

The Weeping King

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- [0 : 0 0] Luke chapter 19. Now, typically we go through a book of the Bible, and last week we finished the book of Colossians. And because next week is Easter, we're spending this week and next week looking at Jesus' final hours.
- So, we're going to read a story that you're familiar with. It's the story of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. And this probably took place on a Sunday, like today.
- And Jesus was crucified six days later on the Friday. And his death is, we call it a humiliation. It's a terrible event.
- And yet, when Jesus goes up to Jerusalem, he's honored like a king. And this is a story that, probably because we celebrate it often on Palm Sunday, it's a story that we all know really well.
- You were taught this since you were a child if you grew up in church. And so, I imagine that you can picture this scene really well inside of your mind. You can imagine Jesus walking up the road, sitting on a donkey.
- [1 : 1 2] The kids coming to wave their palm branches for Jesus. And the one question I want you to consider as we open this passage is, in your image of what's going on in this scene, what is Jesus doing?
- Is he waving at the kids? Is he smiling? Does he have a triumphant look on his face? What is Jesus doing? And that's a question worth thinking about as we come to this passage.
- So, we're going to read Luke chapter 19, starting at verse 28 and reading to verse 44. And when Jesus had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.
- When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two 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 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 were sent went away and found it just as he had told them.
- [2 : 2 6] And as they were untying the colt, its owners 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. As he was drawing near, 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. And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, Teacher, rebuke your disciples. He answered, I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.
- And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace.

But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the day 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.

[3 : 40] And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation. Amen. This is God's word.

So Mark, Matthew, Mark, and Luke each tell the story of the triumphal entry. And John, they each tell the story of the triumphal entry. And when you read each account, they're all telling the same story, but every account is different because they're all emphasizing different parts of what's going on here in this last moment.

Some of the differences are trivial. So, for instance, did you notice in this passage, we call this Palm Sunday because of the triumphal entry, but there's no palms in Luke's account. The only thing that people do is they lay their clothes as Jesus comes along on his donkey.

But Luke also makes a point of showing one other moment in the triumphal entry that none of the other gospel writers talk about, which is that when Jesus actually catches sight of Jerusalem as he's making the triumphal entry, he begins to weep.

And so you think about the theological picture that Luke is painting for us, about what he's telling us about Jesus. On the one hand, he's saying, it's never been more clear that this man is the king that Israel has been waiting for.

[5 : 01] There's an Old Testament prophecy that any Jew would have thought about whenever they saw Jesus walking up to Jerusalem. And it's Zechariah 9.9, which says this, You know, if you were to ask somebody, why is Jesus going up to Jerusalem on a donkey?

You could say, well, because he's so humble. That's just the kind of guy that Jesus is. He's a humble guy, so he rides a donkey. And that's kind of true because it says here in the prophecy that he would be humble. But really, the main point is he's going up on a donkey because that's what the prophesied king would do one day.

And you know that the people in Jerusalem or outside of Jerusalem understand that that's exactly what all this means because they take their cloaks off.

And as he goes along on his donkey, they lay cloaks down for him to walk on. And we know from the Old Testament, there's a famous scene in 2 Kings where the people decide to declare a man named Jehu king.

And when they declare him king, they immediately put their cloaks on the ground for him to walk across. And it's their way of saying, all right, this is our king. And that's exactly what the people are doing in this scene.

[6 : 27] So Luke is saying to us, first of all, this man, Jesus, is not just a good teacher. He is a king. And the people around him know that. And he's going to Jerusalem as a king.

But the moment he establishes that fact for you and me, what does he do? He shows us that king weeping. He shows us that whatever it means for Jesus to be a king, he's a king who weeps.

And that if you want to understand Jesus, you've got to understand why he is a weeping king in this scene. And so we're going to look at two things this morning. We're going to look at what the tears of Jesus teach us about what it means that Jesus is king.

So we're going to look at the peace of the king and secondly, the pity of the king and what Jesus's tears show us about those two things, the peace of the king and the pity of the king.

Now, first, the peace of the king. You see, Jesus talks about peace down in verse 42. He says, he's looking at Jerusalem. So he's not actually talking to anyone. He's talking to himself kind of, but he's addressing Jerusalem.

