

THE JOURNEY ENDS: JESUS

April 10, 2011

By Pastor Stan

Luke 19:28-44

PASTOR STAN WEESE

SERIES: ON THE WAY TO THE CROSS

SERMON TITLE: "THE JOURNEY ENDS: JESUS' TRIUMPHAL ENTRY"

SCRIPTURE TEXT: LUKE 19:28-44 / P. 743

DATE: APRIL 10, 2011

copyright 2011 by Stan Weese

INTRO.

-- During the past several weeks we've been following Jesus on His final journey to Jerusalem where He will give Himself as the atonement for our sins in His death on the Cross. The journey started back in Luke 9 where we find the event of the Transfiguration when Moses and Elijah appear and meet with Jesus, and we read this about their conversation:

v. 31, "They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem."

And then in verse 51 we read, "As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem."

-- Along the way to Jerusalem we've seen Jesus encounter would-be disciples; visit at the home of Mary and Martha; teach parables about a lost-and-found sheep, coin, and son; talk with a rich young ruler; and bring about the transformation of the tax collector Zacchaeus.

-- Today, Jesus finally arrives at Jerusalem and goes into the city in an event traditionally referred to as "The Triumphal Entry," which is described for us in Luke 19 (p. 743).

-- A couple of background details are helpful to best understand what happens here. The Triumphal Entry is traditionally observed in the Church as Palm Sunday, and it marks the beginning of the final week of Jesus human, incarnate life.

Jesus arrives at Jerusalem at the beginning of Passover week, which was one of the religious festivals when Jews from all around Israel and throughout the Roman Empire came to Jerusalem, swelling the city's population to more than 2 million.

Passover was also a time when religious passions and Messianic yearnings ran high. Many were convinced that Jesus was the answer to those yearnings - that He was, indeed, the Messiah. Luke's account of the Triumphal Entry attests that that is exactly who Jesus is, but in a very different manner from what everyone, including His own disciples, were expecting.

I. THE SUBTLE INDICATIONS IN THE PREPARATION (VV. 28-35)

-- We see subtle indications of Jesus' divine identity in the preparation for the Triumphal Entry in verses 28-35.

A. WHAT HAPPENS.

-- Bethphage and Bethany were villages just a couple miles from Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives, overlooking Jerusalem. When Jesus arrived at the Mt. of Olives, He sent two of His disciples into one of the villages to find a colt, a young donkey tied up along the road. Without asking any permission, they're to untie the donkey and bring it back to Jesus. If the owner objects to these strangers taking the donkey, all the disciples are to do is to say, "The Lord needs it."

The disciples do as instructed, and sure enough as they are untying the young donkey, the owner yells out, "Hey, what do you think you're doing?"

The disciples simply reply as instructed, "The Lord needs this donkey," and amazingly the owner lets them take the animal away.

-- This would be like your having a new convertible sitting outside your house and you see someone pull up and start to tow it away, and you run out to ask what's going on, and all they say is, "The Lord needs to use your car," and you immediately reply, "Oh, sure, that's fine - here don't forget the keys."

B. WHAT THIS REVEALS.

-- This act of getting the donkey for Jesus reveals something important about the Lord's sovereignty and His humility.

1. The Lord's Sovereignty

a. Over Possessions

-- We see the Lord's sovereignty over possessions here. The Lord didn't need to ask permission to use the donkey because the donkey belonged to Him. As the Psalmist declares:

Psalm 24: 1 The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it.

b. Over Creation

-- We also see the Lord's sovereignty over creation in this account. Luke notes that the colt had never been ridden; in other words, it wasn't "broken," trained to carry a rider. Normally, the donkey would have done everything it could have to throw Jesus off, but Jesus sits on the donkey and rides it without any trouble because He is sovereign over all creation. The same God who commanded the whale to swallow Jonah, can easily command an untrained donkey to carry the Savior.

c. Over History

-- This account also demonstrates the Lord's sovereignty over history. The other Gospels observe that this incident is actually a fulfillment of a prophecy made by Zechariah 500 years earlier.

Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey

-- This prophecy had been made 500 years earlier, but the incident had been planned before the world was created. God had been directing the affairs of history towards this very time. The royal wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton is being planned and prepared for in amazing detail. Hours are being spent on inspecting and shining just the wheels of the carriage they will ride in. But those plans and preparations are amateurish compared to the planning and preparing of the Triune God for the events here in Jerusalem. The events of the final week of Jesus' life - His death and Resurrection - are the central events of all human history. Nothing that happens here in this story is an accident or coincidence. The Father has brought Jesus to Jerusalem at this precise moment, and planned for the donkey to be born the proper months in advance, and for it to be tied up along the street at exactly the time when Jesus needed it.

