

Date: March 28, 2021

Series: *A First Century Physician Introduces the Cure*

Title: *A Different Kind of King*

Text: Luke 19:28-48

Preacher: Mark Adams

In 2009 there was a very interesting article in *The Washington Post*. It began with these very interesting words: *"The king folds her own laundry, chauffeurs herself around D.C. in a 1992 Honda, and answers her own phone---her boss's phone, too."*

Did that pique your curiosity? Good---that was my plan.

The article went on to tell the story of Peggelene Bartels, who has worked as a secretary in the Ghanaian embassy in Washington for 30 years now. She's originally from Otuam, Ghana, a small city in Western Africa of about 7,000, and her story is a fascinating one. In 2008 her uncle, the 90-year-old king of Otuam, died, and when he did the elders did what they always have done.

They performed an odd ritual to determine the next king. They prayed and poured schnapps on the ground while they slowly read the names of the king's 25 relatives. When steam rose from the schnapps on the ground, the name that they were reading at that moment would be the new king, and that's exactly what happened when they came to Peggelene's name.

Thanks to the timing of that evaporating schnapps, she became Otuam's first female King. And you didn't hear me wrong---Peggelene is a king---not a queen. When she pointed out to the elders that she is a woman, they replied by saying the office of king was the post that was open.

When she returned to Ghana for her coronation, she was given a heavy gold crown and carried through the streets on a litter. King Peggelene was also given power to resolve disputes, appoint elders, and manage more than 1,000 acres of family-owned land. This new king says, *"Most of the time, a king is the one who has all the executive power to do things, while the queen is mostly in charge of the children's affairs and reporting to the king. So, I really love this."*

Until her retirement from the Embassy here in D.C. she returned to Ghana for several weeks of the year to perform her duties as King. She would also call Ghana every morning at 1:00am D.C. time to keep up with her regent and elders in Ghana. But now those mid-dark-30 calls are a thing of the past. She has since moved to Ghana to serve the people there full time. She was given an eight-bedroom palace in need of repairs. She has a chauffer and servants.

Isn't that an interesting story? It's hard to imagine a story like this---a story about a different kind of king! But of course, we don't have to imagine because for the last few months we've been studying about ANOTHER different kind of King. I'm referring to the life story of the King of Kings---Jesus---as told by a 1st century physician named Luke. And today we come to the day when Jesus---our King---THE King---came into Jerusalem. His behavior that day shows that He TOO was a different kind of king. In fact, as we look back on our study of Luke's Gospel we can see that this difference began at---well, the beginning.

First, King Jesus was born in a smelly cave used to stable sheep near the hamlet of Bethlehem.

And, He grew up---not in a palace but rather in another small town, named Nazareth---in the middle of nowhere. Jesus had no servants. In fact, He worked for years at a regular job, just like everyone else. And, He had no "chauffer," He was never carried in a litter---in fact, other than today's text it appears that He walked wherever He went.

Well, as we learned when we began this series, one day, about the time He was thirty, King Jesus gave up His job as a carpenter and started preaching. He wandered all over the place drawing huge crowds of people with His messages, even though He had no real theological training. But He was more than an amazing speaker---He was a miracle worker. He calmed storms, healed lepers, cast out demons, and even raised the dead---which greatly increased His popularity.

Then He ran into some trouble by claiming that He was not A king but rather THE King---the Son of God---the long-awaited Messiah. With this claim, He managed to offend some of His own people as well as the local religious leaders. And that brings us to the day, three years into His ministry, when this unlikely Ruler was finally acclaimed as King. Take your Bibles and turn to Luke 19 and follow along as I read verses 19-48. If able, I ask that you stand in respect for God's Word as it is read.

Luke 19:28-48

28 - After Jesus had said this, [the Parable of the Ten Minas], He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.

29 - As He approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples, saying to them,

30 - "Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here.

31 - If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' say, 'The Lord needs it.'"

32 - Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as He had told them.

33 - As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?"

34 - They replied, "The Lord needs it."

35 - They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it.

