

Palm Sunday

*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 ESV)*

The Arrival Of The King

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Luke 19:28-48

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Introduction:

Good morning, Simcoside and Redeemer! I want to invite you to turn with me in your Bibles to Luke 19.

Today is Palm Sunday. If you have grown up in or around the church, then you are likely quite familiar with this story. Here we find Jesus approaching Jerusalem mounted on a donkey surrounded by disciples waving palm branches. They are shouting praise and adoration because they understand that they are witnessing the long-awaited arrival of the King! We're going to revisit that familiar story this morning.

But then, we're going to keep reading *past* the familiar story that describes the King's arrival to a *less familiar* story that describes the King's heart.

In the end, my prayer for this morning is that each and every person in this room would go away convinced of two things: First, that the King has come. And second, that the King is worthy of our praise.

To that end, we're going to be reading Luke 19:28-48, but we will break our reading into two sections. We will begin with verses 28-40. Hear now God's holy, inspired, inerrant, living and active Word to us today:

²⁸ And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹ When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰ 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. ³¹ If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘The Lord has need of it.’” ³² So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. ³³ And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?” ³⁴ And they said, “The Lord has need of it.” ³⁵ And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. ³⁶ And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. ³⁷ 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, ³⁸ saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” ³⁹ And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.” ⁴⁰ He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.” (Luke 19:28-40 ESV)

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

In this familiar passage, we witness the arrival of the King.

The Arrival Of The King

If you are hearing this story for the first time, then you might wonder why the crowd and the pharisees responded so dramatically. Jesus had entered Jerusalem on many occasions – what was so different about this day?

In order to answer that question, we need to draw from the larger story of the Bible. One of the great meta-narratives in the Old Testament is the anticipation of a coming King – a Messiah – who will once and for all lead the children of God into freedom. Every devout Jew longed and prayed for the arrival of such a King.

Unfortunately, with few exceptions, the kings in the line of David looked nothing like the promised Messiah. Most of them were corrupt, selfish, and wicked. Even the best kings – kings like David, Solomon and Hezekiah – PALED in comparison to the King that the prophets said would come.

One of those prophets – Zechariah – saw ahead to the day when the Messiah would finally arrive. When you hear this prophecy, you come to understand why everyone was so excited in our passage this morning. In Zechariah 9:9, we read:

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 ESV)

It was this prophecy that filled Jesus’ disciples with anticipation when 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.** (Luke 19:30 ESV)

Now, Jesus wasn’t the first Jew to approach Jerusalem on a colt – this happened all the time! But when Jesus summoned his disciples to bring him a donkey – *everything* clicked into place in the minds of his followers. We’re told why in verse 37. Look there closely:

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** (Luke 19:37 ESV)

At this point in his ministry, Jesus had hundreds of disciples who were following him. They followed him because they saw in him something that they had never seen before. They saw authentic love – pure mercy – true righteousness. He taught as one who had authority. He spoke and dead men rose out of their tombs! With one word he could silence fierce storms!

They rejoiced and praised God *for all the mighty works that they had seen!* They had witnessed enough to know that this was not simply a man riding to Jerusalem on a donkey. This man was unlike any man who had ever come before him. This man truly was the King! So, they declared:

“Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” (Luke 19:38 ESV)

“This is IT” they declared! “PEACE has come! GLORY has come! The KING has arrived, and his name is JESUS!”

The religious leaders were appalled by this, and they couldn’t believe that Jesus would accept such lofty accolades. They urged Jesus to get a handle on his followers and to silence the praise, but he replied:

“I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.” (Luke 19:40 ESV)

Generation upon generation waited longingly for the arrival of the King. Generation upon generation endured war and exile and famine and subjugation. Generation upon generation watched as crooked, corrupt, con-man “kings” sat on the throne and helped no one but themselves.

But now, the true King has come! And the religious leaders – the men who should have been the FIRST to recognize the One who fulfilled every prophetic anticipation – wanted to silence the joyful cries of the people of God. IMPOSSIBLE! If they stopped their rejoicing, *the rocks themselves* would cry out!

The familiar story of Palm Sunday is the story of the arrival of the King! He has come!

But as I mentioned off the top, I want to go on reading a little further because in the story that follows, we catch a glimpse into the HEART of this King. Look with me now at verses 41-48. Hear now God’s holy, inspired, inerrant, living and active Word to us today:

⁴¹ And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it,⁴² saying, “Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side ⁴⁴ and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

⁴⁵ And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, ⁴⁶ saying to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a den of robbers.”

⁴⁷ And he was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him, ⁴⁸ but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words. (Luke 19:41-48 ESV)

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. With the time we have remaining, I want to ask the simple question:

What Does This Passage Reveal About The Heart Of The King?

First, we discover here that:

1. He is the King who weeps for the lost

Look again at verses 41-42:

⁴¹ And when he drew near and saw the city, **he wept over it,**⁴² saying, “Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! (Luke 19:41-42a ESV)

Salvation was presented to Jerusalem, but they rejected the offer. They rejected the promised Messiah. In A.D. 70, the judgement of God would fall and – in the siege of Jerusalem – all of the destruction that Jesus foresaw came to fruition. The city whose name means “peace” rejected the Prince of Peace, and they perished as a result.

