

The King Is Coming

John 12:12-19

The week of The Passion of our Lord begins at this event. During this busy week, the Lord Jesus will come into Jerusalem on a colt of a donkey, and have the masses hail Him with cries of adoration. This is the time is the Passover when the Jews were to bring sacrificial lambs. Jesus comes, bringing Himself, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus knew His days were limited. Our days are limited. When you know your days are limited, you see things differently, and you act differently. *“Teach me to number my days, so that I may gain a heart of wisdom.”* Psalm 90:12

The Palm Sunday experience is recorded for us in all four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. There are two Old Testament prophecies that are quoted, and they're quoted really close together in John.

Luke begins by telling us about Jesus care and concern for Jerusalem, *“As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it.”* Luke 19:41

Many people see different things when they look at our city. Jesus sees human beings with needy hearts who are lost and suffering, bleeding and dying. What do you see when you look at our city?

“He wept over it 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.” Luke 19:42

We don't know whether he had wept other times or not, but we know there are two times recorded. These times happen within days of each other. Once he was choked up and had tears streaming down his cheeks and wept when he saw his friends, Mary and Martha, and the Jews who came with her to the tomb of Lazarus, their brother, when they were grieving and mourning over his death.

Don't ever think that Jesus is not moved by your pain, by your sorrow, and by your suffering. Don't ever think that Jesus is not affected by what affects his children. Whatever pain you may be experiencing right now. Don't ever think that Jesus is only walking with you and is not weeping with you, he is. As the psalmist said in 56:8, *“You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book.”* Not one of your tears falls to the ground that he had not taken notice of and stored it in a bottle. There is not one tear that he missed or has forgotten that ever came down your face.

The second time was Palm Sunday, a few days later. These two different times, we have two different Greek words for the weeping, that represent different kinds of weeping. The first meant, Jesus just being choked up, and then weeping in tears. The other indicates that he was sobbing, possibly uncontrollably on Palm Sunday. He sobbed over sin and the consequences of sin and the blindness to him as the savior and the destruction coming upon them. There were some things they did not know and someone they did not recognize. Destruction is coming upon you, and you don't recognize God's agenda and purpose of this moment. They missed what His grand entrance could do for their life.

- They missed the presence of God.

The King of Kings was triumphantly coming to them and they did not understand it. They were not discerning the opportunity for their salvation that had come to them from heaven. They were not discerning the rare opportunity that they have. They were oblivious as to necessity of believing in Jesus and believing Jesus. They were oblivious to their privilege of living in the days that many generations past have longed for for hundreds of years. They looked forward to, they were living in the days of being able to see with their own eyes and hear with their own ears the anointed Messiah, the anointed of God, Jesus the Christ.

- They missed the fulfillment of the promises.

“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.” Zechariah 9:9

- They missed the fulfillment of the Passover.

The Passover was that feast when the Jews were to bring sacrificial lambs. Jesus publicly comes to the city of Jerusalem and presents Himself to Israel as their Messiah and Savior.

“Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect. Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses. On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. “This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord—a lasting ordinance.” Exodus 12:4-5,12-14

On the 10th day, everyone was to pick a lamb as a substitute for each family. On the 14th day, when the death angel came by, he would see the blood and pass over the family who was covered by the blood of the lamb. Do you recognize Him and what He can do in your life?

John tells us the details of the entry, *“The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. 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!’” John 12:12-13*

Jesus is coming to Jerusalem riding on a colt, the symbol of love and peace. He can calm the war that is going on in your heart and bring you perfect peace and comfort if you will allow Him to. Spreading your garments on the street was an ancient act of honor reserved for high royalty, which suggested that they recognized His claim to be King of the Jews.

John gives us a quote from Psalm 118:25-26 in the Old Testament.

“Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: ‘Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt.’” John 12:13

That's a quote from Zechariah 9:9 in the Old Testament.