2. The Lord's Humility

-- As sovereign Lord over creation, Jesus could have requisitioned any animal. Generals and kings in the Roman Empire rode on beautiful stallions for grand processions. Jesus could have arranged for the most exquisite thoroughbred in the Empire. Instead, He chose a donkey, a humble beast of burden.

Paul tells us that Christ's incarnation was a time of humbling.

Philippians 2:5-7 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness

-- We see that humbling throughout Jesus' incarnate life: He was born in a borrowed stable; He was buried in a borrowed tomb; He entered Jerusalem riding on a borrowed donkey.

II. THE OPEN PROCLAMATION IN THE ENTRY ITSELF (VV. 36-40)

-- While Jesus' identity as divine Messiah is demonstrated rather subtly in the preparations for the Triumphal Entry, it's proclaimed openly and unmistakably in the Entry itself.

vv. 36-40

A. THE PEOPLE (V. 37)

-- Notice how the people who greet and hail Jesus are described in verse 37.

v. 37

-- Many, perhaps most, of those who line the road spreading their garments on the road before Jesus and shouting praises to Him are called "disciples." It appears that as Jesus has journeyed to Jerusalem more and more disciples have joined with Him to follow Him to the city.

And notice the main reason given for their excitement over Jesus: "all the miracles they had seen." Jesus had two reasons for the miracles He performed throughout His three years of ministry:

1. To help people in distress, and

2. To give evidence of His deity and His identity as Messiah

-- Probably, the greatest of all Jesus' miracles was one performed shortly before arriving at Jerusalem:

the raising of Lazarus from the dead, after he had been in the tomb for four days. That happens in John 11. Then we read in the next chapter:

John 12:9-13 Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. 10 So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, 11 for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and putting their faith in him. 12 The next day the great crowd that had come for the Feast heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. 13 They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the King of Israel!"

B. THE PRAISE

-- The praise shouted by the crowd of disciples hails Jesus as the Messiah. They are right in what they proclaim, but they are mistaken in what they think that means. They shout, "Hosanna," which means "save now." But they aren't meaning that in regards to their sin; they're shouting for salvation not from sins but from Romans. They're excited about Jesus' miraculous power because they expect that power to be turned against the Romans, to defeat the Roman conquerors and to restore the glory of Israel as it was in the days of David and Solomon.

-- Not everyone, however, is excited about Jesus' being hailed as Messiah.
v. 39

C. THE PHARISEES' RESPONSE (V. 39)

-- The tension between Jesus and the Pharisees has been growing throughout the three years of Jesus' ministry, and now it comes to a climax. The Pharisees refuse to recognize Jesus as Messiah. They're like Baptists praying for supernatural healing - they don't have trouble with praying for it - they just have trouble with what to make of it when it happens. They Pharisees prayed for the Messiah to come, but they didn't really expect it to happen.

-- To the Pharisees proclaiming Jesus as Messiah was blasphemy, and they are correct - it would have been blasphemy if Jesus wasn't the Messiah. So they come to Jesus demanding that He tell His disciples to stop their blasphemous proclamations.

But look at how Jesus replies.

D. JESUS' REPLY (V. 40)

-- Interestingly, up to this point in His ministry Jesus has avoided publicly identifying Himself as the Messiah. But now it is different. Jesus has come to Jerusalem to complete His mission as Messiah, and now is the time for His true identity to be openly announced.

-- When God wants His glory to be known, nothing can muffle it. If the crowds were silenced, if no person were allowed to declare God's glory, God could command the stones on the road to cry out His praises.

It's impossible to silence and snuff out the glory of Christ.

CONCLUSION

When the Communists took over in China they closed the churches. Anywhere they found a cross, they tore it down. Christians were put in prison and driven to the countryside. But instead of disappearing, the Church grew, and today there are millions of Christians in China.

-- Christianity is oppressed and persecuted in Muslim countries. In many Muslim countries conversion to Christ is punished by death, and owning a Bible is illegal. But Christianity is growing throughout the Muslim nations. In Iran, for example, Muslims are coming to faith in Christ because of the internet and social media, and the number of house churches is exploding.

-- Perhaps the worst persecution of Christians in the world is in North Korea. As soon as they can talk, children are indoctrinated in atheistic Communist. For 60 years Christianity has been outlawed, suppressed, and severely oppressed. Humanly speaking, there shouldn't be any Christians in North Korea, but it's estimated that there are half a million. The glory of Christ cannot be silenced.