

Luke 19:28-48

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- [0 : 00] Good morning. Great to have you here today. And what a wonderful text we have before us in advance of our congregational lunch, which will follow in the cafeteria.
- Show me what a people stop to celebrate and you will have shown me things that function as a window into their heart.
- Collectively, in America, in the present day, we stop to celebrate very few things. But, by way of example, we celebrate athletic prowess, such as when the Blackhawks will win the Stanley Cup, we throw our, what we hope to be our annual Chicago parade.
- We celebrate artistic excellence, for we are, even now, in the season of the Grammys and the Oscars, and the country stops to take a look.
- We celebrate autonomous achievement. Whether it be our financial independence or our sexual freedoms, parades and litanies of things indicate what our culture celebrates.
- [1 : 47] show me what a people celebrates, you will have a window to what their heart loves. For us, athletes, artists, an autonomous achievement.
- In a previous day in this country, it would have had a more collective sound to it. New York City, in fact, has its hallowed Canyon of Heroes.
- That skyscraper line stretch from the bottom of Manhattan up to City Hall, which is famous for its ticker tape parades. 1945, V.J. Day.
- Over 5,438 tons of material dropped from the windows as a people stopped to celebrate the end of war.
- The largest ticker tape parade, April 20, 1951, honoring General Douglas MacArthur. Stretched out even before that in ancient Rome, usually after a great military conquest, a general would be awarded a triumph.
- [3 : 15] It wouldn't come on his own accord, it would come as a vote of the Senate, or later, under just a principate, a declaration from the ruler.
- So the general would have won some great foreign victory and returned with his army and captives in tow, and they would literally camp outside the gates of Rome and wait for the politicians to deliberate and to award a triumph.
- And at that moment, if granted, the chained captives would lead the way in through the city gates on foot, followed by the storehouses of treasures and wealth and exotic animals or whatever it was on flatbeds in front of all the people.
- And then, the general's own army in dressed white togas, unarmed, for their victory had come, would be hailed by the people and there at the capstone of the triumph in a chariot behind four steeds of war would be the general.
- The cheering populace giving shouts of gratitude. Our text, the most ironic of triumphs.
- [4 : 51] Indeed, it's referred to as the triumphal entry. A day when the people stopped to celebrate and thereby gave a window to the desires of their heart.

It reads, And when he had said these things, he went on ahead going up to Jerusalem when he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany on the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of his disciples saying, Go into the village in front of you where on entering you will find a colt tied on which no one has ever yet sat.

Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you why are you untying it, you shall say this, The Lord has need of it so those who sent went away and found it just as he had told them and as they were untying the colt its owner said to them why are you untying the colt and they said the Lord has need of it and they brought it to Jesus and throwing their cloaks on the colt they set Jesus on it and as he rode along they spread their cloaks on the road.

An ironic triumph. Not occasioned by the vote of the senate or the principate but a self appointed ride in through the city gates with the populace having a hand but interestingly carried out by a deliberate conscious occasioned manner by the Lord Jesus himself.

He had come to Jerusalem at last. We opened the preaching season this year back in 951 where there was that first narrative declaration that Jesus now set his face to Jerusalem.

[7 : 12] And for ten chapters we have been watching him walk being interrupted just enough times to let us know he was on the road and today he's come.

He's arrived and he knew exactly how he wanted his day to come down. The interesting thing of course is he comes uncomfortably through the city gate upon a colt rather than standing behind the pull of four great white war horses.

There's an ancient Hebrew text post-exilic Zachariah who in his enigmatic prophetic way spoke of a deliverance that God would give to his own people.

A day in which God would come as a victorious warrior with an ironic entrance.

Those many years before Zachariah had prophesied rejoice greatly O daughter of Zion shout aloud O daughter of Jerusalem behold your king is coming to you righteous and having salvation as he humble and mounted on a donkey on a colt the foal of a donkey.

[8 : 54] It appears to me that Jesus in the isolation of his own mind has determined to take upon himself the ancient Hebrew text and upon his arrival into Jerusalem identify himself with that divine victorious warrior who would overthrow God's enemies and establish God's rule.

