

The Palms Before the Storm: (Palm Sunday)

The Importance of Community: (Are you in a cell?)

- *“Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus’ honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with Him.”* John 12:1-2
- *“Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.”* John 13:34-35

Palm Before the Storm:

- *“John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! “* John 12:3
- *“Jesus went on toward Jerusalem, walking ahead of His disciples. As He came to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany on the Mount of Olives, He sent two disciples ahead. Go into that village over there,’ He told them. ‘As you enter it, you will see a young donkey tied there that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here.”* Luke 19:29-31
- *“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!”* John 12:12-13

A. Figuratively the donkey tells us: Who Jesus Is

- Messiah Foretold / Prophecy Fulfilled in Jesus:
 - King: *“Rejoice greatly...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
 - Ruler: *“But you, Bethlehem, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”* Micah 5:2
 - God With Us: *“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.”* Isaiah 7:14
 - Saviour: *“They pierce my hands and my feet. All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.”* Psalm 22:16-18
 - Redeemer: *“He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities.”* Isaiah 53:4-5

B. Figuratively the donkey tells us: What Jesus Is Like

- Jesus wasn’t coming to bring a short-term political solution. He was coming to bring a long-term spiritual solution to a problem that has been shared by all of mankind all through history, which is that our sin and wrongdoing have separated us from God.
- *“I, the Messiah, did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give my life as a ransom for many.”* Matt. 20:28 (LB)
- *“Learn from Me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”* Matt. 11:29
- Humility is having a realistic view of who we are in relation to Christ. When we do that and are humble, we begin to break down the barriers between us and God. We make it possible to begin a fulfilling relationship with him that will continue all through eternity.
- It's a comforting discovery when we find out that Jesus didn't come to retaliate. He came to rescue and restore us. It is almost too good to be true when we picture Jesus riding into our lives gently, peacefully and humbly on a donkey and offering us forgiveness and guidance.

C. Figuratively the donkey tells us: What Jesus Deserves

- *“Go into that village over there,” He told them. “As you enter it, you will see a young donkey tied there that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it.’”* Luke 19:29-31
- **What does Jesus deserve from you? What have you personally given to Him?**
- Did the people truly recognize Him? Notice the difference from the passage they were ‘trying’ to quote and how they twisted it to meet their own needs!
 - *“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 12:13
 - *“Lord, save us! Lord, grant us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. From the house of the Lord we bless you.”* Ps. 118:25-26
- Palm branches were a symbol for the nation of Israel of their freedom and independence.
 - *“Some of the Pharisees among the crowd said teacher, rebuke your followers for saying things like that!”* Luke 19:39
 - *“This is getting us nowhere, look the whole world has gone after him.”* John 12:19
 - Jesus response: “If they kept quiet the stones along the road would burst into cheers.” Luke 19:40
 - In essence, if our lives don't become acts of worship to Jesus then we will be shown up by wind and waves and flowers and even rocks.
- *“But as they came closer to Jerusalem and Jesus saw the city ahead, he began to weep.”* John 19:41
- Does anyone even notice? Does anyone even notice that the heart of God is being broken right in front of them? Are people so caught up in their so-called worship of Jesus that they don't even see that they are breaking his heart? Don't they see the puddle of tears making its way to the hot desert floor as Jesus weeps for a people, for his people, who don't even recognize their true king?
- *“How I wish that today you of all people would understand the way to peace. But now it is too late and peace is hidden from your eyes. Before long your enemies will build ramparts against your walls and encircle you and close in on you from every side. They will crush you into the ground, and your children with you. Your enemies will not leave a single stone in place, because you did not recognize it when God visited you.”* Luke 19:42-44
- That begs the question of you and I, what do our lives say about the real Jesus? Two thousand years later do we recognize him? Take a moment and think about this. If Jesus were to make an entry into your life today, right now where we are, would you even recognize him? If he were sitting right next to you would you know? How would you know?
- Do you recognize Jesus who says to us:
- *“He said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.”* Luke 9:23
- *“Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.”* Mark 9:35
- Do you recognize Jesus when He comes to you:
 - In the distressing disguise of the poor, the sick and the overlooked?
 - And doesn't work like a genie in a bottle and just give you all the wishes you want?
 - When it is tough or when it seems like there isn't any other answer?
 - When all your circumstances and surroundings point you in every other direction?
 - And choose to follow Him?
 - Or hear: “...you did not recognize it when God visited you.”