

The Triumphal Entries of Jesus
Palm Sunday 2021
Luke 19:28-44

We are in Luke's Gospel again this morning, however we are walking back a little bit. And if you've been with us for the last year and a half of going through Luke, you might be thinking, ummm, going the wrong the way...But we are going backwards today because today is Palm Sunday. Happy Palm Sunday! So we are going to spend some time today looking at what Palm Sunday commemorates, what is often called the "Triumphal Entry of Jesus."

Luke 19:28-40

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."

Again, this is referred to as the Triumphal Entry of Jesus, that moment when Jesus, having come to the end of his earthly ministry, arrives in Jerusalem to begin his Passion Week, the week leading up to his arrest, crucifixion (which we commemorate on Good Friday) and eventual resurrection on Easter Sunday.

As Jesus rides into town we see a crowd of people, “a whole multitude” rejoicing with a loud voice for what they were witnessing. The promised Messiah had arrived.

DAVIDIC COVENANT AND ISRAEL’S HOPE

To understand their excitement we have to understand a promise that was made by God to Israel and specifically to its king David roughly 1,000 years earlier. The famous king of Israel, David, receives a very important promise from God.

2 Samuel 7:12-13

12 When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.

13 He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

God makes a covenant with David that through David’s family, or line, God would bring along someone whose throne and kingdom would reign forever. Remember last week at the end of Luke 20, Jesus referenced David and his connection to the Messiah when he quotes Psalm 110. This one who would come after David would be this long awaited Messiah, everyone was hoping to see.

Fast forward 1,000 years...Israel is no longer a sovereign nation but is now under the rule of the Roman empire. They now are not living under their own king but under Caesar. So you can imagine how their cultural moment only heightened their expectation and hope for a coming, promised King. And it is in this context we understand the scene from Palm Sunday...

THE PROPHECIES AND EXPECTATION

Jesus and His disciples begin to enter Jerusalem, Jesus sends 2 disciples ahead to a village to borrow a donkey which actually fulfills a prophecy in **Zechariah 9:9**

Zechariah 9:9

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.

Jesus gives them instructions on getting the donkey for his triumphant ride into town. We don’t know exactly how this worked. Jesus could have possibly arranged for this beforehand so the owners knew that Jesus would be borrowing their donkey. Perhaps they were familiar with Jesus since he spent significant amount of time around that area. And hearing that he was in need they willing gave their donkey to him.

We don't know the exact circumstances of it but the disciples get the donkey bring it to Jesus and like a team lifts up their coach in celebration and victory the disciples set Jesus on the donkey to ride to Jerusalem.

Again think about this. There were already rumors and hopes that this Jesus everyone was hearing about was the Messiah and then they see Jesus coming into Jerusalem on a donkey! Those who knew the OT and knew the prophecies would have immediately recognized this as a declaration that Jesus is the king they have been waiting for.

So they began laying down their cloaks on the road to show respect and reverence to King Jesus. Now the other gospel writers tell us that the people also brought palm branches and laid them down.

They then began shouting "*Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!*" Other texts show that the people were shouting "Hosanna!" which was taken from Psalm 118 and literally means "Save us!"

So there was a great commotion with the arrival of Jesus into Jerusalem. But not all were excited for the occasion. The usual suspects were there as well. The Pharisees, the religious leaders, want to no part of the celebration. And not only are they unwilling to celebrate the arrival of the king, they don't want anyone to celebrate either.

So they say "rebuke your disciples, Jesus." To which he simply responds, "Even if they were quiet, the very stones of this street I am riding down would sing my praise." In other words, there is no suppression of the praise that the King deserves. Whether it is by the mouths of men or the shout of creation, the Creator King will be exalted.

And this is a good reminder that even when we don't feel like it, Jesus deserves our praise. Even in years like the one we've just experienced and our hearts don't feel moved to sing God's praise, he nonetheless is worthy of all praise.

This scene, the actions of Jesus and the disciples, the recording of this momentous occasion for all of us to read about now thousands of years later, is given to remind us that Jesus was and is the Davidic King, promised by God for his people. He exercises real authority over a real kingdom. As God had promised to David, Jesus as the true king will reign forever. His kingdom will never end.

