

Series: **Palm Sunday 2024**

Today's Title: **"It Was Time"**

March 24, 2024 - Selected Passages

OBJECTIVE: To help people understand what Jesus did on that first Palm Sunday.

What is Palm Sunday all about?

What happened on that day which makes it a day we still recognize 2,000 years later?

In my Bible – in all 4 gospels, the heading above the section which records the events of that day is titled, **"The Triumphal Entry"** (Matthew 21; Mark 11; Luke 19; John 12).

This is an interesting title – but there was no actual 'triumph' or 'victory' on that day.

There was a parade of sorts – but not an actual triumph.

In fact, a better title would be *"Puzzling Parade"* – or *"Confusing Procession"*.

I say 'puzzling' and 'confusing' because what many of the people were celebrating and proclaiming – was not the intent or purpose of Jesus that day.

They were celebrating Jesus as a King – the long-promised King – the Jewish Messiah - who they believed would conquer Rome and liberate Israel from their Roman oppressors.

But that wasn't what Jesus was there to accomplish.

His mission was not political or militaristic – ***it was spiritual.***
We know from the book of Revelation that Jesus will return as a powerful military figure and defeat His enemies – the enemies of God.

But in His first advent – His first appearing on Earth, His mission was a spiritual one – to reconcile mankind to God.

It is important to know that a week or 2 before this day, Jesus had raised His friend, Lazarus, from the dead.

Lazarus had already been in the grave 4 days – his body starting to decompose – Jesus stood at the entrance of Lazarus’ tomb – and called out his name, “Lazarus, come out.”

(John 11:43).

And Lazarus – all wrapped up in the linen strips of cloth – comes walking out of the tomb!!

Can you imagine what that was like???

This was not some hoax – or some 1st century slight-of-hand. Lazarus died 4 days before – was buried – and Jesus raises him from the dead – and there were dozens – if not hundreds of eyewitnesses to this miracle!

Now some of those eyewitnesses were members of the religious establishment – who didn’t celebrate what they saw – they hated what they saw.

They were now more determined to kill Jesus – to save their own positions of power and influence (John 11:45-53).

We even read in **John 12:9-11** that they also wanted to kill Lazarus – because he was living proof of what Jesus had done!!

Well, after raising Lazarus, Jesus stayed out of public view for a week or two (John 11:54-57).

He knew of the plot to kill Him – and His friend, Lazarus. So, He stayed ‘hidden’ – out of sight...

Until it was time for the parade – the procession.

But this was not some simple parade.

It was filled with meaning and symbolism.

The parade was a plain and clear announcement by Jesus – that He was now ready.

It Was Time.

His time had now come.

It was finally time for the final act of the divine plan of salvation to play out.

The first thing Palm Sunday is about is that Jesus came to declare ‘peace’.

In ancient times, a military general – either when his army defeated an enemy city – or when he returned home to his home country and city – there would be a parade of sorts – a ‘Triumphal Entry’ of the victorious general.

He would ride on a white horse.

A white horse symbolized power – strength – victory!
But, a donkey, was a sign of peace, not military power
or might!

It was no accident that Jesus rode on a donkey as He
traveled from Bethany to Jerusalem that day.

He was making it clear that He was offering peace – not
war.

John 12:14-15

And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written,
“Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on
a donkey's colt!” (From Zechariah 9:9)

The reference in vs. 15 is from Zechariah 9:9 – an O.T.
prophecy of this event.

However, the people were so excited and taken up in the
moment, this detail seems to escape them.

They were yelling, “Hosanna” – which means, ‘save us’.

This was their way of celebrating that Jesus would save
them from Rome.

#2, Palm Sunday is about Jesus proclaiming He was the long-awaited – long-promised Messiah.

About 1,500 years earlier, Moses had written about the
future Messiah.

Jesus was now identifying Himself as the Jewish
Messiah.

This is plain in all 4 gospel accounts of this parade – but none are as clear as Luke’s account.

In Luke’s account, we not only read of what the people were proclaiming, but we read the response of the religious establishment.

It’s their response which helps us understand that what the people were proclaiming was praise for Jesus as Messiah – and as a great prophet of God.

Luke 19:37-40

As He (Jesus) 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.”

I doubt the people understood that Jesus was God incarnate.

I think the people were fully convinced that Jesus was a great prophet who had the power of God – the blessing of God.

We can safely assume many of them had been eyewitnesses to His miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead – just a week or two before this day.

The reaction of the Pharisees – the religious establishment – was for Jesus to tell the people to shut their mouths – to quit proclaiming these Messianic descriptions of Him.

In their minds, it was very improper to give this kind of praise to a man.

To them, this was blasphemous, sacrilegious, profane!!! But Jesus' answer is enlightening.

40 He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."

Jesus is telling them that praise for God cannot be muzzled. Nature itself will yell out in this moment if the people are silenced!

The 3rd thing that Palm Sunday is about is to tell those who don't know about Jesus – that He has come.

We are so distracted in our world today.

It's easy to see why / how.

With all the technology and activities available to us today – it's easy to disconnect from the world around us and get lost in our own focus.

But we can't blame technology alone for our distractions – because people have been distracted for thousands of years!

Even people in Jesus' day were distracted.

Here was the most famous person of His day – the most talked about celebrity of the 30’s – and yet... there were people who didn’t know anything about Him.

Matthew 21:10

And when He (Jesus) entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, “Who is this?”

“stirred up” – agitated, a word often used to describe the shaking of an earthquake.

Jesus was one of the great celebrities of His day.

- Thousands of people flocked to hear Him teach.
- Thousands of people were healed by Him.

Yet, there are many who don’t know who He is – they never saw Him and were oblivious to what was going on with this spontaneous parade honoring and celebrating Jesus.

Matthew 21:11

And the crowds said, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.”

This is our job.

Not just to praise Jesus, but to tell others about Him!

We have a much fuller picture of who Jesus is than the crowds on that first Palm Sunday.

We know He’s much more than a prophet from Nazareth.

He is our eternal Priest.

He is our eternal King.

He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. (1 Timothy 6:15)

Palm Sunday – a day where:

Jesus came to **offer peace**.

Peace between God and man. He is offering you that peace today. Believe in Him – follow Him – and receive the peace of God – be reconciled to God – forever!

A day when Jesus publicly embraced and declared Himself to be the long-awaited **Messiah** for Israel.

He is our Messiah – the one who came to save us – not from Rome – but from ourselves – from our sin.

A day when **Jesus was declared** to those who didn't know who He was.

Today – let's celebrate Jesus – the peace with God He provides through His death on the cross and resurrection.

Let's recognize Him as the Messiah – the Christ.

Let's tell others who don't know Him – about what He's done for them – for their salvation!

Palm Sunday – **It Was Time** for Jesus to make these 'public' announcements.

It Was Time for Him to publicly declare who He was and what He was offering.

Today – ***It's your time*** to come to Him.
It's time to put your faith in Jesus – the Son of God.
King of kings and Lord of lords.

Closing prayer