36 - As He went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

37 - 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:

38 - "Blessed is the King Who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in Heaven and glory in the highest!"

39 - Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples!"

40 - "I tell you," He replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."

41 - As He approached Jerusalem and saw the city, He wept over it

42 - and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes.

43 - The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side.

44 - They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."

45 - When Jesus entered the temple courts, He began to drive out those who were selling.

46 - "It is written," He said to them, "'My house will be a house of prayer;' but you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"

47 - Every day He was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill Him.

48 - Yet they could not find any way to do it, because all the people hung on His words.

Dr. Luke is not the only one to share the story of this event--all four Gospels do---no doubt because it was the only "public demonstration" like this that our Lord allowed while He was ministering on earth. And this morning we'll be pulling not just from Luke, but from other Gospel accounts as well.

Here's something else unique about the day Jesus came to town. The gospel writers tell us that He was AT THE FRONT of this pre-Easter parade. Nowhere else do we find Jesus at the HEAD of the multitude: not when He descended the mountain after the Sermon on the Mount, not after He left Capernaum, and not as He entered the town of Jericho. Before this Jesus chose to be SURROUNDED by the people rather than OUT FRONT---but not today. Today, He LED---like a King!

And a HUGE throng of people would have been there to follow or watch Him do so. You see, it was Passover and that meant Jerusalem would have been absolutely packed with Jews. Every male Jew living within 20 miles of Jerusalem was REQUIRED to attend. And since it was the principal Jewish feast, multitudes of people came from all over the world as well. In fact, no matter how far away a Jew lived---he hoped to be able to attend at least one Passover feast in Jerusalem during his lifetime.

To give you a better idea as to just how many people would have been in Jerusalem for that feast---30 years later a Roman governor took a census of the number of lambs slain at a Passover. His count numbered 250,000. Now since one lamb was required for ten people, this meant that 2.5 million Jews were present. I'm thinking the number was much higher when Jesus entered Jerusalem that day

And to give you an idea of what the ATMOSPHERE would have been like at that particular Passover we need to remember WHY it was such a popular feast in the first place.

Remember?

The Passover commemorated Israel's deliverance from EGYPTIAN bondage. With this historical event in mind the Jews of that day hoped that at some Passover, God would AGAIN deliver His people---this time from their ROMAN oppressors. In fact, many believed that it would be at a Passover that the MESSIAH Himself would show up. He would be a military, political, Messiah and would lead the people in a victorious revolt. Well, when this particular Passover rolled around in 30AD it was widely reported that Jesus WAS the Christ---the long-awaited Messiah.

And many of the people who believed this, hoped that at this religious feast Jesus would openly, publicly declare Himself to be the Christ. As the Messiah they expected Jesus to then storm the gates of the Antonio Fortress and drive the Romans out like David did the Philistines.

In short, they thought the best way to fix their world's problems would be to fix the government. And let me just pause to say---we must be careful not to make their mistake---as so many Christians have in recent years. This world of ours is a fallen world, so its problems are not going to be solved by government no matter which political party is in power. The only way to change this world is to change the hearts of people and only Jesus can do that. That's why He didn't run the Romans out at that Passover. Jesus didn't come to save government. He didn't come to save a nation. No---He came to save souls. He was indeed---IS indeed---a different kind of King.

But like so many people of our day---the people then didn't understand that---and their RESPONSE to Jesus' arrival that day tells us as much. First, we see their misunderstanding in what they DID. Remember, as other Gospel writers tell us, they not only laid their cloaks on the ground, they waved PALM BRANCHES. And to them this was a sign---a symbol---of MILITARY victory. This symbol originated back in the 2nd century B.C. when the Seleucid Empire ruled Israel. In those difficult days there was a sort of guerrilla group that fought against the Seleucids. The leader of this group was a man named Judas Maccabaeus. He was much like a "Robin Hood" for the Jews and because of his determined efforts, in 164B.C. the Seleucids gave up---and let the Jews practice their religion in the temple once again.