“When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was moved and asked, “Who is this?” Matthew 19:10

The phrase, *“the city was moved”* means, "the city was shaken or stirred." The same verb is used in Matthew 2:3 for Herod's reaction to the wise men who were asking about the birth of Israel's King. city of Jerusalem was torn up over the events of this day. It was as if they were shaken to the core. It was the moment they had been waiting on for hundreds of years, and they missed it! Jesus was presenting Himself as their long-awaited Messiah.

Three Facts About The Triumphant Entry We Need:

1. **The Purpose Of The King - “Save Us.”**

“They cried out ‘Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the King of Israel.’” John 12:13

Jesus' purpose in riding into Jerusalem was to make public His claim to be their Messiah and King of Israel in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. This is the first time that the people of Israel have called Jesus the King. We know they are saying He's the Messiah because they are quoting a Messianic scripture that predicted this event, and

this is the first time they've recognized Him not just as a prophet, but as a King.

They are welcoming Him as the King of Israel, and they are quoting this scripture. The word “Hosannah” means “Save now.” The first part of the word, “hosan,” means “save.” Then, when you put the “na” on the end, that means “now” or “us”, “Save us now.”

If you read Psalm 118:25, “Save us now.” *“Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”* This is the scripture they're quoting. They are saying, *“Save us now.”*

Think about how many times we pray this prayer. Don't just save us, God, but save us now. Save us from what we are in right now.

Psalm 107 details four different times Israel got in trouble. They cried out to God in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses.

“They wandered in the wilderness in a desolate way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.” Psalm 107:4

“Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, And He delivered them out of their distresses.” Psalm 107:6

“He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city for a dwelling place.” Psalm 107:6

“Because they rebelled against the words of God, and despised the counsel of the Most High, therefore He brought down their heart with labor; they fell down, and there was none to help. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and broke their chains in pieces. Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men.” Psalm 107:11-15

“Their soul abhorred all manner of food, and they drew near to the gates of death. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses. He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men.” Psalm 107:18-21

“They mount up to the heavens, they go down again to the depths; their soul melts because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end.” Psalm 107:26-27

“At their wits' end.” You ever heard that expression? That came from the Bible.

“Then they cry out to the Lord in their trouble, and He brings them out of their distresses. He calms the storm, so that its waves are still. Then they are glad because they are quiet; so He guides them to their desired haven.” Psalm 107:28

“Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men!” Psalm 107:31

He is not rebuking them for crying out to Him. He saying, “I wish that you were giving me thanks all the time, not just when you're in trouble. I wish that men, think about this, would give thanks to God for his wonderful works toward the children of men. I wish you just give me thanks all the time.”

2. The Peace Of The King – “Fear Not.”

“Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: ‘Fear not.’” John 12:14

This is the second Old Testament scripture he's quoting. *“Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming, Sitting on a donkey's colt.”* Zechariah 9:9

“*Fear not*” is the most frequently repeated commands in the Bible. It's a positive command that appears 365 times in the Bible, one for every day of the year. Put your trust in God and don't be afraid. Don't let your heart be afraid. The first three times it's in the Bible, it's in Genesis. The word “Genesis” actually means “beginning.” God is trying to tell us from the very beginning, “*Don't be afraid.*”

- The missed the peace He would bring.

“*If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes.*”
Luke 19:42

Do you know what will bring you peace? They did not understand the deliverance He was offering. They could only imagine a physical deliverance, but God wanted to give them a spiritual deliverance. They wanted God to deliver them from the Roman occupation, but He had come to set them free from sin's domination. Jesus is here with us, and we live like He is not present. Are you in need of peace in your life? We find it hard to rest, and we long for just a moment of peace. Jesus teaches us that we can have peace in our hearts even when the whole world seems to be against us.

“*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world gives, give I to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, or be afraid.*” John 14:27

“*These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*” John 16:33

The phrase means, “I've got it all under control. I'm going to take care of things.”

3. The Power Of The King – Not as We Expect

“*Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming. Your King is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt.*” John 12:15

Your King's coming, just not as you expect.

“*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, o daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.*” Zechariah 9:9

He's saying, “Your King is coming, but He's not coming as you think He would.” In that time, when a king entered the city, he entered on a war horse, not a donkey, and the war horse that he rode would have been taller than every other horse.

