

Sermon Notes

The Triumphal Entry Revisited—A Day of Lament [Matt. 21:1-11; Mk. 11:1-11; Lk. 19:29-44; Jn. 12:12-19]

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Introduction

One of the great events in the life of Christ. Fascinating, special, told in all four gospels, various details. This is a special, bizarre incident in Christ's life. That it is in all four gospels may indicate its significance. It is important. It is an event neglected, seldom preached, seldom talked about. One time each year, Palm Sunday, the Triumphal Entry.

Palm Sunday – Jesus Wants You to Know Peace

What do you know about the Bible story--palm leaves, Palm Sunday? Have you studied its context, order, lessons? What can we learn, how can we apply this lesson?

Palm Sunday, the Triumphal Entry. Have we grasped the details? Palm Sunday – the day Jesus wept over Jerusalem. Reading the Bible through new eyes.

Focus with me on Luke 19. In 2015, Jan and I saw these places—the road leading from Bethany to Jerusalem reaches a peak before it begins its descent past the Mount of Olives, down into the Kidron Valley, then up to the east side of the city. Luke tells us that on Sunday, his disciples went ahead and found a donkey-colt for him to ride. Jesus was riding toward Jerusalem, ascending the east side of the mountain. As he reached the summit, near the place where the road begins to descend past the Mount of Olives, crowds assembled, including some Pharisees (Lk. 19:39). The crowds spread their cloaks and joyfully sang (19:36-38). As the city came into view (19:41), Jesus approached the city, wept (sobbed, wailed), wishing that the city had known the true source of peace. Text: what will bring peace? Who will bring peace?

Look at the text again. Palm Sunday 2020 is a time to connect the Triumphal Entry and Jesus' grief. Palm Sunday was for Jesus a day of weeping. Jesus wants everyone to know peace. He came to give peace.

Today the world we live in does not feel peaceful. In stress and difficulty, most feel more turmoil than peace. Many do not know the source of true peace. Many live with great stress. We live in a world wrought with conflict. Wars are seemingly continual. Families are conflicted. Churches are conflicted. Christians are internally conflicted.

People seek peace in the wrong places. Prophets still cry “peace, peace” where there is no peace.

If you spend any time at all thinking about the Triumphal Entry, let me encourage you to weep and grieve about those who have not found peace in Jesus.

Today's text, Luke 19:41, suggests three truths about Jesus.

- Jesus wept for those who had not found God's peace
- Jesus wept for those who could not see the source of genuine peace
- Jesus died to give them peace

What does this text mean for you and for me?

- The Christian world wants to celebrate more than it wants to cry.
- The Christian world largely ignores this detail: the triumphant Jesus understood the spiritual needs of the world. The triumph the world sees is physical. The triumph Jesus saw was spiritual. Jesus' triumph and victory came through suffering and death.
- Pray, lament, grieve over the things Jesus laments. The church must learn to cry. Christians must learn lament, how to deal with God in difficult days. The church must learn prophetic lament, crying over the lost world, unable to sleep, unable to rest, unable to stop doing everything possible for the salvation of the world. Today's text occurs in a larger context that includes Luke 19:10. Jesus came to seek and save the lost.
- Following Jesus means seeking the lost. Following Jesus means opening eyes to see real peace. Following Jesus means spending oneself so Jesus' reason for dying is known, for as many as possible.

As Luke connects Palm Sunday with Jesus' desire to bring peace to the world, I think of three things Christians can do to make Jesus' desire a reality. Three things to help us be people of peace, know peace, share peace with those around us so they come to know peace.

First, we can pray for peace – include the world in our prayers. We can pray for those who struggle with the pressures of life, praying that they will come to know the Prince of Peace. Pray for leaders, pray for the lost, pray for the multitudes who daily experience the reality of this fallen world of illness and death. Ask God, ask yourself, how you can be a part of bringing God's peace to others.

Second, we should proclaim peace. At Jesus' birth (Luke 2), angels proclaimed peace on earth. As Jesus begins his ministry, at the synagogue, taking the scroll, reading from Isaiah, he declares that he comes to proclaim good news and liberty from the oppression that so easily imprisons people (Luke 4). Share good news, proclaim gospel, focus on who God is, revelation of God in coming of Jesus. See the love, presence, peace communicated in death of Jesus. We anticipate Easter week, proclaim peace.

Third, may we practice peace, may we be peacemakers. May we live in the peace of God so that we are examples to those in turmoil, so that they will seek to know the one who came to give us peace. May we live in peace in relationship with God, to be those who know the genuine source of peace. This is Luke 19:41.

In these three simple commitments, the peace of God that passes all comprehension can become reality for multitudes in our tumultuous world. May you have a peaceful Palm Sunday. God bless.