

Children's Moment

March 29, 2015

Title: The King is Coming

Object: Palm Branches

Scripture: “BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” (Luke 19:38)

Who do you think is the most important person in our country? Do you think it is the person who has the most money? Is it a famous movie star? Or how about a great athlete? An Astronaut who went into outer space, who served as a senator and faithfully married for 72 years? If John Glenn came to Canyon Bible Church we might have a celebration. We would go all out to make him feel welcome and that we appreciate his service to our country. The East Mountain communities might even have a parade.

I want you to imagine this morning that we are going to have a visit from John Glenn. I will describe the parade as it passes by. Are you ready? The parade is about to begin.

Look! The parade is approaching. I can see it in the distance. The band is leading the parade and behind the band there are cars with other important people. As they pass by, we smile and wave. Then, here he comes – John Glenn. He is riding down the street in a big black convertible. He waves to the crowds that are lining the streets as he passes by. The people are waving flags, throwing confetti into the air. Then as the parade moves on down the street, the sound of the band playing and people shouting fades away in the distance. It is over. The celebration is over.

That was very much like a scene that took place in Jerusalem one day. The king was coming to their city. People lined the streets. Some people walked in front of

the king and some walked behind him. Instead of a big, black convertible, the king rode on the back of a small donkey. As He rode through the streets of the city, the crowds waved palm branches and shouted, “[BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!](#)”

I'm sure that you know who that King was. It was Jesus. Today is Palm Sunday. Today we celebrate the entry of King Jesus into Jerusalem. It was a day that marked the beginning of an incredible week. A week that would see Jesus cheered, then arrested, tried, condemned, and crucified. But as that week came to an end, another week began just as the previous week had begun -- with a celebration. We will talk about that celebration next week.

Dear Jesus, our voices join with the voices of the people in Jerusalem some two thousand years ago. Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. May our celebration and worship of You never end! Amen.

Tears of Mercy

Luke 19:37-44

Today we take a break from our journey through the Gospel According to John. Today, Palm Sunday is the day in the church year when traditionally we mark the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem for the last week of His life on earth. It is an event of great insight and great misunderstanding. The great insight was that this Jesus really "[IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD](#)" (Luke 19:38). He is the Messiah, the Son of David, the long-awaited Ruler of Israel and fulfillment of all God's promises. The great misunderstanding was that He would enter Jerusalem and by His mighty works, take His throne and make Israel free from Rome.

Taking the throne by power and might was not what God had planned. Jesus would take His throne but it would be through voluntary suffering and death and resurrection. The first sermon Peter preached after the resurrection comes to an end with the words, "[This Jesus God raised up](#)" so that He was "[exalted to the right hand of God](#)" (Acts 2:32-33) The Apostle Paul wrote that Jesus is now King and "[He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.](#)" (1 Corinthians 15:25) Jesus was not the conquering king that the people had imagined.

People struggled with the conflict of God's insight and their misunderstanding of Palm Sunday. The insight gave joy and would bring people to worship Jesus. The misunderstanding brought about destruction – the murder of Jesus a few days later and the destruction of Jerusalem 40 years later. As God incarnate, Jesus already knew the result of both.

What I want to focus on this morning is Jesus' response to this blindness and hostility that He was about to meet in Jerusalem. Indeed, He met it already in this very text.

The crowds were crying out in verse 38, “BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” In the very next verse we see the beginning of blindness and hostility, “Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, ‘Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.’” (Luke 19:39)

Jesus knew what was going to happen throughout this last week. He knew the Pharisees were going to get the upper hand. The people would be fickle and blindly follow their leaders. Jesus knew the short-term result would be His rejection and crucifixion, but the long-term result would be salvation for those God has called. Jesus knew this most hostile act would set into motion within a generation the destruction of Jerusalem and the nation would be scattered and end. Because of history we can clearly see what Jesus was saying, “For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.” (Luke 19:43-44) God incarnate visited Jerusalem, but the people were blind and did not recognize Him. 40 years later there would not be one stone left upon another of the temple.

God had visited the people of Israel in His Son, Jesus Christ for three years – “He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.” (John 1:11) They did not know the time of God’s visitation. So they stumbled over the stumbling stone. The builders rejected the stone and threw it away. Jesus saw this sin and this rebellion and this blindness coming. How did He respond to this blindness? The answer is found in verses 41 and 42, “When He (Jesus) approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, ‘If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes.’” Jesus knew God’s plan and

His mission, but this brought no peace at this time and He wept over the blindness and the impending misery of Jerusalem.

How would you describe these tears? You can see from the title of this message that I call them, "Tears of Mercy." I pray that we will see and understand and that Jesus' tears will affect us. First, these tears will help us admire Christ, and treasure Him above all others and worship Him as our merciful Sovereign. Second, that by seeing the beauty of Jesus' mercy we will become merciful with Him and like Him and because of Him and for His glory we will be merciful to others.