Now the differences between the two cannot be ignored. Lord it was years ago where Drayton Benner in our midst at the Oriental Institute pointed out to me and to those of us around anyone who would listen that in Zachariah's day when that entrance came the northern and southern tribes the people of God would be brought back together.

In Jesus of course the Christian understanding is that you actually encompass something on a much grander scale than just the tribal people of Israel being reunited under a ruler but rather the four corners of the earth following in Jesus' train.

In Zachariah's day it was the picture of God as a victorious warrior literally destroying the works of Israel's human enemies.

Jesus here we have the Nazarene looking the part of a very insignificant rider. In Zachariah's day it meant military conquest for Israel.

[10 : 43] It meant peace from human enemies. Here the sword is put away. Within a week Jesus will say the kingdom I am establishing is not by sword but rather establishing peace with God.

There is no other triumph like this one. No king had ever entered Jerusalem this way before nor has any king entered Jerusalem's eastern gate the golden gate like this since.

This grand entrance that rolled off the mount of olives down through the ravine across and up and in the gate in proximity on that eastern side to where entrance meant looking directly at the temple itself on a donkey.

Yet this was David's way. I mean Jesus' way. David's way back in 2 Samuel 5 was to let his warriors uncover the water shaft and see who could get in and take the city from the inside.

Nebuchadnezzar's day was to fortify against it until he could blow the doors down. Jesus chooses this day to come in this way.

[12 : 11] an ironic triumph. It's met with two responses. The first is right there in verses 37 and 38. An energized populace.

And as he was drawing near, the text says, I love this phrase by Luke, already on the way down the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen saying, blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven and glory in the highest.

The words themselves actually possess the features of motion as he was already on his way down. And you can almost see this stubborn colt, this downward trajectory off the ridge of Olivet and the steps naturally going faster in pace because of where you're moving and as they're moving down and he's finally entering, the praises go up, the cloaks come down.

Blessed the king, our ruler, an energized populace.

They had expectations, no doubt of what would happen once Jesus arrived. All you need to do is look back to chapter 19, verse 11 to see how we are heightened to this very moment.

[13 : 48] For in the text before our own, it reads, as they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable because he was near to Jerusalem and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately.

That was the expectation. We've been following him, he's been doing kingdom works. In fact, the very word kingdom in this section of 951 through 19 has been used 27 times.

Jesus continually heightening your anticipation on the kingdom and how you get in and what life looks like and what are your commitments in light of the kingdom. Only 10 times is that word used before 951, 10 times after 1940, 27 times in the midst we've been listening about the coming of the kingdom.

And now he's here. The expectation is that the kingdom of God arrives when he rolls through the gate, well, as he clops his way through.

They anticipated the overthrow of all comers, I would think Rome most especially. They anticipated from the Hebrew scriptures that this would be an indication of great earthly gain for any who followed him.

[15 : 09] A promise in the cabinet, appointments to be made, resources to be in charge of, opportunities to rise. They anticipated that the elevation of the Jews would lead to the vanquishing of the Gentiles.

They anticipated a throne material prosperity, the day of big grapes. In short, the Messiah, the anointed one.

As they say, blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. Now, interestingly, that's only one response to his ironic entrance, this enthused populace.

The other, of course, is it provoked something different from the elite. Verse 39 and 40, And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, Teacher, rebuke your disciples.

Hey, Nazarene, getting out of hand here today. They are attributing to you Hebraic expectation that you are certainly not the one to deliver on.

[16 : 29] Don't take for yourself what our word gives to God alone. This provocation.

These, of course, are those who rejected Jesus' rule. And so he lets them have it.

As he often does. Gentlemen, they can be quiet, but even if you win that day, these stones are crying out.

Because somewhere in God's created order, there's going to be a declaration of the entrance of the king. He received it unto himself, and therefore sealed his own fate in their eyes.

an ironic entrance, an enthused populace, a provoked elite, and the majority of the text, and I'll close with these words on this paragraph, the dejected but determined king.

[17 : 42] Look at his response when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it. For them, he would take up the sword.