So, when we come to Jesus we find in him not only a Savior but a king, One who lays claim to the entirety of our lives. One who exercises authority through his word over his people. To recognize him as your king is to submit yourself to his rule over your life. We live under the good rule and reign of King Jesus.

So that day the people saw the long awaited king, in the flesh, arrive and they praise God for him.

JESUS WEEPS OVER THE CITY

But what is interesting is what the next verses say...

Luke 19:41

41 And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it

Even in this seemingly great and victorious scene of people shouting praise to King Jesus, the text says that Jesus wept over the city. And these aren't tears of joy. Why would Jesus be moved to tears here?

Luke 19:42

42 "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. (Goes on to describe the coming destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of Rome)

The reason for sorrow is that there were many who reject Jesus as the promised Messiah, and further, the people singing praise to Jesus arriving in Jerusalem did not fully understand what Jesus came to do. The people were seeking a Messiah that would victoriously ride in, overthrow the Roman government, and reestablish the throne and kingdom of Israel. They were looking for an immediate, physical, literal fulfillment of God's promise to David.

In fact, **palm branches** represented victory. It was common for this kind of procession when a victorious king would return home from battle. The palm branch had become the national symbol of Israel, even appearing on Israel's coins. It would be like waving your nation's flag in nationalistic pride. The people were declaring a national victory over Rome! That is why they were shouting "Hosanna," "Save us now!" That is also why, some commentators believe, in verse 39, Jewish leaders were trying to silence the people, not just because they didn't accept Jesus as the King but because it would stir the Roman officials and they would punish them.

They were ready for the physical kingdom to be reestablished. But they didn't understand, that wasn't to be yet. Instead of a victorious king riding in on a warhorse, Jesus, the suffering servant comes in on a borrowed donkey. Later that week Jesus, the King, would assume the role of a servant and wash the disciples' feet, allow Himself to be arrested, mocked, beaten, whipped, nailed on a cross, and buried in a tomb.

And the people didn't get it that day. What Jesus came to do was just the opposite of what they were expecting. What Jesus would experience at the end of the week would look anything but triumphant. It would seem Jesus, His people, and the hopes they had laid on him had been completely defeated.

So, a good question to ask is why Christians still call this a “Triumphal Entry”? Again, that day was a day of celebration for those there that day but Friday will feel much different. So is this a name we give this moment to make it sound better than it really is?

The reason we can still call this moment a “triumphal entry” is because what Jesus would accomplish on the cross at the end of the week would bring true triumph. Greater triumph than any person could have hoped for that Palm Sunday in Jerusalem.

Scripture teaches that Jesus’ death meant triumph. On the cross Jesus was triumphant over:

1. Sin.

Since the fall of Adam and Eve, all people are dead in their trespasses and sin. Sin is our nature. It is not the exception to our life’s experience, it is what we *naturally* do.

And though there is nothing we could do to have victory over the sin that had full reign over our hearts, Jesus’ death meant that we could be freed from sin’s mastery over us.

Rom. 6:6-11

6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. **7** For one who has died has been set free from sin. **8** Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. **9** We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. **10** For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. **11** So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Because of what Jesus accomplished at the cross, sin does not and will not define God’s people. Sin does not have mastery over us. Though the old flesh still remains in a battler with our new hearts, our sin, our hangups, our temptations, are not ultimate. Jesus’ death on the cross to defeat sin is ultimate. And all because he humbly rode into Jerusalem that Palm Sunday.

Because of the death of Jesus and his resurrection on Easter, Jesus was triumphant over sin, but also triumphant over sin’s consequence:

2. Death.

1 Cor. 15:54-57

54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”
55 “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” **56** The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. **57** But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Followers of Jesus grieve over death, mourn the loss of loved ones, and yet, we also can rejoice knowing that death will not have the final word. It has been defeated by Jesus and one day will put away forever. We can truly look death in the face and say, “Where is your victory? Where is your sting?”

