

When the King Wept

Luke 19:28-44

At some level, we have all experienced emotional or physical anguish (pain) because of something that has occurred in our personal lives (i.e. a profound loss, illness or injury). And to varying degrees we've all been in anguish over the trouble, the needs or the suffering that a loved one has or is experiencing.

Do you know why we anguish over the suffering or needs of another person, because we have love and compassion in our hearts? If you didn't have love or compassion in your heart, you wouldn't feel the pain that another person is experiencing.

We see this anguish over the spiritual condition of others in the Apostle Paul. In Galatians 4:19 he writes: *"my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!"* Paul's entire ministry was like a mother in labor pains (Romans 9:1-3; Colossians 1:28). He travailed to see the lost experience the new birth (2 Corinthians 5:17) and for Christlikeness to take shape in the lives of his spiritual children.

The word "travail" means the pain that a woman experiences both in the act of childbirth and in the long months leading up to it. Do we travail over the spiritual condition of those without Christ and long for them to know the new birth?

As we are going to see in a moment, during Jesus' Triumphal Entry into the city of Jerusalem, while some were rejoicing over Him, He wept over the spiritual condition of the city. He wept not because of the trouble that he would soon face, but because of the trouble that others would face. He wept not because He didn't get all the praise He deserved, He wept because those who rejected Him would not receive the eternal peace that they didn't deserve.

How many of you know, what we are most passionate about says everything about who we are and what we treasure the most. What are you most passionate about? Unless there is soul travail over the

spiritual condition of others, we will not see spiritual births or a spiritual awakening in our day.

Main idea: When we know the love of Jesus, we will do more than weep over the lost state of humanity; our anguish will move us to action.

To unfold this theme, we are going to look at 3 aspects of Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem which gives us a glimpse into His heart—a heart that we must take on if we are going to make a difference in this world for Christ.

1. Christ's Timing

The first aspect about Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem is **Christ's timing**. Jesus' three-and-a-half-year earthly ministry, which would culminate with His death and resurrection, was ending. Up to this point, He had appointed His disciples, healed multitudes, raised the dead and taught numerous parables concerning the kingdom of God. But although He privately taught His disciples about His crucifixion and future kingdom rule, He did not publicly promote His kingship.

In fact, often when He would miraculously heal the sick, He would charge them not to reveal publicly what He had done for them privately. The reason He did not want them to broadcast His healing power, which was a sign of His messiahship to those who had eyes to see, was because the religious leaders were envious and would be provoked to take violent action against Him. He wasn't trying to avoid fulfilling the ultimate reason for His first coming, namely to give His life as a ransom for many. Rather He was submitted to His Father's plan and prophetic time clock.

But as the hour of His crucifixion drew near, Doctor Luke writes: "*And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem*" (Luke 19:28). Earlier in His ministry, the bible records in John 7:6-10 that Jesus went up to Jerusalem privately for a Jewish

feast because as He explained to His disciples: *“My time has not yet come...”* (John 7:6). But now in our text, Jesus walked ahead of His disciples and began to lead them to Jerusalem.

We know from the gospel of John and in our text that before arriving in Jerusalem, Jesus had stopped in Bethany. And according to the gospel of John chapter eleven there He raised Lazarus from the dead. Because of this spectacular miracle, many Jews from Jerusalem came to see Jesus and Lazarus. However, the religious leaders, who were already plotting to kill Jesus because of His spreading fame, also began to plot to kill Lazarus. They plotted to kill Him *“because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus”* (John 12:11).

But although Jesus knew that tension in Jerusalem was rising and that many including His detractors were anticipating His arrival in Jerusalem for Passover, Jesus did not shrink back. Knowing that the hour of His sacrificial death for our sin was drawing near, Jesus made intentional and careful plans to enter Jerusalem. But this time His plans were not about avoiding publicity. Rather, He was making plans to ride into the city in a way that would publicly demonstrate that He was the King of kings.

Luke writes: *“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”* (Luke 19:29-35).

