

February 2, 2020
Sunday Morning Service
Series: Luke
Community Baptist Church
643 S. Suber Road
Greer, SC 29650
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BLESSED IS THE KING
Luke 19:28-40

Harry, Duke of Sussex, and Megan, Duchess of Sussex, have caused quite a stir recently as they decided to withdraw from the royalty which is theirs by virtue of Harry's lineage. That a person would give up all the pomp and circumstance of royalty is difficult for us peasant-like people to grasp. Unless something changes, Harry will never be King Harry, or whatever his title might have been.

Royalty is a big deal in the U.K. as it has been throughout the history of the world. When Harry's grandmother, Queen Elizabeth II was crowned the Queen of the United Kingdom on June 2, 1953, it was the great spectacle of the world. It was the first coronation to be televised and 27 million people just in the U.K. stopped life to watch it. Elizabeth II was the sixth queen to be crowned in Westminster Abbey, the first being Queen Mary I four hundred years early in 1553. That is a very important lineage of royalty. The order of service used for the coronation descended directly from King Edgar of Bath in 973. As we would expect, the grandeur and majesty of the procession from Westminster Abbey to Buckingham Palace was a sight to behold. Everything about the coronation declared that this woman was one of the most important persons in the world, and among the most important in history.

Our text tells the story about the triumphal entry of King Jesus. Some of the folks present that day didn't even know who He was. The people in the know answered their question by telling the uninitiated that this was Jesus of Nazareth (Matthew 21:10-11). Others were shouting that He was a descendant of King David. But no one seemed to realize that this man who entered the capital city of

the Jews was their Creator, their rightful King, and their only Savior from sin.

Because of that, the very people who seemed to welcome the promised earthly king on Palm Sunday (Monday) shouted that He should be crucified on Good Friday! Jesus' peers failed to realize or to acknowledge that He was the most authoritative, most regal, most majestic, most worthy person who ever walked on earth. His presentation as king should have been the grandest spectacle in the history of humanity. But, as God had promised, the King was also the Lamb of God who presented Himself to His people in humility. And His people must accept and embrace Him with the same kind of humility. Most people are not willing or able to do that.

No doubt, all of us believe in our hearts that, if we would have been present at the King's entry, we would have been trying to help the people see that He is the suffering Servant of God, the Lamb determined before creation to be slain, the only one who can take away our sins. Probably not. It is a sad commentary that most professing Christians are not interested at all identifying with the suffering Savior because they implies we, too, will be humbled and face suffering.

We are much more like the crowd that day in Jerusalem who was ecstatic about their perceived benefit from the relative of King David. We err to bless Jesus because of perceived passing benefits in this life. We should not be delighted with Him because He will make life easier or make us feel good about ourselves. No. We bless Him and praise Him because He is the expression of our Creator's amazing love for us.

Trust the King's Authority (vv.28-34).

Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem was all part of His work of accomplishing the task assigned to Him (vv.28-29). In this grand event, He was simply completing the task for which He came. Luke wrote the story to flow into that idea. *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 the disciples (vv.28-29).*

When Jesus had said these things, refers back to Him completing the lessons and stories Luke recorded in the last part of chapter eighteen and first part of chapter nineteen. Jesus and the entourage were already near Jerusalem (19:11). He was finishing His course. According to the opening words of our text, Jesus arrived at the two villages, Bethphage and Bethany. They were situated side by side a couple of miles east of Jerusalem just over the Mt. of Olives. We know from the accounts in the Gospels that when Jesus was in the vicinity of Jerusalem, He often stayed with friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in Bethany.

We also know from John's account that Jesus arrived in Bethany six days before the Passover (John 12:1). Passover was on Nisan 14 which would begin on Thursday evening at 6:00. On the next day, Sunday, Jesus attended a dinner given in His honor at the home of Simon (Matthew 26:6-13). Also at that occasion a large crowd gathered, probably most of them wanting to see Lazarus the dead man raised (John 12:9).

The day after the banquet (Sunday evening or possibly Monday. But whoever heard of Palm Monday?), Jesus rode into Jerusalem (John 12:12). This is the story about the Lamb of God presenting Himself as the sacrifice for sin. At various times, Jesus had told His closest followers that He would go to Jerusalem to be killed. He first introduced the idea in Caesarea Philippi about six months earlier (Luke 9:22). Again Jesus promised that He would go to Jerusalem to die after the transfiguration (Luke 9:44). And then again, Jesus taught the same truth just a few days before this entrance into Jerusalem (Luke 18:31).

