

PALM SUNDAY

April 10, 2022

St. Luke 19:28-40

## **“From Praise to Cross”**

- I. The Preparation
- II. The Gentle King.
- III. For Our Understanding.

Pilgrim Lutheran Church  
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St. Luke 19:28-40

Dear Friends in Christ,

Please consider, once again, the third stanza of the sermon hymn for this morning: "Ride on, ride on in majesty! In lowly pomp ride on to die. O Christ, Thy triumphs now begin O'er captive death and conquered sin." In a sense, we're traveling with Jesus from "The wages of sin is death, (to) the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rm. 6:23)

And, probably, as we travel with Him, we feel sadness over what He would endure for us. But the journey to the Cross has another side. The fifth stanza of that hymn reads, "Bow Thy meek head to mortal pain, Then take, O God, Thy pow'r and reign." Victory! Any way we look at it, it's a hard journey. This morning, He's on the way . . .

## FROM PRAISE TO CROSS

### I. The Preparation.

And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of his disciples, saying, "Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, "Why are you untying it?" you shall say this: "The Lord has need of it." ...As he was drawing near...the whole multitude of his disciples began to praise God with a loud voice...saying..."Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!" (vv. 29-38)

This, of course, is what we term His "Psalm Sunday" entrance into Jerusalem. Jesus puts everything in place so the focus will be on Him. Everything on Him, because if you miss it you miss the point of His First Coming. If you reinvent Jesus according to taste - to the wants of this world - you've missed it all. And, if you've missed it here you've missed it forever!

We know that Jesus is the very subject of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation along with these words He speaks as recorded in Revelation: "Surely I am coming soon." (Rev. 22:20) And of Himself he said, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Lord God, 'who is and was and who is to come, the Almighty.'" (Rev. 1:8)

It was Jude who wrote,

But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions." It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the (Holy) Spirit. (Jude 17-19)

There is no greater desire of the skeptic, the hater of Christ, and the liberal preacher than to sell Jesus out for whatever hides the reality of sin and the consequences of everlasting darkness and burning. Thus, as Jude encourages us, "...dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith." (Jude 20a)

In Christ, we are making a journey. It's the journey to eternal life; a journey that reinforces who Jesus is: the One who would love and lift us to something more than a few years of wanting, struggling, and then death.

### II. The Gentle King.

The Holy Spirit gave St. Matthew this insight:

This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet: "Say to the Daughter of Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'" (Mt. 21:4-5)

The prophet who is quoted by Matthew is Zechariah. The word that touches our hearts is "gentle." It is the incomprehensible Love of God that would willingly enter His creation and willingly suffer and die for humanity - the humanity that rebelled against Him and continues to rebel - the humanity that mostly despises Him. He would first come to this world gently. He comes to us "gently." Jerome and Michael Albrecht wrote:

The manner in which Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday plainly showed that he had no intentions of setting himself up as an earthly king. The throne he would ascend would be a crude wooden cross. The crown he would wear would be a crown of thorns. He would establish his kingdom, not by shedding the blood of enemies, but by shedding his own blood (*Matthew* by G.J. Albrecht and M.J. Albrecht, The People's Bible Commentary, CPH, p. 294)

If you've been on this earth for awhile, life has probably been disappointing any number of times and ways. We like to remember the great and high moments, and the times of laughter and celebration. But if you've been around awhile, there's another thread that weaves its way into every life. It's a thread that often weaves adversity, and with it the sorrow and regrets from bad decisions and wrong turns. And when you're alone - just you in that cold moment of honesty - that thread has a way of coiling itself around your heart and bringing pain and regrets only you can measure. Call it what you will, but in simple terms it's sin and the results to which sin gives birth in every life. And worst of all is what sin does to us in our relationship with God. As Paul writes:

...remember that at that time (the time we did not know God's love in Christ) you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel (that is, the church and ultimately eternal life) and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God. (Eph. 2:12)

Christ comes to us in our worlds of sin and guilt and regrets, and gently draws us to Him. Draws us to the blessed comfort of forgiveness and the promise of eternal life He earned for us. Listen - you know the verse. Even if you've been a child of God for a short time it's simple, it's clear, it's truly a blessing: "For by grace you have been saved through faith (grace - God's undeserved love for the unlovable). And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." (Eph. 2:8 & 9)

### III. For Our Understanding.

And they brought it (the colt) to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. As he was drawing near - already on the way down the Mount of Olives - the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory to the highest!" And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out." (vv.35-40)

Let's face it, the Pharisees represent every hater and skeptic of Christ. They are filled with rejection. And with that will come the moment of their entrance into eternal citizenship in the country of God's burning wrath.

As for the “multitude of his disciples (who) began to rejoice” did they really grasp where that moment would take everything. Let’s face it, even the Apostles’ labored under the thinking that Jesus was going to set up an earthly kingdom and make everything here okay. We are to clearly understand: That was not His goal! A number of years ago, Michael Horton wrote:

According to Scripture, God cannot violate his own character. He cannot sin or tempt people to sin. And Scriptures declare, he cannot acquit the guilty. That is, he cannot just forgive - he cannot let bygones be bygones when his justice, holiness, and righteousness are at stake. (*Something God Cannot Do*, by Michael Horton, Modern Reformation, Vol. 13, No.2, March/April, 2004)

Well, He doesn’t. That wasn’t His goal. He doesn’t just ignore or overlook the times we’ve ignored Him, angrily misused His name, looked upon others with hate, excused ourselves from serving Him, ignored those who are hurting and eternally lost, lied a little, cheated a little, wasted what He provides a little, demanded that our needs and wants were more important than our walk with Him - a little, choked up our miserable excuses.

He doesn’t just forgive. He sent His Son to be punished for us. To pay for all our vile and violent sins against Him. The ones that still entangle us. “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (1 Cor. 5:21) The blood of Jesus covers our sin. God reckons us as righteous; perfect.

We’re traveling with Him. This part of the journey is almost over. It will end at the cross - to pay for our sins so that whoever believes has eternal life.

Amen.

Pastor Bill Abbott