

What Palm Sunday Teaches Us

Today is Palm Sunday. Today we're commemorating the triumphal entry of Jesus to Jerusalem. His entry was triumphal because he was welcomed enthusiastically by a large number of disciples, admirers, fans, and what-have-you. In fact, they welcomed him as their liberator. They have been under Roman rule for many, many years and they have been waiting for a Savior, someone who would lead them to fight against the Romans. Surely, they have heard about his miracles. So, he must be powerful.

Jesus came into the city in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9. It says, "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

But not everyone welcomed him with enthusiasm. Some were indignant like the Pharisees. And we know that in a week's time, that triumph ended in tragedy. Because many of those who welcomed him were the very ones who also rejected him and asked for his blood. They were disappointed in him. Instead of starting a war, Jesus came to bring peace and love.

But we can learn lessons from that first Palm Sunday. So, I've entitled our message for today as "What Palm Sunday Teaches Us". Let us read from Luke 19:28-38. Please open your Bibles to this passage.

From this passage, we see that Palm Sunday teaches us

1. To obey Jesus unreservedly.

In verse 32, we read, "Those who were sent ahead went . . ."

So, earlier in verse 29, it says that Jesus sent two of his disciples and commanded them to go to a village, enter it, and untie a colt they see.

Anyway, as verse 32 tells us, these two disciples “went”. They just went. I imagine they didn’t hesitate. I imagine they didn’t ask like “Lord, are you sure we just need to untie the donkey without asking permission?” “What if there were two donkeys, how do we know?” “What color is the donkey?” No, they just went. No ifs and buts. They did as they were told and went ahead to get the colt. They obeyed the command that Jesus gave them. It is such a simple thing, but there is no more important thing in all the Bible than to obey the Lord. He tells us to repent, we must repent. He tells us to believe, we must believe. He tells us to forgive, we must forgive. He tells us to go, we must go.

On Dec. 4, 1893, Walter Gowans and Rowland Bingham of Toronto, Canada, and Thomas Kent of Buffalo, N.Y., landed at Lagos, Nigeria. Their aim was to establish a witness among the 60 million people of what was then commonly known as the Soudan, the area south of the Sahara between the Niger River and the Nile. A year and a half later Bingham returned to Canada, alone. Walter and Thomas Kent lay buried in Nigeria's interior. Bingham, who eventually founded the Sudan International Mission, recalled, (and I quote) "I visited Mrs. Gowans to take her the few personal belongings of her son. She met me with extended hand. We stood there in silence. Then she said these words: 'Well, Mr. Bingham, I would rather have had Walter go out to the Soudan and die there, all alone, than have him home today, disobeying his Lord.'"

Obedience seems like a hard thing at times, but it doesn't appear that it was difficult at all for those here in Luke 19 who were called disciples. They were told to go and they went. They were told what to do and they did it. They were told what to say and they said it. When the Lord presents himself again as the Messiah to the world in these last days, The last thing we want to be found doing is disobeying the Lord.

Thomas a Kempis said "Instant obedience is the only kind of obedience there is; delayed obedience is disobedience. Whoever strives to withdraw from obedience, withdraws from Grace." We must crucify the flesh, and all its lusts - because the Lord says so. We must pick up our cross, without reservation - because the Lord says so. We must follow Christ wherever he goes - because he says that is what his disciples are to do. You cannot be a disciple if you do not obey. Obedience not only defines what a disciple is, but who he follows.

We often see how our obedience leads to blessing. Abraham was obedient in going to a place that would be his inheritance, even though he didn't know where he was going. How many of us would leave behind everything that is familiar to us and just go without knowing our destination? Yet that is what Abraham did and what the fishermen did, and it is what any obedient disciple does.

Palm Sunday teaches us to obey Jesus willingly. Secondly, it teaches us

1. To trust Jesus absolutely

Now, the second part of verse 32 says ". . . and found it just as he had told them."

Folks, God keeps his promises. Always. If he tells you there is a colt tied at a doorway in a nearby village, then there is a colt tied at a doorway in a nearby village. They found it just as he had told them. When Jesus said that He was "The Truth" that is what he meant. The question is do you trust the truth?

There is a larger lesson here in faith and trusting God's word. The disciples could not see the colt. They had to walk in faith all the way to the village trusting that Jesus was telling them the truth and when they got to the village, the truth was realized 'just as he had told them'

We often will judge what we trust by how we feel. If we feel good, then we might reason that it must be good. I don't know anyone who doesn't want to feel good - myself included;

but my feelings are not the final authority on what is good or bad, right or wrong. The word of God is the final authority on what is good and bad, right and wrong. The disciples could have trusted their doubt more than their faith. Sometimes they did, remember what happened to Peter on the water?