- [7 : 32] And he says, would that you, he's lamenting, even you had known on this day the things that would make for peace. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hen you on every side.
- And he goes on to talk about how bad this one day will be one day. And he goes on. Now, what is he talking about here? Well, Jesus is in, he's in prophet mode right here.
- And he's talking about a day that was actually going to come about 40 years from this moment in about 70 AD when the emperor, the great Roman emperor Titus was going to march on Jerusalem.
- And Titus laid siege to the whole city almost at the exact same time of year. And that meant that it was during Passover. And that meant that it was especially horrible.
- Because the city was packed with Jews more than it normally had. And what Titus did when he got to Jerusalem is he laid siege, just like Jesus is talking about here.
- [8 : 35] And he starved the people out. And when he was finally able to get into the city, he killed tens of thousands of Jews. He tore the temple to the ground. The Jews who did survive were taken away into slavery.
- And Jesus weeps here in his moment of triumph. In the triumphal entry, he weeps here because he's thinking about that day. And it is so certain to him and it's so real to him that he weeps as if it's already happening.
- And for Jesus, the destruction of Jerusalem 40 years from now is it's inextricably linked to the moment that we just read about, the triumphal entry.
- And you see why. It's because he says, all these things will happen to you because you did not know the day of your visitation.
- You know, when Jesus is talking here, he's doing something that prophets do all the time. You know, prophets come along in the Old Testament and they say, listen, bad things are about to happen.
- [9 : 40] Sometimes they say bad things are about to happen. Bad things are about to happen to you, Israel. Assyria is going to come or Babylon is going to come and they're going to destroy the country. And the point of a prophet, one of the points of a prophet is always that, you know, they're saying bad things are going to happen and there will always be a historical explanation.
- You know, why did Assyria conquer Israel? Well, because the Assyrians were strong. They were mighty. And the prophet is always the one who comes and says, oh, but there's so much more going on here. Why did Assyria conquer Israel?
- Because God's people left God. And so God wasn't there to protect the people. And that's exactly what Jesus is doing here. He's saying one day the Romans are going to come and they're going to conquer Jerusalem.
- And it won't be because the Roman army was so strong. It'll be because you didn't see, you didn't see your king when he was standing right in front of you. You did not know the day of your visitation.
- That's how he puts it. Now, what does that mean? You didn't know the day of your visitation. He's saying that what makes Jesus weep in this moment is that he is the king of God's people and he's coming to the city of God's people and they don't know it.
- [10 : 53] They look at him and they can't see who he is. All they see is a poor man riding a donkey, just like everybody else is doing. And Jesus laments because he knows that to reject the king, the true king, is to opt for no peace.
- Because Jesus says, if only you knew the things that made for peace. And that thing that made for peace was seeing Jesus and who he was. And if you read Luke, one of the things you find out about Luke is Luke does a really good job of showing Jesus' heart.

And this is actually the second time that Jesus has gone to Jerusalem and stood looking over it and cried and lamented. The other time is in Luke 13 where he says this.

He says, Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills prophets and stones those who are sent to it. How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings and you were not willing.

So this is a lament, but it's good news for you and me in the sense that it puts into contrast what Jesus is actually offering you and me. What he offers is peace.

[12 : 06] What he offers for those who can see that he's the king is, it is real, genuine, lasting peace. And that's why Jesus weeps. Now, you and I, in just a few minutes, we're gonna sing a song.

I think we're gonna sing Crown Him With Many Crowns. We're gonna talk about how important it is that Jesus is our king. And you've gotta ask yourself, why is that actually important? Why is that good news to say that Jesus is my king?

Because a lot of times the language of peace sounds really foreign to us, right? Because, you know, I've never been to war. Some of you have, and you know the price of peace and you know the power of having peace.

But for so many of us, we live in an age of peace, especially compared to any other human age before us. But instinctively, I think we also know at the same time, right, that there's more to peace than the absence of war.

And ironically, isn't it true that many of us have known peace for our whole lives, and yet we would also say, at the same time, I feel like I have no peace.

[13 : 15] This is illustrated for me beautifully on a Wednesday night series that our church did years ago when I was at First Press Jackson. And, you know, turnout on Wednesdays can be hit or miss. But I'll never forget the time that we did a lecture series on anxiety, we had a packed house.

You know, you announce you're doing a sermon series on sin. You're not going to get a great turnout, but you announce a series on anxiety, and the room is full. And it's because, you know, we live in an age where people, as we get less and less religious, people may say, you know, I'm not comfortable with the language of sin and sinner.