Jesus rode into Jerusalem that day to, among other things, defeat death.

Jesus’ death on the cross was also triumphant over:

3. Satan.

Col. 2:13-15

13 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, **14** by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. **15** He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Now, how would the removal of our sin debt before God through the death of Jesus on the cross “disarm the rulers and authorities”? Well, Scripture teaches that Satan is the accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:10), wanting to condemn us for our unfaithfulness and sin, but now because of the cross, the accuser of God’s people has nothing to accuse us of. No accusation will stick because they have all been dealt with.

Romans 8:1

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

In other words, though His suffering and His death might look like Jesus lost, it was the only way to have true victory over sin, death, and Satan! Victory for the King first came not by the shed blood of his enemies but the shed blood of the King himself.

THE OTHER TRIUMPHAL ENTRY OF JESUS

However, Scripture tells us about another triumphal entry of Jesus. The entry of Jesus on Palm Sunday precedes another triumphal entry when those triumphs accomplished on the cross will be fully realized...

Revelation 19:11-16

11 Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. **12** His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. **13** He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. **14** And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. **15** From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. **16** On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

So, according to the revelation given to the apostle John, this future, coming triumphant entry of Jesus looks very different than the one on Palm Sunday.

Notice the differences among the similarities:

On Palm Sunday, the beginning of Passion Week, Christ rides in on a borrowed donkey. At the end of this age, Christ will ride on a white warhorse.

At the end of Passion Week, Christ's robe will be stained with his own blood. At the end of this age, Christ's robe will be stained with the blood of his enemies.

At the end of Passion Week, Christ will stand before his accusers without speaking up in defense. At the end of this age, Christ will open his mouth and strike down the nations with his word.

At the end of Passion Week, Christ will be crucified with the words "King of the Jews" hanging above his head. At the end of this age, Christ will return with the words "King of kings and Lord of lords" on his thigh.

Again, what Jesus triumphantly rode into town to do in his Passion Week will one day be fully realized when he comes again.

So, we, as his followers celebrate his triumphal entry into Jerusalem today, but one day we will celebrate the moment when he returns and makes the kingdoms of this world his own.

The thing for us to consider this morning, is that we live in between these two triumphal entries. How should we live in the meantime? How should the reality of Christ's past triumphant work on the cross and future triumphant rule and reign shape our attitudes and actions? Specifically, how should we relate to a world that rejects Jesus?

I think this is something we all need to consider. As we stand in between what Christ has accomplished on the cross and what he will one day come again to do, we ought to see the world and approach the world in the same way that Jesus did. As followers of Jesus we desire to be like Jesus, right? Well, what did Jesus do on Palm Sunday when he looked on the crowds that rejected him? He wept. And he wept not for himself and what he knew was waiting for him that week; he wept for them because he knew what awaited them in the future.

What did Jesus do on Palm Sunday and all the way to the cross? He showed concern and compassion for those who rejected him.

Unfortunately, this is a very different posture than many Christians take towards those who are not Christians.

It seems as if many Christians today are standing on the front lines of a culture war shouting at their enemies and banging their sword against their shields like a scene from Braveheart. But Palm Sunday reminds us that the more appropriate posture is concern for and weeping over the enemies of Christ who face certain defeat.

Please understand, followers of Jesus do not mock those who mock Jesus. Followers of Jesus do not ridicule those who ridicule Jesus. Rather, followers of Jesus weep for those who Jesus wept for.

You see, when we are confident of the victory of Christ, both on the cross and when he comes again, we become less angry at the world around us and more compassionate and broken-hearted. When we are confident of the victory of Christ we are less concerned with our own victories in society, because we are already victorious in Christ. Of course, that victory is partial now, but it will be complete and certain one day in the future.

And when we reflect on that, our anger, anxiety, and fear give way to compassion and peace. Again, faced with death, Jesus was concerned with the futures of those who rejected him, and Christlikeness means we do the same. More than being concerned for the battles of the day, we are concerned for the souls of the lost.