As Jesus contemplated their coming judgement, he wept. The word translated here as “wept” is not describing a quiet, subdued sadness. One commentator explains:

Wept might be rendered ‘wailed’; Jesus burst into sobbing as he lamented lost opportunity... their failure to get to grips with the message of God was now final.¹

Have you ever been with someone in a time of wailing? I have. They are some of my saddest memories. There is nothing quite like that sound of deep, profound love colliding with deep, profound grief. It is like the sound of a mother losing her son, and here, Jesus looks out over the city of Jerusalem, and he *wails* and *sobs* because she is so BLIND and PRIDEFUL that she would rather perish in hell than receive peace from her King. One pastor describes the scene powerfully:

¹ Leon Morris, *Luke, TNTC* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 297.

Here the Son of God with all power and glory looks on the city of sinful man. Thunder does not rumble, and lightning does not flash in divine curses. The earth does not quake in destruction. Instead, rivulets of tears flow down the Savior's face.²

G. Campbell Morgan – who I frequently quote because of his powerful and eloquent use of words could only write here:

I have no words to speak of it. We need hearts that feel it.³

O that we would have hearts to feel what we see in this story! Let me ask you: Does this scene shape your understanding of Jesus? When you imagine him in your mind's eye, do you ever see him like this? Can you see him looking out over a lost and dying world struggling to catch his breath through his agonizing sobs?

This is our King. He is the image of the invisible God, and in this story we find a real, flesh and blood expression of passages like:

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, **not wishing that any should perish**, but that all should reach repentance. (1 Peter 3:9 ESV)

And passages like:

“But if a wicked person turns away from all his sins that he has committed and keeps all my statutes and does what is just and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. ²² None of the transgressions that he has committed shall be remembered against him; for the righteousness that he has done he shall live. ²³ **Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked**, declares the Lord God, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live? (Ezekiel 18:21-23 ESV)

If you reject the free gift of grace that Jesus is offering to you and choose to persist in your sin all the way to hell, you need to know that Jesus is not shaking his head in disgust behind your back. He is sobbing like a grieving parent. The road to hell passes through a river of tears – and those tears will bear testimony for all eternity to the insanity of our rebellion.

² Thabiti Anyabwile, *Christ-Centered Exposition - Exalting Jesus In Luke* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2018), 290.

³ G. Campbell Morgan, *The Gospel According To Luke* (New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1981), 222.

Here is the King who deserves your praise. Here is the King who weeps for the lost.

We also discover in this passage that:

2. He is the King who brings outsiders in

In verses 45-46 we read:

⁴⁵ And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, ⁴⁶ saying to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a den of robbers.”
(Luke 19:45-46 ESV)

To understand this passage, we need to understand that there was a whole economy behind the operation of the temple. People travelled to Jerusalem to worship and to make sacrifices, and some pilgrimages stretched hundreds of miles. It’s hard to travel hundreds of miles with sacrificial animals like heifers and doves, so there were places in Jerusalem where a person could exchange their foreign currency and purchase the animals that they required. The system in and of itself was not inherently wrong. However, the merchants came to realize that if they were closer to the temple, they could turn over a greater profit because of the convenience factor.

The only place in the temple that they were allowed to set up shop was in a place called the court of the Gentiles. So that’s what they did. They commandeered the one designated area where non-Jewish worshipers could gather in the temple to pray and worship, and they turned it into a mall.

Imagine travelling with your family some 800 miles from Thessalonica to worship in Jerusalem. Through the Jews in your city, you have come to learn about God, and you can’t wait to worship with His people in the temple! You arrive at the temple and are greeted with signs that read:

“No foreigner is to enter within the balustrade and embankment around the sanctuary. Whoever is caught will have himself to blame for his death which follows”⁴

⁴ Richard N. Longenecker, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary (John - Acts)*, ed. Frank A. Gaebelin, vol. 9, 12 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 521-522.

Suddenly, you're not feeling particularly welcome, but you ask around and finally make your way to the court of the Gentiles – a special place that is set apart so that people like you can pray and worship in the temple! As you enter the court it looks more like the checkout area on Saturday at Costco than it does a place of worship. You kneel with your family to pray, but people around you are shouting out exchange rates and daily deals for grain offerings. Discouraged, you make the trek back home. Clearly there is no place for you or your family in the house of God.

This is what was happening in the temple, and it infuriated King Jesus. In Mark's Gospel, he gives a fuller account of the scene that unfolded:

And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple **and began to drive out those who sold** and those who bought in the temple, and **he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.** ¹⁶ And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple.¹⁷ And he was teaching them and saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers." (Mark 11:15-17 ESV)

The King who weeps for the lost is also the King who flips tables when we keep the lost from being able to come to him! As we have seen in the Book of Acts, there was a long history of animosity between Jewish and non-Jewish or Gentile people. Many of the Jewish people were HAPPY to see the court of the Gentiles transformed into a shopping mall! They had become self-focused and self-obsessed. They didn't care that the nations had no place to worship in the temple because they didn't care if the nations worshipped at all! They only cared about their own.