Within a week, he tells Peter to put the sword away. For them, it was military conquest. For him, it was a kingdom that required a cross, not only for himself by way of substitution, but for his followers by way of imitation.

For them, their hearts were ready to stop and celebrate earthly gain. For him, it was actually about heavenly grace. For them, freedom and life.

For him, capture and death. They wanted a throne, a crown of laurels. For Jesus, it would be one of thorns.

They thought that his rule would enrich their material well-being when in actual fact, the followers of the Lord Jesus are continually giving their wealth away.

[19 : 05] Let me put it this way. What do we want out of Jesus? Jesus. Jesus. What do you want out of Jesus?

What we want in our culture today is a Jesus which will act as a stamp that will validate my heart's desire to celebrate whatever I deem appropriate.

love. We want a Jesus under the word love which vindicates the fulfillment of whatever I would like to do or be.

glory. I find it interesting. If we in our culture celebrate athletes and artists and autonomous achievement, so often the church itself mirrors these things.

At best, as a way to tap into the heart of our culture, to reorient them toward God. And so churches are filled with basketball leagues, artist's colonies, the celebration of autonomous achievement that we have in Christ.

[20 : 30] We have created a Jesus that fulfills the desires of our hearts. And over that, he would weep still.

He says, Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace. Do you remember their commendation?

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace, glory, oh, that you would know what makes for peace. Peace is an interesting word in Luke.

It comes all the way back to the opening chapters. Even the angels that announce his birth talk about peace. But in Luke, it's continually, universally, a peace that's to be established between a humanity under God's wrath and a maker in heaven who desires to make them well.

He wept. They did not know the peace of which their voices filled the air. peace.

[21 : 46] Peace in chapter 1, verse 68 of Luke, is actually connected to the forgiveness of sins. And just as their house would be torn down, Jerusalem, so too will the one we have erected and from which we would have him rule.

Jesus knew in his heart that king would suffer and die, and that his followers would do the same. He knew that Jerusalem, which stood as the city of peace, the place where God met with humanity, would itself come crashing down.

indeed, history bears out his prophetic word, for here he says, the days will come upon you when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you.

And they will not leave one stone upon another because you did not know the time of your visitation. and by 70 A.D., Titus, an emissary general of sorts for the Roman army, trashes Jerusalem.

You can read about it in Josephus, the historian concerning the wars, where they burned the buildings and the temple courts, where the blood flowed from the temple, actually extinguishing fire as it went, so much was the destruction of the day, where the Romans carried standards into the sanctuary at the east gate and sacrificed to them, when they took all the temple, goods and treasures, the price of gold, when they executed all the priests, the destruction of Jerusalem.

[23 : 56] Let me help you this morning. let me put it where you can get it. You need to make an informed response on who Jesus is and why he came and what it means for you.

Let me put it simply. Tell me what you stopped to celebrate and you will have shown me the window to your heart's love.

and this is what it is to become a Christian and to walk as a Christian is to be willing to line the road and hail the cross carrying Christ as he prepares to pass you by.

to be captivated by him, to fall in behind him, to live in his kingdom, to walk in his ways, to establish his peace, to commit yourself to the lowest of the low even as he has done.

Did you know that Lent is just around the corner a week from Wednesday, next, 18th of February, 40 days where historically the church begins to consider what it is to make that walk.

[25 : 29] We are entering the season where I can say to you, here he comes. Here he comes. humble, impoverished, giving his life for all.

Do you see him? Do you see him in your mind not striding forth behind some great chariot of steeds, but being interrupted in his day with the everyday concerns of the men and women around him, his kingdom ways?

Do you see him stopping along the way to minister the kingdom of God? I don't see him triumphant.

him. I don't see him with his painted toga and laurels upon his head.

I see him as servant to all, seeking and saving, spending and being spent. here he comes.

[26 : 54] Does your heart truly desire him? our heavenly father, this most ironic of all entrances should make us pause as we stand on the ridge and may our own road from this day forth possess the downward motion of humble obedience singing praises to him as we follow in his way.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.