They measure a horse's height in hands. They start at the ground and go up to the shoulder of the horse. A military leader always wanted a horse at least two to three hands higher than the height of the leader. He wanted everyone to know he was higher than everyone in the land, so he rode on a higher horse. Think about what Jesus did. He not only rode on a lower animal, a donkey, but it was the foal of a donkey. In other words, it was a donkey's colt. That's what Zechariah said, “Your King's coming, but lowly. He's bringing justice and salvation, but He's coming on the foal of a donkey.” Matthew tells us they loosed the donkey and the foal and brought them both to Jesus, and Jesus rode on the foal. The donkey's mother was there, and it would have made the foal calmer.

A King's horse, a war horse, or horse for soldiers would be larger but then Jesus comes on foal of a donkey. It's possible His feet were almost dragging the ground. Jesus is trying to tell them something. “I'm coming, but I'm not coming as you expect.” They were expecting a King. They were wanting someone to save them from their temporary circumstances. They were looking for a temporary answer, but Jesus was bringing a permanent solution.

There will be a day when He comes riding on a great white horse, and everyone will see Him and every knee will bow

down before Him and confess that He is Jesus Christ the Lord!

"Look, he is coming with the clouds," and "every eye will see him, even those who pierced him"; and all peoples on earth "will mourn because of him." So shall it be! Amen." Revelation 1:7

"I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war." Revelation 19:11

"They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'" John 12:13

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. They did what they always did when they greeted someone important. Palm branches were their way of greeting a very important person. Waving palm branches was their version of throwing confetti. John says, "They went out to meet Him." They had come out to meet Him before He even got to the city. That was another indication of how important they thought Jesus was. You didn't just meet them in the streets. You actually left the city and went out to meet them before they got into the city. The crowd was saying, "Jesus, You are really important."

They were saying, "We think You are able to save us."

They also said, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. We believe You are the one God sent." They are saying, "We believe You are the Messiah, the Savior that we have been waiting for all of these years. We think you are Him."

The third thing they say is, "Blessed is the King of Israel." That was a really dangerous thing to say. It was a dangerous thing for this crowd to meet Jesus and proclaim Him to be their king because they already had a king. His name was Tiberius Caesar, the Roman Emperor. For them to declare Jesus as their King was to say, "We want You to be our King, not Caesar." When they called out, "Hosanna," which meant, "Please save us," what they were probably saying was, "Would You save us from Caesar?" What John is telling us is that this huge crowd was making a dangerous declaration of their faith in Jesus.

Rome did not have a policy of tolerance when it came to rebellion in their territory. Rome's policy was, "Everybody dies." Ancient historians report that when Rome thought a rebellion was stirring, they would crucify hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of people in order to put that down. This is a very dangerous thing that the crowd has done. They have come out to meet Jesus and said, "Would You please save us? We think you are from God."

How did the crowd get this deep confidence in Jesus? How did they get to the place where they risked declaring Him to be their King? They were saying, "It's worth taking the risk to greet You in this way. It's worth risking the fury of the Roman Empire because we think You are worthy of it. We think You are worth our faith." How did they get this deep confidence? John is writing this to tell us both how the word spread so widely and how confidence had gone so deep.

John tells us by quoting from Zachariah 9:9, *"Do not be afraid Daughter of Zion. See, your king is coming seated on a donkey's colt."*

God says, "When the king that I'm sending to you arrives, He will come in riding on a young donkey, on the colt of a donkey."

Jesus is saying is, "You are right. I am the One who can save you. I am the King you have been waiting for. I am the One that God promised." He's accepting their faith, but Jesus also challenged their expectations. The kind of king they were looking for was a military king. The kind of savior they were looking for was a military savior, somebody to lead the rebellion against Rome.

To them it should be a war horse or, at the very least, it should be a camel. Camels are a little weird, but at least they are big. It's not just a donkey, it's a donkey colt.

