

April 13, 2025
Palm Sunday
Which of Those Are You?
Luke 19:28-44

Today, Palm Sunday, begins what is known in the church as Holy Week or The Passion of Christ

- Now, the word Passion has several components to its origin
 - Certainly, the passion of Jesus for the lost that led Him to give His life for us is very much present in its meaning
- But the word itself contains the most direct application
 - In the original Greek, the word is *pahs-kho*
 - It is translated based on the context in which it is being used.
 - Let me give you an example of what that means
 - If someone were to use the word “sick” in describing something
 - It would be according to the context and even the vocal tone that would determine its meaning -
 - That’s sick – That is an assault against my sensibilities, gross, or perverted
 - You look sick - Not well or physically ill
 - That was sick – unbelievable in an impressive way
 - So too the word passion
 - The general definition means to be affected by something or someone that causes you to experience or sense something deeply
 - If it is in the positive – it means to be well off or for good, or exciting – to be passionate about something
 - If in the negative – it means to suffer sadly
 - That was the passion of Jesus, His time of suffering for us

And because of the context of this time, all four Gospels record Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem that day to begin His week of passion or suffering

READ – Luke 19:28-44

- Background of the author, Luke
 - He was a Gentile Christian
 - Making him the only non-Jewish author in the Bible
 - Much of what Luke wrote had to do with Jesus’ interaction with people who would be considered outcasts in Jewish society (as he also would have been)
 - Luke often wrote of the moral outcasts - the woman, known in the town as someone who had lived a very sinful life, but was so moved that she anointed Jesus’ feet in Simon the Pharisee’s house (7:36-50)
 - Social outcasts – Zacchaeus the tax collector (19:1-10)

- The economically deprived – retelling Jesus’s teaching of those people wanting the place of honor at the table versus those on the outside unable to get in (14:12-14)
 - Luke also recounts the story of the rich man and the beggar Lazarus, their place in eternity after death, and in so doing contradicts the Jewish belief that wealth was a sign or indication of God’s favor (16:19-31)
 - He writes of the Good Samaritan – addressing the Jews’ hatred for the Samaritans
 - The descendants of the Assyrians; the result of a time when the Hebrews and Assyrians were having children of mixed blood and culture (10:29-37)
 - Luke's purpose for writing his gospel was to give an account of Jesus’ life, specifically as it related to the Gentile people
 - He writes that Jesus was sent for the Gentiles as well as the Jews quoting the prophet Simeon who when dedicating the infant Jesus in the temple quotes the prophet Isaiah who describes the coming Savior as...
 - *A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.*” (Luke 2:32)
 - Historical extra-biblical writings regarding Luke tell us that he was from Antioch, Syria, he never married, and died in the Bo-ay-tia region of Greece at the age of 84
 - While Luke was not an eyewitness to the events he wrote about, but states that he “...carefully investigated everything from the beginning,...” (1:3)
 - Certainly, his time with Paul would have influenced his writing
 - We know this for certain since Paul names Luke as one of his traveling companions (Col 4:14)
 - Luke is also cited as the author of the book of Acts
 - Similar greeting, writing style, and use of the language
- (v 28) Jesus is entering Jerusalem having just come from Jericho (about 19 miles away) and throughout this time Jesus has been active...
 - Healed blind Bartimaeus entering Jericho (18:35-43)
 - Spoke with Zacchaeus and went to his house (19:1-9)
 - Teaches the parable of the 10 coins (Luke 18:35 – 19:27)
 - During this time of the last week Jesus is, by all accounts, staying at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in the town of Bethany which is only a couple of miles east of Jerusalem
 - Bethphage, where Jesus sends the disciples to get the donkey, or as Luke refers to it a colt (a young donkey), is a neighboring town also within walking distance
 - But as in all things – there is a much deeper meaning and significance in all that Jesus did to demonstrate who He was in that time
 - Let’s look at what was happening to understand the importance of this day and what Jesus was telling the people through His action

1. Jesus is riding on a donkey (vv 30-35)
 - a. This is the only time in the New Testament where we read of Jesus riding anywhere
 - i. He always walked – perhaps as a way of identifying Himself with everyone He would meet
 - b. But what else did those times of traveling by foot between towns mean?
 - i. He was interacting with and teaching His disciples and other followers
 - ii. He was right in the crowd's midst in order to physically demonstrate the love of His Father and heal the sick
 - c. Why a donkey?
 - i. Very few horses in that area
 - ii. Only the very rich or nobility could afford them and even then there were very few who did
 - iii. Because in that day, horses were almost exclusively used by the military and were therefore closely associated with war
 1. In that time, when a conquering king came into a city he had just defeated, he rode in on a magnificent steed
 2. But when a king entered a city on a donkey, it was a symbol not of war but of peace and humility as well as declaring his regal authority
 - a. Solomon rode a donkey on the day he was made king by his father David (I Kings 1:38)
 - b. This is also why throughout the OT, any time a prophet rode from one town to another, it was on a donkey
 3. Jesus was not coming as a king of war but as the Prince of Peace – but a king nonetheless
 - iv. Did you know the first mention of a donkey in the Bible is found in Genesis 22, where Abraham saddles his donkey to go to Mt. Moriah to offer his one and only son as a sacrifice to God?
 - v. Just as God the Father was doing here with His Son
 - d. Jesus had to borrow the animal
 - i. He did not own any worldly goods
 - ii. All he had were his clothes and even those were taken from Him at the crucifixion
 1. I believe this again reinforces the danger of believing the teaching that poverty or lack of wealth is a result of sin in a person's life or an absence of belief
 2. Or that to be wealthy is a sign of God's favor and blessing
 - iii. The abundance or lack of possessions of this world are not an indication of God's level of love for us
2. The disciples put their cloaks on the animal for Jesus to sit on (19:35)
 - a. In the OT, as a sign of honor and respect, people would put their clothes on the ground when the king walked by so that he would not be walking on the bare ground
 - b. When Jehu was being made king over Israel in 2 Kings 9:12-13 - *'This is what the LORD says: I anoint you king over Israel.'* And they quickly took their cloaks and