Later, Judas' brother, Simon Maccabaeus drove the Seleucids out all together and when that happened, he was acclaimed a national hero---and his victory was celebrated with something like a ticker tape parade in New York---but instead of ticker tape, that day the Jew rejoiced in his victory with music---and with the waving of PALM BRANCHES.

From then on, the PALM BRANCH became significant for them as a symbol of military victory. In fact, that symbolism became so deeply rooted in the Jewish consciousness---that when the Jews revolted against the Romans thirty years after Jesus' ascension---they dared to mint their own coins with the image of a palm branch because it was their national symbol of victory.

But it wasn't just what they DID that day. We also see their flawed understanding of the nature of Jesus' kingdom in what they SAID.

Remember?

In verse 38 Luke tells us they cried, "**Blessed is the KING who comes!**" In John 12:13 we read that they said, "**Blessed is the King of Israel!**" and "**HOSANNA!**" Now we think of that word, "**Hosanna**" as a word of praise but it literally means "**Save us now!**" It was their way of saying that they wanted the Romans gone and Jesus installed as King---NOW!

John tells us the also cried out, ***“Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord?”*** That phrase is from Psalm 118, a psalm that they considered the CONQUEROR’S psalm. Listen to the entire verse, ***“Save NOW, I pray O Lord; O Lord, I pray, send NOW prosperity. Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord.”*** (Psalm 118:24-5 KJV)

My point is---it’s obvious from what the people SAID and DID that they saw Jesus as a military leader---a King who would deliver them from Rome. That’s what was on the minds of these millions of Jews on that day as Jesus entered the city. It is no wonder that the religious leaders said, ***“See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how THE WHOLE WORLD has gone after Him!”*** (John 12:19)

Well, in John’s gospel we learn that sometime that week, a group of Greeks sought Jesus out. They came to Philip---possibly because his is a Greek name. And---who knows---maybe they knew him because his hometown, Bethsaida, had a large Greek population. In any case, these Greeks were proselytes to the Jewish faith. John says they came up to Jerusalem to worship---and I think they sought Jesus out because they had either been present---or heard that He cleansed the temple. For---as we just read---after His triumphal entry, for the second time in His ministry---our Lord chased the money-changers and the sellers of sacrificial animals out of the COURT OF THE GENTILES---the only place that Gentiles like these GREEKS could go to worship. Perhaps these guys had been in the temple at the time and had seen Jesus do this and had wanted to know more about a Man Who could and would do things like this. They wanted to meet this Man Who made it possible for them to worship again.

Okay, enough background. Let me take you to what I consider the FOCUS of this text---because, as I have already alluded---Jesus’ actions that day reminds us that He was---and IS---a different kind of King---both in what HE came to do and in what He asks HIS SUBJECTS to do.

Let’s hang our study on those two facts.

1.) He is the King Who was born to DIE for His subjects.

You don’t see presidents or governmental leaders announcing that this is the goal of their administration---do you? You don’t see earthly rulers saying, *“I want to be clear. My platform is based on one thing. I will literally die for you guys!”* But that’s why Jesus came. That’s the basis of His “platform.” And---this shouldn’t have been news to His “cabinet” because Jesus had told the twelve disciples this for some time. In fact, in his gospel, Mark tells us Jesus had plainly told them JUST A FEW HOURS EARLIER as they approached Jerusalem,

“We are going up to Jerusalem and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the Law. They will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles, who will mock Him and spit on Him, flog Him and kill Him. Three days later He will rise.” (Mark 10:33-34)

I’m sure He wanted to explain this to the throngs that witnessed His entry into Jerusalem that day---but with MILLIONS of Jews crowded around and no P.A. system available---well, it was obviously impossible for Jesus to do this by SPEAKING. His voice could not have reached that vast assembly of people---so this DIFFERING KIND OF KING made this point in A DIFFERENT KIND OF WAY. He borrowed a teaching tool from the Old Testament prophets.

Remember?

