

### **3-28-21 Palm Sunday**

Sermon- He Comes Gently and Peaceably

Scripture- Mark 11:1-11, CTW Zechariah 9:9-12

Hymns- 217, 215, 239

Theme- As we picture ourselves standing with the cheering crowds that day, we cannot help but wonder how we would feel as we took it all in. Many in the crowds had heard of Jesus or had already seen him and were hoping to hear him preach in the Temple. Jesus knew that those who would hear him at the Temple would return to their homes and announce the coming of the Messiah. What will you do?

#### **I. EXPECTATION AND IDENTITY**

**Text: Mark 11:1–11 NLT**

**A. Jesus' Triumphant Entry Let's hear the New Living Translation and pick up some of the nuances of the language:**

**11** As Jesus and his disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of them on ahead. <sup>2</sup>“Go into that village over there,” he told them. “As soon as you enter it, you will see a young donkey tied there **that no one has ever ridden**. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>3</sup> If anyone asks, ‘What are you doing?’ just say, **‘The Lord needs it and will return it soon.’**”

<sup>4</sup> The two disciples left and found the colt standing in the street, **tied outside the front door**. <sup>5</sup> As they were untying it, some bystanders demanded, “What are you doing, untying that colt?” <sup>6</sup> They said what Jesus had told them to say, **and they were permitted to take it**. <sup>7</sup> Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their garments over it, and he sat on it.

<sup>8</sup> Many in the crowd **spread their garments on the road** ahead of him, and others **spread leafy branches** they had cut in the

fields. **9 Jesus was in the center of the procession**, and the people all around him were shouting,

“Praise God!”<sup>[a]</sup>

Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the LORD!

**10 Blessings on the coming Kingdom of our ancestor David!**

Praise God in highest heaven!”<sup>[b]</sup>

**11** So Jesus came to Jerusalem and went into the Temple. After looking around carefully at everything, he left because it was late in the afternoon. Then he returned to Bethany with the twelve disciples.

**B. When we think of Palm Sunday, what do we think of??** The chances are that we think about celebrations and the parade that they threw for Jesus as He had His triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

There were many in that crowd who thought of Jesus as a hero--- maybe even a **superhero**. Max Lucado once wrote that “Heroes mirror society”. (Max Lucado. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1987, p. 80).

Just look at this crowd along the sides of the roads that day in Jerusalem and you will see that what he says is most certainly true.

It was on this day that people had high hopes that Jesus was the hero that they expected. Were they thinking that Jesus was a “freedom fighter” who was sleeping and waiting for his moment to gather an army about Him?

Were they thinking that Jesus was an epic hero of some sort? The response of the crowd seems to say yes! Their expectations were high, but the real irony is that they missed an important clue of His entry---riding on a colt.

## **II. HEROIC EXPECTATIONS**

### **A. What do people look for in a hero?**

**1) Oppression and deliverance:** One of the best answers is an old romantic notion in literature of the damsel in distress. Look up that term on Wikipedia and this is what you will

find: "The subject of the damsel in distress, or persecuted maiden, is a classic theme in world literature, art, and film. She is usually a beautiful young woman placed in a dire predicament by a villain or monster and who requires a hero to achieve her rescue."

**2) Classic characters:** Consider some of the following princesses (damsels in distress) who have been portrayed in many Disney movies. Some examples of princesses---damsels are Snow White, Belle from Beauty and the Beast, Aurora in Sleeping Beauty, Jasmine from Aladdin, Ariel from The Little Mermaid,, Tiana from The Princess Frog and Rapunzel from Tangled. My daughters were fans of all these princesses. I can't tell you how many Halloween costumes were devoted to them!

**3) Rescuers:** What goes along with a damsel in distress? There is always some prince or knight hero or rescuer. In literature device of a "damsel in distress", there is usually some knight in shining armor.

What kind of hero were the people in the crowd expecting during Jesus's triumphant entry into Jerusalem? Let's preface the answer to this question through an observation made by Max Lucado.

**B. Custom made image of heroes:** "Heroes mirror a society. Study a nation's heroes and understand the nation. We honor those who embody our dreams----gang members toast the ruthless, slaves esteem the freedom fighter, and cult members exalt the dominant."

**1) A caped crusader mentality:** When Jesus rode through Jerusalem there were those in the crowd who expected a caped crusader type-of-a hero.

**2) A King's welcome:** They gave Jesus the Red Carpet treatment that day. They thought that Jesus embodied their ideals, their hopes and their dreams.

However, a few days later they were giving Jesus His pink slip. What went wrong? What went wrong was that Jesus could not be their hero on their terms.

**3) Seeing ourselves in a mirror:** How does it look when we see ourselves in the mirror? How are we like those in the crowd that day in their adulation as well as their condemnation?