What Jesus is beginning to help them understand is, "I am the King that you have been waiting for, but I am not coming to save you in the way or from what you think you need saving from. The thing that you think is your big problem is really not your biggest problem."

They thought that the biggest problem was Rome. They thought the biggest problem was that they had foreign oppressors in the land, and Jesus didn't come to get rid of that. Jesus came to save them from their sin. Jesus came to go to the cross to take the weight of their sin, of our sin, and to set both them and all of us free from sin, so that there is nothing that separates us from God. That's what Jesus came to deliver them from, but that's not what they were looking for.

How often do we make the same mistake? We have some kind of difficulty that we are facing, and for us, that thing becomes the big problem. That's the thing that we are praying about, that we are desperately asking God to deliver us from, and sometimes He doesn't. Sometimes we find ourselves saying, "God, I thought you were good. If You are good, why wouldn't You deliver me from my biggest problem?"

What we have to understand is that what we think our biggest problem is, is not what God knows our biggest problem is, and so Jesus has to challenge our expectations too.

If God isn't answering your prayer for deliverance, maybe it's because we need to realize that we're asking to be delivered from the wrong thing. Maybe the problem is not God's goodness, or His faithfulness, but maybe the problem is our expectation.

Jesus accepted their faith, but at the same time, He challenged their expectations of what He was going to do with that faith, and I think we need to recognize that we can fall into that same category.

It says, "*At first his disciples did not understand all of this.*" It was only after Jesus was glorified that they realized that these things had been written about Him and that these things had been done to Him.

It makes me feel a little better about myself. They didn't understand what was happening. What John is saying is that the disciples didn't understand when they were in it.

I don't understand what God is doing when I'm in the middle of it. It's when I'm on the other side of it that I look back and say, "Oh, now I see what You did, Jesus." I wish I could see that in the middle of it, but I don't always. I love the fact that the people that were closest to Jesus, who were literally walking in the flesh, step by step behind Him, they didn't always get it. They didn't understand. When Jesus fulfilled Zechariah 9:9, riding on this colt and going into the city fulfilling this prophesy, the disciples weren't behind him saying, "Hey, this is Zechariah 9:9. This is how the prophet foretold it. They were probably wandering around behind Him going, "What is He doing? This is embarrassing." They didn't understand.

If we have given our lives to Jesus, and we have put our faith in Jesus, God is always with us. He's always bringing good. He's always putting pieces of a puzzle together, and we don't always see that, but we will. There will come that moment that we look back and we say, "I get it. I see what You did there." Understanding comes faster when I live in the anticipation of understanding.

John answers the questions of how this huge crowd knew that Jesus was coming and how they had such a deep confidence in who Jesus was. He says, "*Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb, and raised him from the dead, continued to spread the word.*" Many people went out to meet Him because they heard that He had performed this miraculous sign.

Did you see what John did there? He really could have said that at the beginning of the story. What he's saying is, "People have been talking about when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead." The people who witnessed it didn't

watch that and say, “Well, that’s interesting.” They went back to Jerusalem and said, “You are not going to believe what happened! You have to hear about this!” They had been spreading the word, and John has been raising curiosity as he tells the story.

People had been talking. How is it possible that this crowd of people was willing to declare confidence in Jesus as their King and their Savior in spite of the fact that it was going to raise Roman attention, and potentially, Roman fury? Why did they have that deep confidence? Because people had been talking about what they had seen Jesus do.

They were testifying. The word he uses means “testify.” It’s a technical word. The NIV translates it as “They were spreading the word.” While that’s a perfect translation, the term is a little more technical than that. It’s a term that was usually used for testimony in a court of law.

They would invite somebody to testify, to speak formal declarations of truth. It’s the kind of language that you would use. You wouldn’t use it to say, “Hey, did you hear what happened?” That’s not testifying. But if you said, “It’s so important that you understand what I saw happen,” that’s testifying. There is a weight to it. There is a gravity to it. That’s the word that he uses. It’s a very important word for John. John actually uses the word so much that scholars write articles about the importance of testimony in the Gospel of John. John uses the root word here. He uses it more than twice as often as all of the other books of the Bible combined. He fills his writings with the importance and the power testimony and of testifying. In one of his letters to the church, in John 1:2 he says, “*The life appeared, and we have seen it and we testify.*” We don’t just talk a little bit about it. We testify. We declare the truth. We proclaim to you the eternal life that was with the Father and has appeared to us.