They often had a very distinctive method of getting their message across. When words failed to move people, instead of TALKING they DID something dramatic as if to say, *“If you will not hear, you must be forced to see.”*

For example, in 1st Kings 11:29-39, the prophet Ahijah conveyed a message to King Jeroboam by ripping his robe into twelve pieces. The message: God was splitting up Israel and giving Jeroboam a piece.

And in Isaiah 20 God told the prophet Isaiah to take off his clothes and shoes and walk around naked. He had to do this for three years. The message: God would punish Egypt and take her people away as naked prisoners. These dramatic actions were what we might call *“acted parables”* or *“dramatic sermons.”* So that first Palm Sunday knowing He could

not get the people's attention by SPEAKING, Jesus did the next best thing: He used this particular prophetic method---and we see this in His choice of TRANSPORTATION---because He came riding in, not in a chariot or on a stallion but rather on a donkey's colt.

This signified two things.

First it was a deliberate claim to be the Messiah. By riding this colt Jesus was enacting the words of Zechariah 9:9.

“Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your King is coming to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and seated on a donkey's colt.”

With this “object lesson” Jesus brought the prophecy to life saying, *“Let there be no doubt---I AM the long-awaited Messiah of God.”*

But He was also claiming to be a certain KIND of Messiah.

You see, the donkey was not normally used by a warlike person. No---it was the animal of a man of peace, a priest, or a merchant. PLUS---the donkeys people ride in the Holy Land are not like the donkeys we breed in the U. S. They're much smaller so that grown men have to bend their knees as they ride to keep their feet from hitting the ground. The donkey Jesus rode was of this small type and it was young too. A conqueror would ride into the city on a horse or perhaps march in on foot at the head of his troops. A donkey wouldn't suit this kind of King because the donkey speaks of peace and humility. So, Jesus was saying that He was not the warrior figure men dreamed of but rather the Prince of Peace. He was telling them He came to be the PEACE OFFERING between sinful man and their Holy God.

Well, they didn't get the message---nor did the disciples, until after Jesus' resurrection. That day they didn't realize that Jesus is a different kind of King---a King Who came to die for His subjects. Perhaps if they hadn't been so focused on getting rid of the Romans, they would have understood that this unlikely Kingly act was what Jesus was getting at when He said, ***“And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself.”*** (John 12:32) As John goes on to say in the next verse, ***“He said this to show the kind of death He was going to die.”*** (John 12:33) I mean, if they hadn't been so intent on political freedom they would have known that Jesus was saying, ***“The wages of sin is death so I will be the sin bearer. I will be lifted up on a cross to pay the cost for your sins. I will die in your place.”*** And---of course, this was God's plan all along. Jesus was---IS--- ***“the Lamb of God slain before the foundation of the world.”*** (Revelation 13:8) It was always understood that He would come to earth, live a sinless life, and then pay the price of our disobedience in order to make the way for us to come home to Him.

Jesus was indeed a different kind of King. I mean, what ruler would do that?!

It doesn't make earthly sense.

I'm reminded of something the famous atheist and author, Richard Dawkins, once said when he debated John Lennox on the existence of God. At one point Dawkins says of John Lennox:

“He believes that the creator of the universe, the God who devised the laws of physics, the laws of mathematics, the physical constants---that this genius of mathematics and physical science could not think of a better way to rid the world of sin than to come to this little speck of cosmic dust---and have Himself tortured and executed so that He could forgive. That, is profoundly unscientific. Not only is it unscientific, but it doesn't do justice to the grandeur of the universe. Why would God bother entering into our small and broken planet?”

Dawkins doesn't get it---sin has a cost. It always has and always will. Someone had to pay that cost. And God did it by sending His Son to suffer and die in our place. God is not like us. His love is unconditional. And---His Son is not like earthly rulers. He came to pay the price for our sin. I don't know about you---but I thank God that I serve THIS kind of King. I praise Him that His love for me was that great---that GRACIOUS. In fact, knowing this drives me---it compels me to want to follow Jesus more closely---and that leads to a second thing I want us to note in this text.

2.) Jesus tells His subjects—His followers that to LIVE, really live, they must DIE as well.