But whether you're religious or not, people are totally okay saying, I struggle with anxiety. And, you know, whether there's a God or not, what I do know is, I don't have peace.

I am an anxious person. And the Bible actually says something to that. Because when the Bible talks about peace, it's hardly ever talking about the mere absence of war.

You know the Old Testament word for peace, even if you don't know hardly any Hebrew, it's the word shalom, right? And shalom doesn't just mean no war.

[14 : 27] What it means is peace in the fullest extent that you could have it. It's total contentment. You know, it's like, you know, when you're sitting on your front porch on a Saturday like yesterday, and the weather is absolutely perfect, and maybe you've got, you know, that great meal, it's that kind of peace.

And what the Bible always says to us is the promise from God when we finally do have the great king as our king is not just that you won't have to go to battle anymore.

It's that you will know contentment on a level that you've never imagined before. That's what we mean when we say Christ is our king is we're saying, this is the one that we look to to give us peace, peace from our anxiety, the kind of peace that can even live in the midst of a lot of trials and tribulations.

And yet you can still say, there's a contentment that I have that can only be explained by the gospel. And, but you've got to see where that peace finds its most, its deepest grounding because the real problem Jesus is pointing out in this passage is not the Roman army, right?

That's just a symptom of the problem. You know, he weeps and he says, listen, the Romans are going to come one day and they're going to destroy Jerusalem. But, but at the same time, he's saying that's not the real problem. The real problem is that we as a people were alienated from God.

[15:49] That's the story of humanity. And if we're ever going to find the deepest peace that the Bible offers us, Jesus is saying, well, you've got to see your king. You've got to see who Jesus really is.

And how do you do that? How do you see Jesus as king? Well, the first step, whether you're new to Christianity or a long time Christian, the answer is the same.

It is just to see Jesus as king. It's to keep your eyes on him and remind yourself of what it means that he calls himself our king and our Lord. You know, I couldn't help but laugh a little bit when I read this passage because did you see what, what Jesus said to the Pharisees?

They see Jesus as a great teacher and they tell Jesus to tell his disciples to be quiet because they're worshiping Jesus as Lord. And Jesus says, what does he say to them?

He says, even if these were silent, the stones would cry out. And I thought to myself, you know what he's really telling the Pharisees is that they are dumb as a box of rocks.

[16:57] They're dumber than a box of rocks because Jesus is saying, you know, even the rocks would cry out and worship me. They're more likely to worship me than you Pharisees have been. And that means that they're wiser than you are.

And so Jesus looks at us and he says, see me as your king. See me as the source of your peace. Sunday, Sunday at its best is us coming before the throne of God and saying, Lord, I've tried to find my peace in so many other places this week.

Will you now help me to find my peace in you? Will you remind me again? That's why he gives us one day in seven to keep coming back to say, remind me who I am in you and who you are for me.

So the tears of Jesus here, they show us the peace of the king. Why would Jesus weep? It's because he knows what he has to offer that the people can't see in Jerusalem, okay? But there's a second thing the tears show us, which is the pity of the king.

Think about it, how amazing it is that Jesus looks at Jerusalem and who does he have pity on? It's not his disciples who will go astray, even though he does pity them.

[18:10] He has pity on his enemies. He has pity on the people that he looks at and who he knows will not turn to him, who he knows will not recognize him as king. And a lot of times in life, isn't it true, we live with a chip on our shoulder.

Someone doesn't see us for who we think that we should be recognized for. They don't see our giftedness. They don't see our talent. They don't see how valuable we are to the company or on the team. And we get a chip on our shoulder and we say to ourselves, what motivates me is just simply to prove that person wrong.

You know, there's a really famous documentary. I won't mention the name of the person because I don't want to embarrass. Well, it's nobody here. It's a famous sports player. But there's a famous sports documentary that recently came out where this player was the best in his league.

And one of the fascinating things about the documentary was that it was clear that what motivated him almost more than anything was revenge, was proving other people wrong.

And he was so addicted to the feeling of humiliating others on the court that he would actually invent stories where he would say, he would invent, he would imagine that someone on the other team had said something about him.

[19 : 30] And he would stew on that for weeks so that by the time the game came around, it was, to him, it was almost as if they had really said it. And he would use that motivation to avenge his honor.

And that's what we do. That's what we do with people. When we're not respected, when we're not loved, so often we want to say to ourselves, I'll show them. How different is Jesus here? What does he feel when he looks at the people that he knows are going to reject him?

