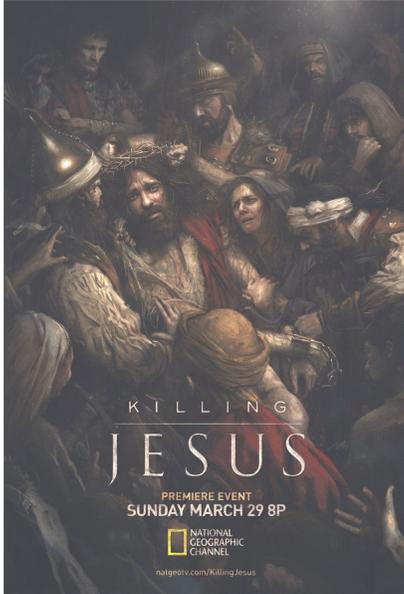


Passion-Palm Sunday 2015
“Ride the Donkey – Love over Power & Control”

Text: Philippians 2:5-11
Mark 11:1-10; 14:10-11

Preached: 3/29/15

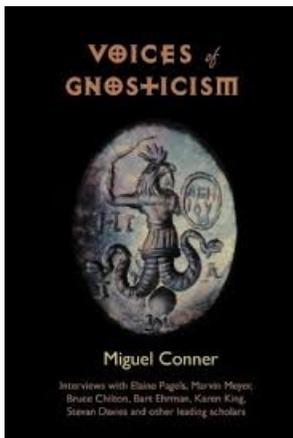


This week people will be talking and thinking about Jesus.

Cable Television will show movies about Jesus. There is a new mini-series debuting from the National Geographic channel called *Killing Jesus*. But there will be other programs, too, some repeats, that cover the life and death of the savior.

What are you thinking about Jesus?

The ancient Gnostics believed Jesus to be a spiritual being, insisting he was only pretending to be human.



Many modern Christians unwittingly tend toward this ancient heresy. They want to emphasize the divinity of Christ, downplaying the very human Jesus. But the events of Holy Week, beginning with Palm Sunday, point to our Lord's humanness.



We may find this disconcerting and uncomfortable. We might rather perpetuate the belief that Jesus was different from us, that He had powers and knowledge that were super-human. We conveniently forget that He had to study and learn the Scriptures, that he grew into spiritual maturity and performed no mighty works with His own power (see Luke 2:52).

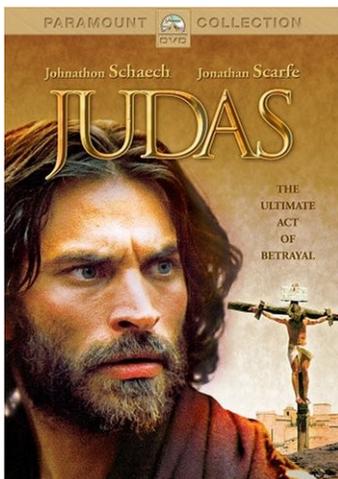


But God entered human history by giving up power & control, in order to bring men and women into His kingdom through His love. He chose to “Ride the Donkey”... not the War Horse. He chose to redeem humanity and transform society through sacrificial self-giving, rather than strength and domination.

Jesus really did abandon power and give up control when He lived among us. He wasn't simply holding back and pretending to possess our physical limitations—He truly was one of us, very human. Sometimes we react negatively to that fact and try to suppress it.



We want to think of Jesus as a God who disguised Himself as an ordinary man but, at will, could step into a phone booth, rip off His robes and show us who He really was: a first-century Superman.



Judas, for one, refused to accept a limited Messiah, believed in this idea of a super savior.

On Palm Sunday, power was within his Master's grasp. It was the perfect time for a political takeover, by Judas' calculations. Jesus should rally the masses to the cause and then claim his power...take control...make things right. But what did Jesus do on that Palm Sunday? How did he use those adoring crowds?



He didn't use them at all. He let his advantage slip away.

No wonder Judas later betrayed Jesus. His carefully-planned scheme meant to force his beloved master to play the power game. When the Roman soldiers came to arrest Him—Jesus would surely realize it was finally time to establish His rule...wouldn't he? Judas seems to have felt that if Jesus were left with no alternative, He would get over His reluctance to use his God-ordained power and seize the throne of Israel.

If that was Judas's plan, it went terribly wrong.



Jesus was not into power; He refused to wrest control of the situation; He eschewed the war horse...rather he would ride the donkey. He chose love over power and control. When mighty works were done through Him, he humbly admitted that He was not the one who deserved the credit, but His Father in heaven. In the miracles attributed to Jesus, we see God's love at work in the world—touching those who were open to Him, never forcing or coercing.



On Palm Sunday we remember Jesus Christ, fully God and fully human, humbling himself by riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, not to overtake the city, but that through Him the city, and the world, might be saved.