Did the disciples, especially John and Andrew, forget that the Baptist introduced Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:36)? According to the Mosaic Law, the lamb to be sacrificed on Passover (Nisan 14) was to be selected on Nisan 10, which would have been Monday (Exodus 12:2-6). Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was His presentation of Himself as the final Lamb to be sacrificed for sin. He was in complete control of the circumstances. He was fulfilling the will of the Godhead in perfect timing to the year, month, day, even minutes.

Everything about this event looks like a paradox. God the Son, co-equal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, was laying

aside His divine prerogatives as He presented Himself as the "Passover Lamb." Christ, the Lamb, voluntarily laying down His life, in full submission to the Father. And yet throughout the story, Jesus was in complete control of all events leading up to the sacrifice. This picture is illustrated so well by C.S. Lewis's story, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, in which Aslan the mighty lion has complete control of all things even up to submitting himself to the White Witch and goblins to be killed.

Being the authority, and being in control, King Jesus directed His followers (vv.30-34). He still does direct, teach, advise us who follow Him. If we are not taking His advise, we are not following. King Jesus demonstrated perfect knowledge. He said, "*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'*" (vv.30-31).

Here we learn that Jesus instructed two of His disciples to go to the village of Bethphage and find a particular colt of a donkey that had not been broken. They were to find the particular animal, at a particular place, owned by a particular person. What are the chances of that happening? Nothing about the King/Lamb's sacrifice was chance. It was planned and foreordained down to the smallest detail. The King even gave instructions about how to respond *IF* someone questioned their actions of "borrowing" the donkey, because He knew that would happen.

The King's servants experienced proof of His authority. *So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" And they said, "The Lord has need of it"* (vv.32-34).

Finding the donkey exactly as the King promised proved His divine authority and perceptive wisdom. While they were untying it, the owner asked what they were doing, just like Jesus promised. And why was the response, "The Lord has need of it," sufficient? Some people conclude that the owner of the donkey knew "the Lord." That is possible. But if that was the case, even that would have been part of the divine prearrangement. Or God's authority would have been

demonstrated if God simply turned the heart of the owner according to His plans right on the spot.

King Jesus had often demonstrated divine perception, knowing what a person was thinking. When religious leaders accused Him of doing miracles by Satan's power, Jesus was "*knowing their thoughts*" (Matthew 12:25). When it looked like everyone wanted to jump on the Jesus bandwagon, He was not impressed, *for he himself knew what was in man* (John 2:25). In the context of many quasi-followers leaving, Jesus revealed that some of them didn't believe because, *Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him* (John 6:64).

It is a sobering thought that our Creator and eternal Judge knows all things about us, including our thoughts. Some people are able to deceive nearly everyone nearly all the time. But they cannot deceive Him to whom they will give account. Elihu, Job's miserable counselor rightly concluded, "*There is no gloom or deep darkness where evildoers may hide themselves*" (Job 34:22). Paul warned that the day was coming when, according to the gospel, *God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus* (Romans 2:16).

But the really good news is that, because Jesus knows our deepest secrets, He knows that you and I love Him. We must agree with Peter who responded when Jesus asked if he loved Him, *Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you"* (John 21:17). Our King Jesus knows every detail of our life and of everything in the universe and in eternity. There is nothing that He does not know. And for our benefit, He presented Himself as the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world.

Praise the King (vv.35-40).

Our King deserves honor, and the people showed it. The two disciples retrieved the chosen donkey, *And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it* (v.35). On one hand, see the King's amazing humility in all this activity. It appears that the disciples picked Jesus up and sat Him on the donkey. The picture reminds us that our King allows us the privilege of

servicing Him, when generally He could do it Himself much quicker and much better.

His humility is also obvious in that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. King David also rode a donkey sometimes (1 Kings 1:38). At his coronation, Solomon rode on David's mule. But Jesus was doing more than demonstrating that He was the promised relative of David who would come to be king over Israel and sit on David's throne. King Jesus was fulfilling every detail of the promise God had made 500 years earlier when He led Zechariah to write, *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey* (Zechariah 9:9). In fact, Matthew pointed out that this action fulfilled Zechariah's prophecy precisely. *This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden'"* (Matthew 21:4-5).

King Jesus demonstrated great humility, which no one would expect from a king. On the other hand, see the King's majesty. *And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road* (v.36). Matthew added that *most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road* (Matthew 21:8). This is in vivid contrast to Jesus' practice of withdrawing from the crowds. He was no longer avoiding the Jewish capital and its hypocritical leaders. This event was unlike Jesus telling healed people to remain silent about Him. Now it was time to make the public display of His ministry, the ultimate purpose for which He came, according to the Father's perfect timing. Let all Jerusalem, yeah all Israel, know that their King was presenting Himself to them.