John uses this word over and over again. Here, he does something more than just using that powerful word. He gives an emphasis to it. In the original Greek, the word “testify” is actually the first word in the verse. It doesn’t come across in English because there is no way to do that. In our grammar, the word order makes a big difference. In Greek, the word order doesn’t make any difference. You can put the words in whatever order you want, so when you put something at the beginning of the sentence, you are usually doing it to show that this is the important thing. This is the key word. He uses the word “testify” at the very beginning.

It reads, “*Testifying had been the crowd who had seen what Jesus did in calling Lazarus out of the tomb.*” What John is doing, he’s focusing on the power of their testimony, the power of that crowd’s testimony to change minds and capture hearts. Why was the crowd that went to meet Jesus so big? Why was their confidence in Jesus so deep? Because their testimony had changed minds and had captured hearts. That’s the power of testimony. How powerful was it?

In verse 19, the Pharisees, the religious leaders who had been so opposed to Jesus and who had been so worried about Jesus, were saying, “This is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after Him.” This is a little bit of an exaggeration, but the point is, they saw Jerusalem empty out. They saw so many people go to declare Him as King. They wondered, “Why is the whole world following after this guy?” Because of the power of the testimony of those who were testifying about what they had seen Jesus do.

What John is trying to help us understand is that it is not something that just took place then. Testimony is something that continues to reverberate through history. He’s saying that our personal testimony is incredibly powerful! It changes minds. It captures hearts. It transforms lives. Your personal testimony of what you have seen God do has the power to change everything. We need to understand, “Okay, God, I get it. I understand what you inspired John to point us to. You are helping us understand that personal testimony is incredibly powerful, testifying to the truth of what we have seen God do, that’s incredibly powerful, but, it’s not always a good idea to tell. God sometimes it happens. It’s a Biblical truth. Personal testimony is incredibly powerful. The problem is that our culture has changed. In our culture, I don’t know that that’s necessarily the way it plays out anymore. I don’t know think personal testimony has that same kind of power anymore. We are a less trusting, more cynical culture, and so I was wrestling.

We have to say, “I’m sorry, Jesus. I have done wrong. I believe You died on the cross for me. I believe You rose from the dead. I accept your gift.” Then we grab hold of the promise of salvation. You could do it right now. That’s how simple it is. If you don’t have a relationship with Jesus Christ, and you want one, ask Him right now.

Your unpolished and honest story of what God has done in your life is your greatest tool for sharing the Gospel. How many of you feel like, if I had to share the Gospel with somebody right now, this very moment, I would be hesitant to do it? How many of you feel like you could easily tell somebody what God has done in your life? The good news is that that's where so much of the power in our sharing comes from. That's what caused the crowds to move out of Jerusalem to meet Jesus and gave them a confidence in Jesus that didn't make sense, but it was based on the testimony of those that had seen what God did, and they testified.

Your unpolished and honest story about what God has done in your life is your greatest tool for sharing the Gospel, and yet studies indicate that between 50 and 75% of born again Christians who have a relationship with Jesus do not share the good news of Jesus on a regular basis. Why? That's because we have forgotten the power of our testimony.

What are three big things that I can testify that God has done in my life? We need to have them in mind. I encourage you to sit down this afternoon or sometime this week, sit down and write down three big things that you can testify that God has done in your life recently. You might find that three is way too small. You might find 30, and that's great. But get the ball rolling. What are some things that God has done in my life. Get ready.

Second thing to do is get set. That means pray and expect that God will give you chances to testify. Pray that God will give you an opportunity to testify.

When those opportunities come up, speak your unpolished, honest story of what God is doing in your life. See what God does with it.