You see, If I relied on my reason and logic, I wouldn't be here today, I wouldn't be in this church. I preach Hell is hot, sin is bad, God is good, and grace is for everyone, and all those who believe Jesus died on the cross for their sins can and will be saved! Not because I feel good or bad about it, but because that is what the word of God says! To trust God's word is to trust God himself. If we tell our children to jump, we will catch them, only an unloving liar would let them fall. We know at least two things about God: God is love (1 Jn. 4:8) & it is impossible for God to lie (Hb 6:18). He is love and he is truth. His word is love and his word is truth because it comes from the one who is love and truth. The question is 'Do you trust him?'

A television program preceding the 1988 Winter Olympics featured blind skiers being trained for slalom skiing, impossible as that sounds. Paired with skiers who could see, the blind skiers were taught on the flats how to make right and left turns. When that was mastered, they were taken to the slalom slope, where their sighted partners skied beside them shouting, "Left!" and "Right!" As they obeyed the commands, they were able to negotiate the course and cross the finish line, depending solely on the sighted skiers' word. It was either complete trust or catastrophe.

What a vivid picture of the Christian life! In this world, we are blind about what course to take. You cannot see tomorrow or next week or next month or next year. As Proverbs 27:1 says, **“Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.”** We must rely on the one who can see ahead of us, we must

rely solely on the Word of the only One who is truly sighted --God Himself. His Word gives us the direction we need to finish the course.

The question is 'Do you trust the word, or do you trust yourself?' 'What guides your decisions? His word or your feelings?' 'what is the final authority in your life? Your logic, reason, and intelligence or God's word?' When we learn to trust God's word and his promises above our logic and feelings, we will begin to see good things happen. Romans 8:28 says, " And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." So, the disciples got the colt, trusting that the colt was there even though they couldn't see the colt at the moment.

Palm Sunday teaches us to obey Jesus willingly, to trust Jesus absolutely, and thirdly

2. To exalt Jesus enthusiastically.

Now, let's look at verses 37-38, "When 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: 'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!' 'Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!'"

David said, "I called to the LORD who is worthy of praise..." (Ps. 18:3) There is only one that is worthy to be exalted. There is only one worthy to be worshiped. There is only one who is truly worthy to be praised and it is the Messiah, Savior, Emmanuel, the Blessed Redeemer, the Prince of Peace, Almighty, Wonderful Counselor, Everlasting Father, Son of God, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Jesus the Christ! The Glorious One has come down from his perfect throne to be among us to save us! If in all of history there was a moment to rejoice, it was the moment the Messiah came into Jerusalem. They laid down their cloaks and palm branches before his procession.

Now, their minds could not comprehend fully what was at work. They thought Jesus was headed for a crown of jewels, He knew it would be a crown of thorns. They thought he would sit in the Temple.

He knew he would hang from a cross. They thought Jesus was going to march through the gate and promptly drive out the Romans and begin to establish his kingdom, in which all the disciples would then have a place in his administration. The reality was greater than that. Jesus said "My kingdom is not of this world" Christ is above a physical kingdom, political kingdoms, and worldly kingdoms. He is KING OF KINGS. The Lord said through his prophet Isaiah (66:1) "Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? Where will my resting place be?" Jesus is worthy to be praised! Amen?

In 1715 King Louis XIV of France died after a reign of 72 years. He had called himself "the Great," and was the monarch who made the famous statement, "I am the state!" His court was the most magnificent in Europe, and his funeral was equally spectacular. As his body lay in state in a golden coffin, orders were given that the cathedral should be very dimly lit with only a special candle set above his coffin, to dramatize his greatness. At the memorial, thousands waited in hushed silence. Then Bishop Massillon began to speak; slowly reaching down, he snuffed out the candle and said, "Only God is great."

Only God is great. His greatness will cause men to tremble in fear or bow in reverence or sing with joy. I refuse to worship anyone who is not great and our God is not only great, He is the greatest! The fact that he would allow such sinful pathetic creatures to worship him at all is a grace in and of itself.

But you know why God is truly great? Because of his great love for us. The Bible says, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." (John 15:13). That's what Jesus did for us. Jesus is God who came down

to earth in order to save us from our sins. Sin is anything that we do, think, or say that is not pleasing to God. Anytime we disobey God, we sin. We are all sinners condemned to die, the Bible says. We cannot save ourselves. Only Jesus can.

He went to the cross willingly and died like a criminal to set us free. Then, he was buried and rose from the dead. His resurrection is what we're going to celebrate next Sunday. Because he resurrected, you, too, can be resurrected and have eternal life in heaven.

Today, if you haven't committed your life to Jesus yet, I encourage you to learn from the lessons that **Palm Sunday teaches us**. First, I'd urge you to obey Jesus unreservedly. Because to be saved, he asks you to first acknowledge you're a sinner, then ask for forgiveness for your sins. And repent of your sins, meaning, do not do any longer those things that are not pleasing to him. Then, I'd encourage you to trust Jesus absolutely. Trust him as your Lord and Savior. Don't put your trust in your religion, in your good works, in your philosophies, in your money. They can't save you. Only Jesus can. Trust Jesus absolutely. And finally, exalt Jesus enthusiastically. You can exalt Jesus when you praise him before others. Give a testimony to others about what Jesus has done for you. Speak to others about Jesus.