The big question now that the King and Lamb presented Himself was whether the people in the crowd would accept Him or reject Him. We know the answer that was given in about four days. Here it appears that nearly everyone was elated at the King's arrival. How common it is to see the immediate response of joy but subsequent rejection. It sounds like the Sower and the Seed story, doesn't it? Many are the seekers who, in an emotional moment,

embrace King Jesus hoping He will bestow kingly benefits on them to make their lives easier.

And many are those seekers who become disillusioned when they discover that the King came to suffer as the Lamb who was slain to pay for their sins. Many are the seekers who reject the idea that being identified with King Jesus requires us to be identified with His cross of suffering. We don't mind if Jesus suffered to pay for our sins, but don't ask me to give up on myself to be identified with Him.

The people not only honored the King, but they shouted truth as He entered the city. Luke tells us that *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 in the highest!”* (vv.37-38).

The crowd was elated with their personal interpretation of God's promises. Here was the King who was coming in the name of the Lord. He was the promised King who would reestablish the kingdom of Israel and sit on David's throne. According to Mark's account, they were also saying, *“Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!”* (Mark 11:10). That was true. He was the promised king. This phrase was part of the Hallel, songs of praise the people sang in thanksgiving during the Passover. This phrase came from Psalm 118:26.

Also we notice that they kept shouting “Hosanna.” Matthew stated, *And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”* (Matthew 21:9). The word translated *Hosanna* means, “save now.” Notice that the same Hebrew words shows up in Psalm 118:25 right before the verse about “blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord.”

No doubt the people were thinking about Jesus' authority to save them from bondage to Rome. Many of them were thinking about the power and authority Jesus had displayed in the many miracles of mighty works of God they had observed. *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* (v.37).

But it seems like the idea of this being the fulfillment of God's promise through Zechariah escaped them. Again, *This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, “Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden’”* (Matthew 21:4-5).

The authority of King Jesus was very obvious. But would the people submit to Him? It doesn't appear that anyone in the crowd remembered the somber warning about what awaited Jesus in Jerusalem. Everyone had their minds set on an earthly kingdom, so when it became obvious that Jesus was not there to do what they wanted Him to do, they changed their tune 180 degrees very quickly. The people were very human-like. They were much like professing Christians who live life as though the passing kingdom of this world is all there is or ever will be. As long as Jesus makes life pleasant and rewards them for saying the right stuff, and promises fun in the future, they will serve Him. But when it becomes obvious that their friends and associates in the world don't like Jesus, their relationship with Him cools.

The people even shouted the truth about what everyone wants: *“Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”* (v.38b). Here was King Jesus completing the journey that began in a manger in Bethlehem. We remember that the incredible incarnation was accompanied by a host of angels, divine messengers, who declared the same eternal promise, *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”* (Luke 2:14). And that is why Jesus was entering Jerusalem to present Himself as the Lamb to take away sin.

He came to bring peace between God and sinners who offend Him. The problem comes when sinners will not tell the truth about themselves, admit their sins offend God, and ask God to take away their offense on the basis of Jesus' sacrifice. God is pleased with every person whose sins Christ takes away. He gives supernatural, abiding peace to those who come to Him through Christ the door, the way, the truth, the life (John 14:6).

Most people in the crowd would not, most people in history have not, and most people we know do not accept Jesus of Nazareth as God the Savior. Therefore, even to this day, Jesus is generally

rejected (vv.39-40). The unbelievers reject like unbelievers do. And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “*Teacher, rebuke your disciples*” (v.39). At best in their thinking, He was the man from Nazareth, maybe even a prophet (“Teacher”).

But a lot of folks didn’t even know that much. Matthew told us, *And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, “Who is this?” And the crowds said, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee” (Matthew 21:10-11)*. Obviously, the religious leaders were jealous of all the attention the people showed to Jesus. They were afraid of losing their supposed authority, especially if the Romans deemed this to be an insurrection. They illustrated exactly why people do not receive Jesus as Savior—it requires them to give up what they think is authority.

So what if people never blessed King Jesus again? No problem. The Creator’s creation always blesses Him. *He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out” (v.40)*. All creation continues to shout about the authority and majesty of their Creator. David rejoiced that *the heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork (Psalm 19:1)*. Or the challenge to, *Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens! (Psalm 150:1)*.

In fact, creation’s testimony testifies against us for not submitting to and praising our Creator and Savior. *For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse (Romans 1:19-20)*.

Jesus of Nazareth is the King of kings. Nothing will change that. As King, He has all authority over all creation. But Jesus of Nazareth is also the Savior from sin. He is justified to forgive sin, to take away our offense, because He was crucified and paid our penalty with His own blood. No one is required to accept Jesus as Savior. No one is required to accept Jesus as King. But everyone is required to stand before Jesus as Eternal Judge. At that point, it will be too late to make any changes. Let’s live in this life rejoicing in, blessing, praising Jesus of Nazareth.