Now Jesus didn't send His disciples to bring Him a donkey because He was tired and wanted to take the load off His feet. In contrast to how a

warrior King would enter a conquered city, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, which was a symbol of peace, in fulfillment of messianic prophecy. Some 500 years before Zechariah prophesied:

“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). Furthermore, the bible not only prophesied the manner in which Messiah would ride into Jerusalem, in Daniel 9:24-27, the precise time that Messiah would come was also foretold.

As one commentator explained: “In all of this we observe Jesus’ painstaking premeditation. He had carefully ordered everything. The day and hour were selected from eternity with countdown perfection. The Triumphal Entry on the first day of the week would precipitate His terrible death on Good Friday, His “rest” in the grave on the Sabbath, and His triumphant resurrection on the following first day of the Church, His Body. Not only the time of His entry, but the mode as well, a previously unriden donkey, was carefully chosen. He was purposefully going public. Never before had He done anything to promote a public demonstration. In fact, He had repeatedly withdrawn from the crowds, if there was any hint of this. But now He invited it. He courted danger and did it with calculated purpose” (Kent Hughes).

Jesus entered into Jerusalem understanding fully what time it was. Although His entrance into Jerusalem in fulfillment of messianic prophecies publicly demonstrated that He was the King of Glory, He knew that it was not time for Him to reign, but to pay the ransom. He knew it was not the time for His coronation, but for His crucifixion. He knew that although some in the crowd would cry Hosanna, others in the crowd would later shout crucify Him, crucify Him. Yet, He would later pray in anguish as He faced the cross, *“But for this purpose I have come to this hour”* (John 12:27). Jesus not only understood the prophetic significance of the hour, but His anguished for sinners moved Him to accept that it was for this hour of unimaginable suffering that He had come into the world. Jesus didn’t just come into

the world in the flesh to enter into our sufferings, but to take on our suffering.

This reminds me of when the people of God were facing a holocaust in the book of Esther. By the providence of God, Esther had become queen. And knowing the day the King's decree to destroy the Jews was drawing near, Esther's uncle Mordecai sent a message to her to go before the King to plead on behalf of her people. But Esther knew that if any man or woman went to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter so that he may live (Esther 4:11).

But after being reminded of the gravity of the situation and that by the providence of God she was brought into the kingdom for such a time as this, Esther resolved that she would take action. But before doing so she called for a fast, which demonstrated the anguish of the people of God. Then Esther replied: *“Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish”* (Esther 4:16).

What moved Esther to court with danger and take such risky action? She was in anguish for her people who were under the sentence of death. And because her anguish overcame her fears her actions brought salvation to her people. In fact, the salvation was so great that all who plotted against the Jews, including the chief conspirator, Haman, were destroyed. The great salvation in the book of Esther is not only a picture of the salvation that Jesus brought through His sacrifice on the cross and resurrection, but it also teaches us a vital principle that is found throughout scripture. And that principle says, Before there is rescue and resurrection, there is action that is stirred by anguish. Before there is breakthrough there is brokenness.

O brothers and sisters, do we know what hour it is? In a moment we are going to see that Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem not only because of the destruction that was to come at the hands of the Romans, but because the people missed the time of their visitation from God and the peace that He came to bring. But although they missed it, there are many today who still have limited time. And like

Jesus was sent, those of us who are saved have been sent into this world to bring the peace and salvation of Jesus.

Do you know what time it is? Like Esther, are you awakened to the spiritual needs of those around you and that you've been called by God for such a time as this? Jesus said, the harvest is plentiful, but the labors are few (Luke 10:2). Until there is anguish in our hearts over those who don't know the salvation that Christ came to bring we will not be moved to action. Unless there is anguish we will not see an awakening. Where does anguish come from? Anguish is not something we can work up ourselves. It comes from the Spirit of God as we look away from ourselves and onto Christ's triumph on the cross over sin and death.

This brings us to a second aspect of Christ's Triumphal Entry which gives us a glimpse into His heart.

2. Christ's Triumph

In addition to **Christ's timing** and understanding that His hour of suffering had come, which He wholeheartedly embraced, His prophetic entrance into Jerusalem demonstrated **Christ's triumph**, or more specifically the triumph of His self-giving and sacrificial love. After His disciples set Jesus on the donkey, we read: *"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 19:36-39).