This is what our Lord is saying to those Greeks.

“Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” (John 12:24-25)

Jesus was saying that to experience true JOY in life---we must be willing to surrender our desires, our possessions---and if necessary even our lives to Him. Now---all this stuff about DYING is not a popular message.

Calling for self-sacrifice???

Well, it's not a way for a king to gain popularity with his subjects. I'm reminded of a cartoon that appeared in LEADERSHIP JOURNAL a while back that showed an advertisement for a seeker-sensitive funeral service. It reads: *“Seeker-sensitive funeral: No body, no casket, no mention of the ‘D’ word.”*

Well, Jesus specializes in the “D” word. He says that to LIVE we must follow His example and be willing to DIE. He says that ironically the way to experience abundant life is to die to our desires---and put His will first---no matter where that will may lead us. We see the validity of this “die to live” principle in many areas. For example, the renowned violinist, Paderewski, was once told by an admiring woman, *“Sir, you are a genius,”* to which he responded, *“Madam, before I was a genius, I was a drudge.”* In other words, Paderewski had learned that musical brilliance came through death. Skill in playing the violin was the result of hard work and self-denial.

The famous runner, Jim Ryun, who set a record for the mile when he was eighteen years old, said this about his training, *“I would run until I felt I couldn't take another step, then I would run until I felt my lungs were going to burst. When I came to that state, then I would run until I thought I was going to pass out. When I did this, I was making progress.”* Jim Ryun learned that the key to victory on the track is dying.

The same principle is true in marriage as well. Marital bliss is all about self-denial. As Robert Lewis puts it, *“The basis for any happy marriage is found in embracing this paradox, ‘die a little...live a lot.’”*

Well, the spiritual life is governed by a similar paradox. We LIVE by dying. We experience an abundant quality of life by saying NO to our will and YES to God's. We live by dying. So---if your spiritual growth is stagnant, if your potential as a Christ-follower is going unrealized it may well be that you need to die in some way.

And, we can see this principle more clearly in Jesus' reply to those Greek seekers. You see, that first word for life in verse 25: ***“The man who loves LIFE”*** that first word is *“psuche”* and refers to the life of the MIND---the EGO---our personal desires and will. The other word at the end ***“will keep it for eternal LIFE”*** is *“ZOE”* and means *“abundant.”* So---Jesus is saying that every Christian has this eternal or divine life *“ZOE LIFE”* now---but he has it in its fullness only when his entire ego or personality *“his PSUCHE”* is surrendered to Christ. Until we follow Jesus' example and die to self, we don't really live.

George Mueller exercised a wide influence for God. In the 19th century this evangelist established 117 schools in which he provided a Christian education for 120,000 children---most of them orphans. He had an amazingly abundant, miracle-filled exciting, joyful life. When someone asked him, *“What has been the secret of your amazing life?”* Mueller hung his head and said, *“There was a day when I died.”* Then he bent lower and said, *“I died to George Mueller, his opinions, preferences, tastes, and will; died to the world, its approval or censure---died to the approval or blame even of brethren or friend.”*

George Mueller is someone who found his LIFE by losing it. Malcom Muggerige said, *“I can say that I never knew what joy was like until I gave up pursuing happiness, or cared to live until I chose to die. For these two discoveries I am beholden to Jesus.”*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer once said, *"To deny oneself is to be aware only of Christ and no more of self, to see only Him Who goes before and no more the road which is too hard for us. All that self-denial can say is: 'He leads the way, keep close to Him.'"*

With that in mind let me ask---how close are you keeping to Jesus? How authentically are you following His example? How much are you dying to self? How do you need to die? In what way does your will need to be replaced by Jesus' will? Or to put it another way, what part of your life would come alive if you died---if you let Jesus make the decisions?

Would your marriage come alive if you died a little? Would your relationship with your children deepen if you died some? Would your work---your career---be resurrected if you died every day and let Jesus take over? In what way is your refusal to die---getting in the way of your beginning to live?

LET US PRAY