

Sermon on Luke 19:28-44 prepared by Jonathan Shradar

Luke 19:28-44

Don't miss Jesus.

October 7, 2007. It was a day long-awaited for. All the important people had gathered in one place to celebrate with each other. All dressed in their best. Months of preparation culminated here on what would become a life together.

It was a moment that was anticipated and met with much rejoicing. My wedding day!

I remember much of that day but key among those moments was the reveal. I knew what my bride looked like. I knew her voice. The way she carried herself. I knew her passion and pet peeves. I knew history, the events that formed her. I knew her family (well most of them!) I knew her friends. I knew her hopes and dreams for this life we were covenanting together in.

I had been reading her well for months leading to this moment. Before the ceremony, near the barn where the groomsmen had prepared and the vineyard ripe for pictures, I was led to a little pond where I was to keep my eyes closed and wait.

Then her voice came and I was free to open my eyes and see my bride in all her splendor. Radiant beauty. Breath-taking. Before me stood the One I had been waiting for.

And since then life has been real, but it has been exceedingly good.

However, if I stood there and when my eyes opened, I failed to recognize her... I would be in trouble. I would have missed what was hoped for, anticipated, and prepared for.

As we arrive on the church calendar to Palm Sunday, I am learning to be thankful for the steady reminder of the King revealed to his people. Because even as I study Jesus, as I see him vividly promised in the prophets, as I witness his ministry in the gospels, and hear the calls to live in light of him through the

epistles, I can miss him in the routines of my day. I can miss his presence and care in the burdens I experience, the struggles I fail to defeat. I can miss him in my hopes and dreams of what life in the Kingdom is meant to be.

Yet, he comes. Like this triumphal welcome into Jerusalem before his defining act, he still comes today waiting to be welcomed.

So as we look back we have a new opportunity to see him and follow him as our King.

Don't miss Jesus.

We have taken the liberty to fast forward quite a bit in our study of Luke's Gospel to get here. To his entry into Jerusalem for the last time of his ministry. Much has transpired since the parable of the soils. He has told many more parables. He has feasted with many more sinners. He has been challenged by teachers and religious elites. He has sent out his disciples to preach the good news of the Kingdom. And he has delivered the spiritually oppressed and fed the hungry.

All along the way, his people have been getting to know him, and those well-versed in the promises of God have started to recognize who he truly is. To recognize that God's plan of redemption was unfolding before then. That hope was being realized.

"Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!
Shout in triumph, Daughter Jerusalem!
Look, your King is coming to you;
he is righteous and victorious,
humble and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey." -- **Zechariah 9:9** (CSB)

As we progress this morning, I want to make a few observations of this welcome of the king and the whoa of rejection we see in the text and then think about how we might welcome Jesus today.

Welcome of the King

Jesus has just taught on using the talents, gift he has given you for his glory, and then he goes on ahead up to Jerusalem.

Sending two disciples to get a donkey, he is confirming the promises of his arrival. And as he makes his way, the response of his followers was that of sacrifice and praise.

Sacrifice. As he was going along they were spreading their clothes on the road.

Now, these are mostly people that had been traveling with Jesus for some time. They had been healed or delivered. They had believed and embraced his teaching of the Kingdom, of the way of Jesus, and they had committed to being with him, to seeing where he might lead.

Certainly, there were some misaligned expectations or confusion over how everything was meant to play out, but they believed Jesus to be the promised King and they were giving him the welcome he deserved.

Other accounts tell us that the welcomers waved palm branches as fitting for royalty. That the crowd would proclaim "Hosanna!" "Save Us!" to this King.

In Luke's account, they were laying their clothes on the road ahead of him.

I feel like we have all seen a fair number of cartoons or images of the chivalrous person draping their coat over a puddle so a sweet older lady doesn't have to get wet or muddy.

That is what is happening here. Laying down their clothes for the donkey to trample on, as an indication that his cargo was precious and worthy of honor. Self-giving sacrifice.

