lender be.” These words are from Shakespeare’s play, *Hamlet*. And wise words they are. To lend and to borrow is to put a friendship at risk. Yet God is willing to take that risk. In our text Jesus asks to borrow a donkey. He sends two of His disciples into a village to untie a colt with the explanation, “*The Lord has need of it.*”

And could we not say that from the very beginning Jesus was a borrower? He borrowed the womb of the virgin Mary to enter this world. He borrowed a cross upon which to die. And He borrowed the tomb of a rich man in which to be buried.

And the borrowing continues today. Jesus borrows the bread and wine for the Sacrament to come riding into you. He borrows your time to serve your neighbor with it. He borrows your offerings to help others through them. None of these things does He demand. But through all of these, when Jesus borrows them, we are the ones who are richly blessed.

Now suppose the owners of that donkey had said, “No!” Suppose they had turned the disciples away refusing their request. Well certainly a different donkey could have been borrowed. But this is not what Jesus desired. He did not tell His disciples to search the village and bring any old donkey they could find. The Lord had need of this one. This donkey is the one He wanted to borrow.

The same is true of you. Some years ago Jesus instructed two of His disciples to untie you and bring you to Him. These two disciples were your mom and dad. His words to them were clear: “The Lord has need of it...has need of you.” And so they untied you of your sins; of Satan’s bonds; doing this within the water of Holy Baptism, and there bringing you to Jesus.

It’s good for us to keep in mind that the donkey Jesus borrowed was nothing special in its own right. There was nothing about it that caused it to stand out above all other donkeys. It was just a donkey.

I think that you and I have the tendency to become a tad bit proud of ourselves over time. We like to consider our standing within the congregation: the offices we’ve held, the work we’ve done. No wonder others praise us and admire us. We’re a cut above all the others.

But here’s the truth: we’re nothing but jackasses...donkeys. We were tied up in bondage to Satan when Jesus called us. He didn’t desire us because of anything in us. He chose you and me purely out of mercy. “*The Lord has need of it.*” Jesus has need of you and me not because of what we can do for Him, but because of what He will do through us for others.

Donkeys are not to be praised. Jesus rode the donkey into Jerusalem, but all the people were cheering for Jesus, not for the donkey. No one called out, “Three cheers for the donkey! Look how well it rides into the city!” On the contrary, you can be sure that animal smelled awful. It was dropping what donkeys drop all the way into Jerusalem. It was rough. Probably a little stubborn. Surely it was making disgusting sounds.

Yet it did carry Christ. Jesus chose to ride on it. And since He covered it with His holy presence, it didn't matter how lowly, how ugly, how distasteful the donkey was. The crowds came out for Jesus. They praised Jesus. They focused on Jesus. And the donkey was privileged that Jesus rode on it.

Think of the fact that for 2,000 years that donkey has been spoken of by Christians whenever this text is read. And it's all because of Christ. No one would know a thing about that donkey had the Lord not had need of it. But He did. And now we, in fact, love that donkey because of our love for Jesus.

And so with you. All the angels in heaven know your name, and they love you dearly. In truth, you are loved by all Christians the world over. Not because of what you have done, but because Jesus had need of you. He chose you. He brought you to Himself. He borrows you - your time, your talents, your treasures. He serves others through you, riding to them upon you. And He covers you with His holy presence. You will never be just a human being who lived at one time on this earth. You, like that donkey, will be known forever as one the Lord had need of, as one who is loved by Him, and as one who is forgiven by Him.

Yes, forgiven. Because we donkeys need to be forgiven. We are stubborn. We are pretty rough. Quite often we try to throw Jesus off of ourselves and go in life without Him. You and I...we're not the best choice for a donkey Jesus could have made. But He did choose you. He has need of you. And truly He does forgive you; every one of you He forgives.

That's why He borrowed a cross. He went there to die for His stubborn donkeys. And He borrowed a tomb from which to rise. So now He lives for His donkeys. Christ is in you, my friend. Wherever you go, you carry Jesus with you.

I look out this morning and I see a bunch of donkeys, just as you see one in the pulpit. We are, truly, a family of donkeys. What a privilege. To be ones Jesus borrows. To be allowed to carry Him in life. Sure, it would be easy to focus upon the negative traits of the donkeys we see. Let us, therefore, remember that each one of us is one of Jesus' donkeys, loved and forgiven by Him. And so go out into your week and do what you are called to do: carry Christ because the Lord has need of you. Amen.