But the Messiah King is a King who brings the outsiders in. In fact, if we go back to that prophecy in Zechariah and read a little further we catch a glimpse of the King's heart for the world:

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.
¹⁰ I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
and the war horse from Jerusalem;
and the battle bow shall be cut off,
and he shall speak peace to the nations;

his rule shall be from sea to sea,
and from the River **to the ends of the earth.** (Zechariah 9:9-10 ESV)

Listen: The arrival of the King is good news for the Jewish people – but it is also good news for the WORLD! Jesus came – not just to bring peace to Israel – but to bring peace to the ENDS OF THE EARTH!

Because Jesus' Kingship is not limited to any one people or culture. He is not the champion of Jewish rights, or of colonialism, or of the Baptists, or of the whites, or of any other any other group that he has so often been conflated with. The arrival of the King is good news for the WHOLE WORLD!

He issues his invitation to every people, and every tongue, and every tribe, and every nation. Surrender to the King! Repent, believe, be baptized in his name and receive the gift of grace! You don't need to become a Jew before you can come to Jesus. You don't need to become a middle-class Canadian before you can come to Jesus. You don't even need to be free from your addiction before you can come to Jesus! Whatever you think is in your way, just take a step forward in faith and watch as the King FLIPS THE TABLES and drives out every obstacle that would keep you from receiving his grace!

Nobody in this room is outside of the reach of grace. Look at the King who weeps for you! Look at the King who overturns tables for you! Reach out in faith and receive the gift of eternal life that he purchased for you with his own blood! He is the King who brings outsiders in.

And finally, having brought us in, he doesn't leave us the way he found us. We discover in this story that:

3. He is the King who teaches us how to live

Look again at verse 47:

And he was teaching daily in the temple. (Luke 19:47 ESV)

The other day, I had the privilege of sharing the gospel with a friend of mine, and he asked me a surprising question. He asked: “Where would I look to find out how I’m supposed to live?”

I was surprised by that question at the time – but in hindsight, I’m not surprised at all. It is one thing – a GLORIOUS thing – to be saved from death. But we also need to know HOW TO LIVE! Don’t we?

I said a moment ago that you don’t need to be free from your addiction to come to Jesus. Perhaps some of you thought that I misspoke, but I meant it. The invitation of grace is an invitation that Jesus issues to us *while we are still sinners*. Jesus said:

“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. **I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.**” (Mark 2:17b ESV)

So, you don’t need to clean yourself up to respond to his call. Come as you are, confess your sin, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you WILL be saved!

But after that, you want to be free of that addiction, don’t you? And PRAISE GOD the King who weeps for the lost and who brings outsiders in is also the King who teaches us how to live!

He teaches us through His Word. In 2 Timothy 3, we read:

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17 ESV)

Do you want to be complete and equipped? Do you want to learn how to live? Do you want to put away old sinful ways of thinking and to replace them with new, godly direction? Open your Bible every day and listen as the King teaches you! Read and grow!

And He teaches you through His church. In Hebrews 10, we read:

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (Hebrews 10:24-25 ESV)

The King uses other Christians in your life to stir you up to love and good works. They encourage you when you're stunted in your growth. They convict you when you're returning to one of your favorite sins. They remind you of the gospel when you're tempted to despair. As we sing and pray and learn together, the King is teaching us through our brothers and sisters.

And, finally, he teaches us through his Spirit. In John 14, Jesus says:

“These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you.²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, **he will teach you all things** and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. (John 14:25-26 ESV)

When you surrender to Jesus and receive his gift of grace, he gives you more than you could have ever anticipated! He gives you the Holy Spirit! The second that you place your trust in Jesus, God Himself takes up residence in your heart, and He begins to teach you FROM THE INSIDE!

He brings conviction where there didn't used to be conviction. It's almost as if he sets up an invisible fence around the sinful things that you used to enjoy. Now, whenever you pursue them, you feel a shock in your conscience.

He brings desire where there didn't used to be desire. Suddenly, you WANT to read your Bible. You WANT to pray. You WANT to grow in godliness. You WANT to gather with the people of God. You WANT to worship. You think that maybe you've lost your mind... But somehow you are experiencing a joy every Sunday morning that is deeper and truer than any high you ever experienced on a Friday night.

What is that? What's happening?

You're being taught by the King.

You're being taught how to live and how to love. You're being taught how to order your affections and how to put to death those old addictions. He saved you instantly, but he teaches you slowly and patiently.

This morning, if you have not surrendered to the King – if he is weeping over you right now – then I want to plead with you to bow before King Jesus. Let go of the excuses. There is no obstacle that he cannot throw aside. Repent. Believe. Receive His grace today and LIVE!

And if you HAVE surrendered – if Jesus is YOUR King – then I want to encourage you to join your voice with the voices of the disciples as we declare:

“Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” (Luke 19:38 ESV)

The King has arrived! And he is worthy of our praise! Let’s pray.