I wonder if they were quick to grab their cloak after the donkey moved further up the road to put it out ahead again. At this moment, all that they have is laid down to welcome Jesus.

As he came near then to the path down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd began to "praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles they had seen."

Can you imagine the scene? The street, the way up to Jerusalem, is crowded and people are throwing down their garments as this teacher rides through the dust and people start singing. At the top of their lungs, they belt out a Psalm with smiles and laughter.

“Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heaven!” -- **Luke 19:38** (CSB)

They amended the Psalm on the fly and added the title King because they knew who Jesus was. He had proven it in his ministry, the authority with which he taught, the unfathomable miracles that had been done. And their response is joyful praise to the promise-giver.

A pivotal moment for all of those present on the road that day, a culmination of sorts, the reveal of the King.

But not everyone rejoiced that Palm Sunday.

Whoa of Rejection

All throughout his ministry, there have been detractors. Those that liked their control, their privilege and saw Jesus and his teaching as a threat to that. And here is Jesus heading to the seat of power and his followers are exclaiming that he is the King!

In several places in the Gospel accounts Jesus was known to slow things down... even at the first miracle, he tells his mother that his time has not yet come. And that refrain will be heard again, leaving Jerusalem, avoiding disputes, continuing on in the normal things of ministry, preaching and healing those in need.

But his time had now come and nothing was going to stop it. So when Pharisees in the crowd demand that Jesus rebuke his disciples his response is that “if they were kept silent, the stones would cry out.”

Creation groaning for redemption will see it. But not everyone will recognize the One true King.

Jesus didn't come to merely categorize people - in and out - Kingdom and not. His desire is for all to enter the Kingdom... he has come in love.

“For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. -- **John 3:16-17** (CSB)

The people have to recognize him as the King and when they don't turn, it grieves him.

“As he approached and saw the city, he wept for it, 42 saying, “If you knew this day what would bring peace — but now it is hidden from your eyes. 43 For the days will come on you when your enemies will build a barricade around you, surround you, and hem you in on every side. 44 They will crush you and your children among you to the ground, and they will not leave one stone on another in your midst, because you did not recognize the time when God visited you.” -- **Luke 19:41-44** (CSB)

All of the promise, the voice of the prophets, the songs of the psalmists, it was leading here. Jesus is the sacrifice that will bring peace. And because Jerusalem as a whole will miss him - he weeps for them.

And it will bring their destruction. The place they put trust, a political Israel, would be crushed. Because they did not recognize the time when God visited them.

This takes me back to Jesus at the funeral in Nain - when he had compassion on the widow whose son had died and he told the man to get up and he did.

“Then fear came over everyone, and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has risen among us,” and “God has visited his people.” -- **Luke 7:16** (CSB)

Those that saw it, that believed, would rejoice, those that couldn't recognize it would perish.

While we could file this under important history and an interesting day to commemorate on the way to Easter, a more fitting response would be to realize

that most of our days position us right there on that road to Jerusalem where we will see our King and welcome him in... or miss him.

Welcome Today

The same spiritual malady that made the Pharisees oppose God's work in Jesus can ironically be our problem as well, as followers of Jesus. We must constantly pray for God to open our eyes to see him truly and to work truth in us.

There is the welcome of salvation - believing in Jesus, that his life, death, and resurrection were for you and your eternity is secure before him. That which sparks praise.

But there is also a welcome along the way, giving Jesus honor in all of the spaces and corners of our lives. To truly see him as King and live under his rule.

We can have a tendency to reserve space for Jesus. Certain parts of our hearts and lives are surely his. But others we don't believe he wants to be in or we don't see a need for him in it. Vocation. Relationships. Suffering. Anxiety.

But living in the Way of Jesus is letting him into all of it, letting his reign, his Kingdom, have every square inch.

And I am convinced that we increasingly do this when we recognize how he welcomes us.