So let me ask, is that how you view those who do not know Christ? Are you more concerned for their souls than putting them in their place? Are you praying for the battle over their souls more than the battle over culture?

Now, do we pray for and do what we can to see a more righteous and holy culture and society? Of course, we do. We want that. That is a good thing. That is not the question. The question is how do we approach our community when our culture constantly moves further and further away from a God-honoring, truth-exalting society. We need

to be careful that our hearts don't become more angry towards those who reject Jesus than broken over their eternal fate should they continue to reject Jesus.

Why can we be a people who live lives of gentleness, compassion, and greater concern for others than ourselves? Because we follow the one who not only humbly entered Jerusalem on a donkey headed to the cross, but we also follow the one who will powerfully come again bringing justice and victory for all eternity.

Understand, it's exhausting to worry over a battle that feels like we can never win. But it's foolish to worry over a battle that Jesus can never lose.

Jesus, and His church, will be triumphant, and nothing can ever change that.

Maybe, the idea of a Jesus who one day rides into town executing judgment and justice is unappealing to you. In fact, you might not like that imagery at all, preferring to see Jesus as the one who promotes only love and peace for mankind.

If you want to understand the graciousness of God, even in his execution of justice, realize that before the final triumphal entry of Jesus was the triumphal entry of Jesus in Jerusalem. Before Revelation 19, we have Luke 19.

I mean, Jesus could have very easily rode into town on the white warhorse, really anytime in history. He could have executed his justice and judgment on all those who have pushed back against his authority and broken his law. And he would've been just in doing so. But he didn't do that. Instead, out of love, he came to take the judgment on himself first. And in so doing, makes a way for us to be reconciled back to God, and all through our repentance and faith in Christ.

CONCLUSIONS

1) Jesus, the One with the right to judge the world, first took judgment on Himself at the cross.

Palm Sunday is the picture of that long-awaited victorious King, humbling himself, riding on a borrowed donkey, and entering Jerusalem on his way to Calvary, where he will be arrested, put on trial, beaten, and crucified to bear the wrath and judgment of God on sin in our place.

He didn't have to do that. But he did. And we rejoice and celebrate him for that today.

2. Jesus, the One who entered Jerusalem in lowliness and humility, will one day come again in a very different manner.

He will come on a white horse, bringing final judgment on sin, death, Satan, and all those who have rejected him.

If it feels like Christ and his Church is losing the war of influence in our world, take heart. The gospel is going forward all over the world and one day Jesus will return and his kingdom will be fully restored.

3. In the meantime, while we live between the triumphal entries of Jesus, we as his followers, stand for truth, are to be courageous in the public square, but we do so with compassion and broken heartedness for the lost.

Rather than mocking and ridiculing those who mock our faith and our Savior, rather than swinging our swords like Peter in the Garden, we bear our Savior's cross while we invite others to it.

That's what we want to do this morning as well. If you are here this morning and have never trusted in Christ, let me encourage you to find hope and life and forgiveness in the One who went to the cross and paid the penalty for our sins. Turn away from your sin, turn away from your self-reliance and trust in Christ today.

VERSES

Luke 19:28-40

2 Samuel 7:12-13

Zechariah 9:9

Luke 19:41

Luke 19:42

Romans 6:6-11

1 Corinthians 15:54-57

Colossians 2:13-15

Romans 8:1

Revelation 19:11-16

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

What is the connection between God's covenant with King David in 2 Sam. 7 and the arrival of Jesus on Palm Sunday?

What did palm branches symbolize in Israel?

Why did Jesus weep over Jerusalem on a day that everyone was celebrating his arrival?

Why do we consider Jesus' death on the cross "triumphant?"

What are the differences between the arrival of Jesus on Palm Sunday (Luke 19) and his arrival at the end of this age (Revelation 19)?

How can Jesus' finished work on the cross and his eternal reign give us peace in a world that rejects Him and us?

How can we both stand up for truth and maintain hearts of compassion for those who reject the truth?

Pray for our church, and other gospel-centered churches around the world, that God would use us to boldly proclaim the good news of the gospel this Easter weekend and that we would see fruit from our efforts.