

Palm Sunday

Text: Luke 19:28-42

²⁸After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, ³⁰“Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ tell him, ‘The Lord needs it.’” ³²Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them.



³³As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?” ³⁴They replied, “The Lord needs it.” ³⁵They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. ³⁶As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road. ³⁷When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: ³⁸ “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” ³⁹Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!” ⁴⁰“I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.” ⁴¹As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it ⁴²and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes.

Theme: “It’s Time”

We have all made plans for trips. There is a lot of anticipation and preparation in the months preceding the trips. Finally, the day arrives and we are on the road or in the place. We aren’t there yet, but we are on the way.

I have always found Palm Sunday a difficult day to preach on. It’s like sitting in the plane. The preparations are done. You are on the way, but you are not there yet. The things that we focus on as Christians will come in just a few days, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. But the events of this Holy Week begin with Jesus’ ride into Jerusalem. This is like the car ride or plane ride for the big trip or the ride to the hospital when the baby is due. Maybe we should ask with the same anticipation as the kids in the car, “Are we there yet?” Today it’s time. We are on our way to Calvary.

I. Everything in Jesus’ life was in preparation for this week.

There are some striking similarities between Luke’s Palm Sunday story and his Christmas story. In the Christmas story the shepherds were told, “*Today in the town of David a Savior has been born for you; He is Christ the Lord.*” The word “Christ” was a royal term. The long awaited king was born

for them. What did the people shout as Jesus rode into Jerusalem? *“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord.”* On Christmas the king was born. Today He rode into Jerusalem to claim his throne.

In the Christmas story the angels sang, *“Glory to God in the highest.”* Today the crowds in Jerusalem sang, *“Glory to God in the highest.”* On both the day that Jesus was born and this day that He rode into Jerusalem, God was praised for the salvation that Christ was coming to bring.

Jesus miracles also led to this day. You have probably noticed that whenever Jesus healed people, He told them to tell no one. There were many times when he took people aside and healed them privately. The miracles were not the main thing. They were signs that He was the Christ. But now as they get closer to Jerusalem, it is almost as if Jesus doesn't care anymore. Luke writes that as they came near Jericho, Jesus healed a blind man. When the crowd saw it, they praised God and began to follow Him. John writes how Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead shortly before he entered Jerusalem. It was because of these miracles that there was a great crowd around Jesus as He entered the city.

Jesus' teaching especially prepared the people for this week. There were many times when Jesus said that when they came to Jerusalem, Jesus would be handed over to the Gentiles. He would be mocked, insulted, spotted, flogged and killed, but the 3rd day He would rise again. The disciples never understood what He meant, and once Peter even said that this should never happen to Him. But everything that Jesus taught resolved around what would happen this week.

II. Now it was time.

By a miracle of God everything worked out according to plan. Jesus knew exactly where a young colt would be, and He knew that the owners would allow His disciples to take it. As Jesus rode into Jerusalem, people were laying their cloaks on the road, and they were waving palm branches in celebration. When the pharisees told Jesus to stop this nonsense, He answered that if they kept quiet, the stones would cry out. God had to be glorified this day. Everything had to work out according to plan because Jesus was coming to claim His crown.

But also notice how humbly Jesus comes into Jerusalem. In 1 Kings when David's son Solomon was made king, he rode on a mule to the place of his anointing. (1 Ki 1:33,44) The prophet Zecariah prophesied that when the Messiah came, He would come humbly, riding on a donkey (Zech 9:9) Christ did not enter the city in power and glory on a great horse. He came humbly on a donkey, just as David's son did so many years ago.

III. Do we recognize that the time has come?

The people of Jerusalem didn't. As Jesus rode into the city, He was not filled with joy, but with sorrow. In the Garden of Gethsemane He would dread the cross He was about to bear, but now His sorrow was for the people of Jerusalem. He cried out, *“If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace— but now it is hidden from your eyes.”* Then He prophesied the coming destruction of Jerusalem, which would come because they did not recognize **the time** of God's coming to them. Christ rode into Jerusalem on this day to accomplish the greatest task ever.

However, most of the people didn't recognize Him as their King. They didn't recognize the time of God's coming to them. They let the greatest event in the history of the world pass them by. In fact, they rejected our Lord when He came to save them.

Do we recognize God's coming to us? We would like Christ to come in powerful and glorious ways. We would like Him to give us wealth and health. He should punish our enemies. He should come in ways that show the whole world that He is the King of Kings and that we are His people. Yet, today He still comes humbly. He comes in simple things such as water, bread and wine, and the message of the cross. We sometimes want to say that it has to be better than that, but that is how He comes to us, in His Word and in His sacrament. In those things He gives us the salvation that He won for us on the cross where He gave His innocent life for the forgiveness of all of our sins. In baptism He washes away our sins and raises us to a new life in Him. In Holy Communion He gives us His body and blood which were given and shed for the forgiveness of our sins. In the Gospel He declares that He died and rose for the forgiveness of my sins. As we fondly look back on that special trip we took at one time, these things remind us of the salvation that Christ won for us this week.

"It's time!" The Bible tells us that now is the day of salvation. When Christ comes to you and me as He came to the people of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, will we let Him pass by. Will we be like the person who sleeps in and misses the plane for their dream vacation? May God's Spirit open our eyes, that we will greet Him as our Savior and King, who rode into Jerusalem to win our salvation and who still comes to us today to bring us that blessed salvation that He won for us in this most holy week. When He does return in power and glory, may we be among those who received Him when He came humbly in the message of the cross.

Amen.

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