Let's pray for our time in the Word of God this morning.

Mercy

First, let's admire Christ together. What makes Christ so admirable, and so different than all other persons – what sets Him apart as unique? He unites in Himself so many qualities that people admire and even desire but are beyond us to possess and live out as fallen creatures. This is just one of the many evidences of His sovereignty. We can imagine supreme sovereignty, and we can imagine tenderhearted mercy. However, humanly they do not go together. But, Jesus combines both perfect merciful sovereignty and sovereign mercy. No other religious or political person of history or today even comes close – no person can come close. Jesus is the only man God the only person who is divine, the only person who is without sin.

The people had a sense of Jesus' sovereignty – yes, it would fade and be overwhelmed by evil leaders. But in their hearts some saw, ["As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen"](#) (Luke 19:37) If only the signs and wonder of Jesus were able to cement in the people's minds who He

was, but like the majority of people they soon forgot. They were focused on today and their needs and what they wanted.

There were those who remembered that in three short years Jesus had made a name for Himself as the worker of miracles, and the people remembered them. Jesus had healed leprosy with a touch; He had made the blind see and the deaf hear and the lame walk; He had commanded the unclean spirits and they obeyed Him; He had stilled storms and walked on water and turned five loaves and two fish into a meal for thousands; He had raised the dead back to life. As Jesus entered Jerusalem, they remembered and the people knew nothing could stop him. He could speak and Pilate would perish, and He could command and the Romans would be scattered. Some truly remembered Jesus was sovereign. What do you think of about Jesus? Is He God? Is He the sovereign Lord of your life?

The people were caught up in the excitement of the moment and their desire for relief from the Roman oppression so they cried out, [“BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”](#) (Luke 19:38) Jesus was a King, not just any king, but the One sent and appointed by the Lord God the Father. They knew how the prophet Isaiah had described the Messiah, writing, [“There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.”](#) (Isaiah 9:7) A universal, never-ending kingdom backed by the zeal of almighty God. Here was the King of the universe, who today rules over the nations and the galaxies and for whom America, Israel, Iran and Iraq are grains of sand and but a vapor in time. The scriptures are clear; all will fulfill the plan of God - willingly or unwillingly.

As the people are blessing Jesus with the praises the Pharisees who fear Jesus chide

Him to stop the people from blessing Him for He certainly could not be the Messiah and the Pharisees certainly did not want Him to be the Messiah. They might, might acknowledge Him as a Teacher of the scriptures. The Pharisees say to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.” (Luke 19:39) I said the Pharisees might recognize Jesus as a teacher, but here in this verse the Pharisees are not giving recognition that Jesus is a Rabbi or Teacher of the scriptures because here in the Greek they use the term or word “teacher” as “instructor.” Simply meaning they wanted Jesus to instruct the people to stop. Jesus responds, “I tell you, if these (people) become silent, the stones will cry out!” in verse 40. It does not matter if these blind stonehearted Pharisees want the people to shut up. Jesus is saying God will be praised and these people sense the presence of God – even if it was short lived. From before Jesus created the universe the whole design of the universe is that Christ will be praised! These men may be learned, they had studied the scriptures, so they of all people are without excuse. As Paul wrote to the Romans, “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.” (Romans 1:20) If the Pharisees will not, the people will and if the people will not then God will command the very rocks to praise Christ and it will be the rocks who receive the joy of God.

Some might say, Jesus could not be God, for He failed to bring Jerusalem to worship Him. They instead rejected Him and murdered Him. Non-believers do not see this as the plan of God for they are spiritually dead. Jesus could command the rocks and receive praise. Jesus certainly was able to change the hard hearts of people to hearts of flesh that would praise Him, but this was reserved for only those who God had chosen from eternity past. The rejection by Jerusalem and Jesus’ crucifixion was not Jesus failing, but the fulfillment of God’s plan for salvation as the perfect sacrifice.

Earlier Jesus told His disciples this, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished. For He will be handed over to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon, and after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and the third day He will rise again.” (Luke 18:31-33)

We understand then that the betrayal, mockery, shame, flogging, being spit upon and murder were no surprise to Jesus; they were in fact planned in the heavens before mankind was. This is why Jesus continues in verse 42 saying, “If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! **But now they have been hidden from your eyes.** Remember earlier in Luke Jesus told His disciples “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest *it is* in parables, so that **SEEING THEY MAY NOT SEE, AND HEARING THEY MAY NOT UNDERSTAND.**” (Luke 8:10) The disciples would understand, especially after Jesus’ death and they were indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but for those who did not believe they were being handed over to the hardness of their hearts – they were spiritually blind and deaf. It was judgment and it is the judgment we all deserve, but for the grace of God.