Remember that in contrast to how a warrior King would enter a conquered city on a war horse, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. How many of you know, when He comes the second time, He will

come on a magnificent white horse as the righteous King to bring Judgment. But in His first coming He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey which pictured both His position as the messiah, and His person, the prince of peace. Jesus, who is our peace, came the first time in humility to reconcile sinners to God through His sacrifice on the cross. He didn't come into Jerusalem to slay His enemies, but to suffer for sinners. Jesus' triumph on behalf of sinners came not by receiving a crown of gold but by wearing a crown of thorns.

Now as He rode into Jerusalem there were those who recognized that Jesus was the prophesied messiah. Multitudes began to rejoice and to praise God with a loud voice saying, "*Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!*" These words of praise echo the praises found in Psalm 118:26, which is a messianic Psalm. We know from the parallel passages in Matthew, Mark and John that the crowd also shouted *Hosanna to the son of David* (Matthew 21:15). and *Hosanna in the highest* (Mark 11:10). The cry of hosanna meant Save, or Save us, and it was a prophetic declaration that Jesus was their deliverer.

But although this whole scene was a prophetic declaration of the person of Jesus and the purpose of His coming, there were others who were outraged. These outraged religious leaders insisted that Jesus rebuke His followers for their messianic declarations of praise to Jesus. But Jesus replied to what they viewed as sacrilege: "*I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out*" (Luke 19:36-39). Jesus not only refused to rebuke His disciples but His reply indicated that the people's acclamations should be encouraged, not suppressed. His suggestion that even inanimate stones could not help but to praise Him was a public affirmation from Jesus that He Himself proclaimed to be the messiah. This further infuriated the religious leaders.

Knowing that His entrance into Jerusalem as King would further provoke those who were plotting to kill Him, what moved Jesus to embrace the suffering that would come? Like a woman accepts the anguish of labor pains because of the joy of birth, Jesus journeyed toward suffering and would endure the cross for the joy of knowing

that by doing so He would bring many sons and daughters into glory. His anguish, which was stirred by His love, moved Him to take calculated and costly action. **Before there was rescue and resurrection there was action motivated by anguish.**

This brings us to a final aspect of the Triumphal Entry that gives us a glimpse into the heart of our glorious Savior.

3. Christ's Tears

Concerning the Triumphal Entry, we saw **Christ's timing**, and **Christ's triumph**. Notice now **Christ's tears**. Beginning in verse 41 we read: *“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”* (Luke 19:41-44).

As many in the crowd were rejoicing and praising their messiah, Jesus saw past the crowd to the surrounding city and began to weep. The word translated *wept* in verse 41 means more than the shedding of tears. It means that Jesus sobbed and heaved. Jesus was not feeling sentimental. He was in agony. Why was Jesus weeping in agony while others were rejoicing? Jesus' tears resulted from two realities, the present blindness of the people and their future suffering. In verses 43-44, Jesus prophesied of the coming destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD, some 40 years after His entrance into Jerusalem.

As one commentator explained: “The details of the Lord's prophecy were not intended to specify the exact methods of the invasion, but they describe siege warfare in general. He also used hyperbole—“they will not leave in you one stone upon another”—to convey the idea of severe, total destruction. In AD 70, Titus did indeed construct

barricades and siege ramps in order to sack the city. While the Romans kept some towers and parts of the wall intact for their own use, Josephus writes, “But for all the rest of the wall, it was so thoroughly laid even with the ground by those that dug it up to the foundation, that there was left nothing to make those that came thither believe it had ever been inhabited. Besides the destruction, the killing bordered on extermination.” Charles R. Swindoll

Why did Jesus weep? Because He foresaw the destruction of the city that could have been avoided if only they had set aside their ambitions for political power and followed the way of Christ. In Jesus’ parable of the ten minas that He taught His disciples before coming into Jerusalem, those who resisted His kingship declared: “*We do not want this man to reign over us*” (Luke 19:14). Luke also records that He taught them the parable because they believed that the kingdom would immediately appear (Luke 19:14). They didn’t grasp, as Jesus explained in this parable, that He must first go on a journey, which began with suffering, to secure the kingdom and then He would return.