"All the tax collectors and sinners were approaching to listen to him.
2 And the Pharisees and scribes were complaining, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." -- **Luke 15:1-2** (CSB)

When you were the farthest from God, he comes to you, he welcomes you in, invites you to trust in him, and live as a citizen in his Kingdom. No pedigree or accomplishment is required. No perfect capable of achieving what you need. No sacrifice you can make to motivate him - in love he welcomes you.

And when he does you are made new. Given his righteousness. His inheritance. He doesn't welcome you begrudgingly. He does it with joy.

“Now to him who is able to protect you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of his glory, without blemish and with great joy, 25 to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority before all time, now and forever. Amen.” -- **Jude 1:24-25** (CSB)

Because this is all true, we can welcome him in those spaces we have been keeping to ourselves. And we can trust that because he leads the triumphal procession, he has gone before us in all of it.

“As the shepherd goes before the sheep, not driving but leading. As the captain goes before his soldiers as taking the post of danger, so our Lord went on before them. It was far better that he should go first than that they should, for the disciple is never more out of place than when he outruns his Master. Rest assured that in whatever way of suffering we have to go in consequence of our being a child of man, and especially in consequence of your being a child of God, we will find that Christ has gone that way ahead of us.” Charles Spurgeon

He has gone before us... into Jerusalem. On the cross. Out of the tomb. For life, glory, and the Kingdom.

And when we recognize him for who he is, life begins. Much of the world will say “that’s not him...” or “look away!” but here is the King that was slain, that was raised up for the forgiveness of sin. For your good and his glory. Believe in him.

Don’t miss Jesus. See him. Welcome him in. Surrender to him. And live.

Like turning to see the bride in all her radiance, Jesus stands ready to welcome you and be welcomed by you.

Oh that we would welcome the King into every corner of our hearts, to all our hopes and dreams, our trauma and pain, our routines and regular life. As we do more and more we will learn to praise God joyfully. We will sing with the saints...

“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his faithful love endures forever.

2 Let Israel say,
"His faithful love endures forever."

3 Let the house of Aaron say,
"His faithful love endures forever."

4 Let those who fear the Lord say,
"His faithful love endures forever."

5 I called to the Lord in distress;
the Lord answered me
and put me in a spacious place.

6 The Lord is for me; I will not be afraid.
What can a mere mortal do to me?

7 The Lord is my helper;
therefore, I will look in triumph on those who hate me.

8 It is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in humanity.

9 It is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in nobles.

10 All the nations surrounded me;
in the name of the Lord I destroyed them.

11 They surrounded me, yes, they surrounded me;
in the name of the Lord I destroyed them.

12 They surrounded me like bees;
they were extinguished like a fire among thorns;
in the name of the Lord I destroyed them.

13 They pushed me hard to make me fall,
but the Lord helped me.

14 The Lord is my strength and my song;
he has become my salvation.

15 There are shouts of joy and victory
in the tents of the righteous:
"The Lord's right hand performs valiantly!

16 The Lord's right hand is raised.
The Lord's right hand performs valiantly! "

17 I will not die, but I will live

and proclaim what the Lord has done.

18 The Lord disciplined me severely
but did not give me over to death.

19 Open the gates of righteousness for me;
I will enter through them
and give thanks to the Lord.

20 This is the Lord's gate;
the righteous will enter through it.

21 I will give thanks to you
because you have answered me
and have become my salvation.

22 The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.

23 This came from the Lord;
it is wondrous in our sight.

24 This is the day the Lord has made;
let's rejoice and be glad in it.

25 Lord, save us!

Lord, please grant us success!

26 He who comes in the name
of the Lord is blessed.

From the house of the Lord we bless you.

27 The Lord is God and has given us light.
Bind the festival sacrifice with cords
to the horns of the altar.

28 You are my God, and I will give you thanks.
You are my God; I will exalt you.

29 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his faithful love endures forever. -- **Psalms 118:1-29** (CSB)

7 Therefore welcome one another, just as Christ also welcomed you, to the glory
of God. -- Romans 15:7 (CSB)