### **III. THINK OF THE IRONY AND IDENTITY**

**A. What was it that those in the crowd missed about their hero?**

**1) Symbolic entry:** The people who greeted Jesus with palm branches were probably thinking about regaining lost real estate as well as some type of insurrection. Remember the oppressive rule of the Romans.

**2) A Prophecy fulfilled:** Jesus went riding into Jerusalem on a donkey---a beast of burden. It was a prophecy from Zechariah 9:9 that was being fulfilled by our Messiah, our Lord and King Jesus Christ.

**3) Symbolism misunderstood:** It was ironic that Jesus' meaning and their perception of what they thought Jesus meant were **two different things**: A) A horse was a kingly symbol. B) A horse was also a symbol of war. C) When kings came in peace they rode on donkeys.

It was ironic that Jesus came riding on a donkey---a symbol of peace while those in the crowd greeted Him with the kind of honor that was usually bestowed to warrior kings that rode in procession such as Jehu on a horse---a symbol of war.

**B. 2 Kings 9: tells the story of Jehu, the anointed king of Israel.** Who was king Jehu anyway? Before we answer that question, let's look at some history's national leaders.

**1) Villains as heroes?:** What do Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Sadam Hussein, Osama Bin Laden, Omar Kaddafi all have in common? They were considered heroes by those who lived in fear under their reign.

Consider what happened to the last three in the last five years! They were known for their brutality and bloodshed. So what about Jehu's reputation? Was there brutality and bloodshed associated with his name?

**2) A tainted reputation:** "When they spread their garments on the ground before him, they did exactly what the crowd did when that man of blood Jehu was anointed king" (**2 Kings 9:13**).

In fact, his "... violence is ... vigorously condemned a century later by the prophet Hosea (Hosea 1:4-5). (Unlike Jehu, Jesus was the Prince of peace (**Isaiah 9:6**) and not a man of blood. What about those who feel sympathy for their captors? If they were excited about Jesus's arrival, then why did they turn on Jesus later that week?

**C. This Was Unprecedented:** In today's passage, was their response to their deliverer unprecedented? If we recall the events of **Numbers 21:1-9**, then we can recall those who were critical of **Moses**: "Why have you brought us out of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!" **Numbers 21:5**. Did those in the crowd of Jesus's triumphant entry have sympathy for those who oppressed them?

**1) Look at something called Stockholm syndrome:** What do they call it when people have sympathy for their captors? They call it Stockholm Syndrome. The reason for that was that back in 1973 there was a bank robbery in Stockholm Sweden that turned into a 131 hour ordeal. The hostages of that robbery eventually started to feel sympathy for their captors. It has been described this way: "... hostages express empathy and have positive feelings towards their captors, sometimes to the point of defending them. These feelings are generally considered irrational in light of the danger or risk endured by the victims, who essentially mistake a lack of abuse from their captors for an act of kindness."

Is this how the Jews conquered and oppressed by Rome felt? Were there times when the Pharisees were in cahoots with Rome? Absolutely!

**2) Modern day Stockholm Syndrome sympathizers:** How many people are there who feel sympathy for this world that

holds them captive in the spiritual sense? Why should we make such a big deal out of the concept Stockholm Syndrome?

#### **IV. Here are some Conclusions We Can Make:**

**A. Irony:** Was it not truly ironic that the people did not see Jesus through the lenses of God's plan for their salvation? Luke's Gospel tells us what Jesus said during His triumphant entry into Jerusalem: "Jesus looked at Jerusalem and wept and said, "If you, even you, had only known this day would bring you peace--- but now it is hidden from your eyes" (Luke 19:42).

**B. Masquerade :** Why was it hidden from their eyes? Paul tells us that the Gospel is veiled to those who are on the road to destruction.

The god of this age, known as Satan and the prince of this world in John12:30, has blinded the eyes of those who do not have faith. Not having faith hinders them from seeing the light of the gospel. Christ is the image of God. (**II Corinthians 4: 4**).

**C. Lamplighters:** Are we like those in the crowd on the day of Jesus's triumphant entry or do we understand Jesus's true identity as our Lord and Savior?

Jesus is our Prince, the Prince of peace who came to rescue all those He came to save. Jesus has called us to help those who are held captive by the god of this age and his ways in this world.

Jesus has called us to pick up our crosses and follow Him. Jesus has called us to be lamplighters for those in live in darkness as we continue His mission.

Despite what our critics say, Christians do not live a fairy tale existence. Jesus is our Prince of Peace who came to rescue the least, the last and the lost.

Without Him there is no peace. Jesus came to rescue us not by force but by His love that He exhibited on the cross. Jesus is not some folk hero, He is our Lord and Savior who conquered sin, death and the fear of death on the cross.

There is much to think about as we approach the cross! Amen?

Let Us Pray...