Do you know, many in the crowd shouted Hosanna, save us, save us because they wanted deliverance from Rome not deliverance from their sin? Jesus will come again to establish His kingdom on earth. But when He came the first time His primary mission was to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). Many who claimed to believe in Jesus were looking more for a kingdom to rejoice in than a king to reign in their hearts and lives. The same is true today. Many are looking to Jesus to save them from earthly problems, but have not received Him as their Savior King who came to deliver us from sin and reign in our hearts and lives forever.

In light of this, Jesus tears were not only about the future suffering that was to come to the city, but more so what they presently missed. While He wept in agony, Jesus cried in verse 41: “*Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes*” (Luke 19:41). They were looking for the peace that came from deliverance from Rome, but the peace that Jesus came to bring was peace with God through His sacrifice on

the cross for our sin received through repentance and faith. They missed it Jesus said, because it was *hidden from their eyes*. This speaks of their self-imposed blindness caused by their sin and selfish-ambitions. Jesus wept, as He explained in verse 44, *because you did not know the time of your visitation*” (Luke 19:41-44).

In the bible the word “visitation” speaks of God coming to His people in blessing or in judgment. According to the prophesy of Zechariah, Jesus came riding on a donkey, which means He came in humility, to bring salvation to His people. But because He did not meet their expectations, His own people did not receive Him. They missed the time of their visitation.

But although they missed it, Jesus moved by the agony in His heart, continued His journey to the cross. And because He did, the Apostle John recorded: *“He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God”* (John 1:11-12). Because of the agony of His heart and the joy of spiritual births that would come through His suffering, Jesus endured the cross.

This must also be true of us His followers if we are going to be effective witnesses for Christ. What are you most passionate about? Unless there is anguish in our hearts over the dire spiritual needs of those around us we will not be compelled to labor in prayer and in the work of the Lord. Unless there is soul travail we will not see spiritual births.

After the presidential election someone who attended our church walked out during praise and worship? When a brother saw Him walking out, He went after Him and asked, “Brother, are you ok?” He responded, “No, I’m not ok. How can we be singing happy songs when the election was stolen?”

It must break God’s heart that we can be so passionate about so many things but often have little to no brokenness over the spiritual condition of others. We can get so worked up about politics, sports,

and gas prices. Yet by comparison when it comes to the spiritual condition of others we are barely moved. How many of you know, the greatest need in our city—in our Jerusalem is not a new mayor—it's not a sports championship or even economic recovery. The great need is spiritual awakening, which will not happen until we agonize over the brokenness in our city.

One bible teacher observed: “The only three times [its recorded] that Jesus wept were near the cross. When He wept over Lazarus it was in the final weeks of His life. When He wept over Jerusalem it was in the final days of His life. When He wept in Gethsemane it was in the final hours of His life. The closer He got to the cross the more He wept. The more we die to ourselves and get a glimpse of eternity and what really matters, the more we will weep. The more we are captured by God's heart, the more the love of Christ controls us. We weep for our minor inconveniences. We groan over things that don't go our way. We fuss over things that a thousands years from now will not matter. But please tell me when was the last time we wept for lost souls.” (Dr. Scott Pauley)

Conclusion

What do you anguish over? Are you in anguish for those who need to grow in Christ or come to know Christ? When we know the love of Christ in our hearts we will be broken over the spiritual condition of those around us and beyond our borders. How do we grow in the love of Christ?

Although it's important to confess our apathy to the Lord, our main focus should not be the lack of anguish in our hearts. Anguish is not something we can muster up ourselves. Anguish comes from the Spirit of God as we look away from ourselves to the love of Christ and His triumph on the cross over sin and death.

As we daily draw near to the heart of God and focus on the needs of others, His love will be manifested in our hearts. When we our filled with His love our hearts will break for what breaks His heart. O may

His anguish move us to action—move us to be weeping witnesses for Christ to the glory of His name.