Here is the point I want you to see today - This sovereign Christ weeps over hard-hearted, perishing Jerusalem as they fulfilled His plan for the final sacrifice, the sacrifice that would bring salvation and the indwelling of God’s Spirit. Jesus was serene in sorrow, and sorrowful in sovereignty. Jesus’ tears are the tears of sovereign mercy.

Therefore, Jesus’ sovereign power is admirable and beautiful. It is the harmony of things that seem to mankind to be in tension that makes Jesus glorious. Jesus is both “Merciful and Mighty”, as the song is sung. We admire power more when it is merciful power. We admire mercy more when it is mighty mercy. My prayer for you and for me

is that as we see His mercy and admire His mercy, and for us to become like Jesus in His mercy. We are to live with mercy for others and love the un-loveable.

There are at least three ways that Jesus is merciful, which we can draw out of this scripture passage. I pray that I will become like Him in all of these. I pray that you will also.

Mercy - Tenderly Moving

First, Jesus' mercy is tenderly moved. He feels the sorrow of the situation. This doesn't mean His sovereign plan has wrecked upon the rocks of human autonomy. It means that Jesus is more emotionally complex than we think He is. He really feels the sorrow of this situation. No doubt Jesus possesses a deep inner peace that God the Father is in control and that God's wise purposes will come to pass. But that doesn't mean you can't cry. When my grandson died I had peace that God was in charge and had a purpose, but I was heartbroken and grieved and experienced sorrow and cried. I understood, at least on a smaller scale, what Jesus was experiencing.

In fact, I appeal to you - pray that God would give you tears, that He would break your heart and give you're a heart of flesh they feels deeply. There is so much pain in the world and there is so much suffering far from you and near you. Pray that God would help you be tenderly moved. When you die and stand before the Mercy Seat of Christ, and He asks you, "How did you feel about the suffering around you?" What will you say? I promise you, you will not feel good about saying, "I saw that most people brought their suffering upon themselves by sin or foolishness or their own stupidity." You know what I think the Lord will say to that? I think He will say, "I didn't ask you what you saw. I asked you what you felt?" Jesus felt enough compassion for Jerusalem to weep. If you haven't shed any tears for somebody's losses but your own,

it probably means you're pretty wrapped up in yourself. So let's repent of our hardness and ask God to give us a heart that is tenderly moved and lives life fully engaged in His ministry.

Mercy - Self-Denying

Second, Jesus' mercy was self-denying – not ultimately; there was great reward in the long run, but this last week was very painful in the short run. This text is part of the story of Jesus' moving intentionally toward suffering and death. Jesus is entering Jerusalem to die. He said, **“Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished. For He will be handed over to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon, and after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and the third day He will rise again.”** (Luke 18:31-33) This is the meaning of self-denial. This is the way we follow Jesus. Jesus was seeing the sin of the world, and broken bodies, and the misery of hell – and He gave the world an alternative He gave mercy, grace and hope – despite the cost. Jesus calls us to see the world as He does and offer mercy, grace and hope, despite the cost. He calls to meet the needs of the broken. We deny ourselves the comforts and the securities and the ease of avoiding other peoples' pain. We embrace it. Jesus' tears were not just the tender moving of His emotions. They were the tears of a man on His way towards meeting the needs of the lost and broken, and He was going to pay the full price to accomplish God's plan of salvation.

Mercy - Helping

That leads us to the third way Jesus is merciful. First, He is tenderly moved; second, He is self-denying and moves towards need. Now third, Jesus intends to help. Mercy is the action of helping. It doesn't just feel – though it does feel – and it doesn't just

deny itself – though it does deny itself – it actually does things that help people. Jesus was dying in our place that we might be forgiven and have eternal life with Him. That's how He helped.

What will it be for you? How are you doing in ministries of mercy? How are you demonstrating mercy? What is tenderly moving you these days? Is there movement toward pain or suffering or misery or loss or sadness, that means denying yourself – in the short run – and multiplying your joy in the long run? What help are you actually giving to those in need? Think of these questions. Think, meditate and pray - of how we are to be like Jesus this week as we approach Easter.

Father, God of heaven, God of the universe, God of this tiny earth and God of people's souls - we desire to see Christ, glorify Christ and live in sacrifice for Christ as Christ sacrificed for us. May His tears of mercy wash us and heal us. May His tears of mercy bring us joy! Father as Christ changes us, may we also be changed by what we see around us and may this move us to be more tender hearted people of mercy that deny self in order to meet the needs of hurting people. May we be Christ's ambassadors to the world and in doing so bring You honor and glory. Amen!