spread them under him on the bare steps. Then they blew the trumpet and shouted, "Jehu is king!"

- c. Everything that was taking place on this first Palm Sunday was the picture of a king
3. The people, and we read this in John's account, waved palm branches as Jesus went by
- a. Luke's account is of Jesus approaching the city while Matt, Mark, and John focus on Him as He enters Jerusalem
 - b. In OT times people welcomed a victorious king back into the city by waving palm branches – the people knew the symbolism of this act
 - c. But do you know who else would have known this to be true by their knowledge of the Scriptures? – The Pharisees
 - d. So much of what Jesus did was in direct opposition to the teaching of the Pharisees
 - i. Because they were not teaching the love of God that Jesus came to share
 - ii. They had become solely focused on upholding the laws of Moses, without love
 - iii. They also taught that God's blessing was based on what a person did rather than on God's mercy and grace
- Jesus was being rightly welcomed into the city, but He was not who the Jews were hoping He would be
 - He was coming as a crowned prince, but a Prince of Peace, not war
 - He would receive a crown, but it would be crown of thorns
 - He would be declared the King, but it would be written on a crude sign hanging over His cross that read, This is the King of the Jews ([Luke 23:38](#))
 - Regardless of what the people saw Jesus do or heard Him say in His 3 years walking among them, they refused to accept that He had come to establish His kingdom, not in a palace, but in their hearts
 - They wanted someone to lead a revolt
 - They didn't want to be under the rule of Rome, but neither did they want to be under the authority of God
 - This is why Luke records Jesus weeping as He enters the city in verses [41-44](#) that we read earlier
 - It is one of only two times that we read Jesus was moved to tears
 - The first was at the tomb of Lazarus ([John 11:35](#)) certainly troubled by the pain of Mary and Martha
 - And the second by the unbelief of the people of Jerusalem
 - Both times was by a demonstration of death
 - The first one a physical death, the second spiritual death
 - But what must be understood as being still true today, as it was then, is those who did not welcome Him and fall at His feet as Savior will still fall at His feet, but it will be as their judge
 - The fact is EVERYONE will profess that Jesus is Lord and King

- And what determines where you spend eternity is when you make the decision to profess His Lordship
 - In your life, as a choice
 - Or at the time of the final judgment as a consequence

And so, who were the people who were there to witness that first Palm Sunday?

- What was going through their minds as they asked who this man was and what did He mean to them?
 - I believe they all fell into one of four categories, and so do each of us today...
 - There were those, of course, who were His disciples, His followers
 - Many more than just the 11
 - Those who watched silently – unsure, uncommitted, and unwilling to take that step of faith to believe in Him as the Son of God
 - Those who probably did not really know what was going on but were content to be caught up in the excitement
 - Those in this group certainly had no real conviction one way or the other
 - Because remember, it is very likely that many of the ones crying out “Hosanna” as Jesus passed by were the same ones screaming “Crucify Him!” just a few days later
 - Then there was a final group watching silently but with hardened hearts – the Pharisees and the Jewish leaders
- e. The only time the Pharisees spoke through this entire event was to tell Jesus to get His disciples to shut up
 - i. Why? Because they were concerned that the Roman soldiers would come in to quiet them down
 - ii. Jesus then tells them that actually, they are right, the soldiers will come
 - iii. But He is prophesying an event that would not occur for another 40 years
 - iv. He was warning them of the coming of the Roman General Titus
 1. Titus did encircle the city of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. just as Jesus said (v 43)
 2. He had his army build an embankment around the city to cut off supplies and weaken the people through starvation
 3. He then attacked and would slaughter the majority of the population including the children (v 44)
 4. And it was then that a large portion of the wall surrounding the city, the palace, and the temple were all completely destroyed
- Let’s summarize then what we have been examining this morning with two simple question
 - First, what was the meaning of Palm Sunday?
 1. It was to continue the Divine plan of God to provide forgiveness of sin and the restoration of our relationship to Him

- a. It was the living proof of Jesus' words in **John 14:6** when He says, *I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father but by me.*
2. It was the continued fulfillment of OT prophesy regarding the life and ministry of Jesus
 - a. *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. (Zech 9:9)*
 - b. This prophesy was written 500 years earlier
3. So that Jesus, entering the city then as the Prince of Peace, would one day return to Jerusalem, but it will be as the conquering King of all eternity
 - o The second question then is for each of us, which of those groups watching Jesus come into the city are you a part of?
 - Is your relationship with Jesus one of surrender and devotion?
 - Or are you just silently watching, content to live your own life apart from what God offers us through the death and resurrection of His Son?