Pity, sorrow. What is pity? Pity is sorrow at the sufferings of another person. That's all that it is. And Jesus feels pity for his enemies.

He feels sorry for them that he knows they're going to suffer. And that doesn't, it doesn't make their sin any less real. You know, he both rebukes them and pities them at the same time.

Because, he says, if you would just turn, if you would know my pity, then you would turn to me and you could find true life. You know, when you read the Gospels, one of the things that theologians will always point out is what makes Luke's Gospel unique is that Luke, more than any other Gospel writer, emphasizes the outsider, the outcast.

[20 : 45] Luke is the Gospel writer who always wants to highlight how Jesus went to the one who no one else would go to. So it's in Luke's Gospel that we have the woman who was caught in adultery.

It's in Luke's Gospel we have the parable of the Pharisee who says, God, I thank you that I'm not like this man and the other man who actually understands the mercy of Jesus and he says, have mercy on me, a sinner.

It's in this same chapter, Luke chapter 19. Do you see how the chapter opens with a wee man called Zacchaeus? And the whole point of Zacchaeus is that he is someone that was unlovable.

He was a traitor to his own people. He was a thief. And what does Jesus do? He comes to him and he offers him what? His pity. He offers his compassion, his love, and invites Zacchaeus.

He invites himself into Zacchaeus' house. And I think Luke puts that story here right before the triumphal entry for a purpose because Zacchaeus, the tax collector who was so far from God, he understands Jesus' pity and he understands his need for Jesus' pity.

[21 : 53] And then what does Jesus do? He goes to the city of Jerusalem, the religious place, the place where if anybody was going to see the king when he came, it'd be Jerusalem, right?

And no one sees the king there. No one recognizes the king. In fact, you may have in your mind that when Jesus gets to Jerusalem, that's where the triumphal entry happens.

It's the people in the city who are worshiping Jesus. And that's not true. Almost every gospel writer makes it sound like it's the townspeople, the villagers who come out and praise Jesus as they're going to Jerusalem.

And then when Jesus actually gets into the city, what's the response of the people? They all say, who is this man? Who is he? He's just a teacher. They don't know who he is. And it's this tragic irony that people like the woman caught in adultery and the Zacchaeuses of the world are the ones who see the king.

And Jerusalem, the city of God's people, they're blind to it. And I think there's a lesson there, which is that so often if you have grown up in church like me, you want to be the one that has pity.

[23 : 01] You want to be the one that goes out into the world and says, I'm going to show pity to my neighbor. And that's good because we see a world that's suffering and it needs help. But sometimes that also, if we're not careful, that can go hand in hand with the feeling of I'm the one who doesn't need pity.

I'm God's helper sent to show pity to others. I don't need other people's pity and I don't need God's pity because I go to church. I pray. I pay my taxes. And what does Jesus show us here?

Every single one of us, for us to truly see the gospel for what it is, we have to see that we are pitiful. That's why Luke is also the one that gives us the story of the prodigal son.

And he's effectively saying every single one of us is the prodigal son. We're the son who ran away from home. We're the one who left God. And the reason that news doesn't crush us is because of who God is.

We are pitiable and we're not crushed because we look at Jesus and Jesus shows himself with his tears here to be the one who is full of pity. What happens in the story of the prodigal son?

[24 : 12] The son comes home, but what does the father do? Do you remember? He runs out to meet the son. He goes towards his sinful son, not away from him. And that's exactly what Jesus is doing here.

His final hours, what is he doing? He's walking towards the city that's rejected him. And he's gonna give his life for these people. And all the way to the end, on the cross, what does he say?

Father, forgive these people for they know not what they do. He looks at the thief on the cross next to him. This is also Luke that tells this story. And says, today you will be with me in paradise.

All along the way, Luke is saying, do you see the pity of Jesus Christ? That he would come to someone like you and me. And the good news is his pity.

The good news is that we need him. And that he offers his pity to you and I. You know, I often use this quote, some paraphrase of it. I think Tim Keller was the first one who said it. But he basically said that the gospel says to us, you are more sinful than you ever dare believe.

[25 : 15] That's the gospel. You're more sinful than you ever dare believe. And at the same time, you are more loved than you ever dared hope. Do you see the pity of Jesus this morning?

Do you see the pity that he offers if we would just turn to him? Let's pray. Heavenly Father, as we look towards the cross, help us to come to the cross with empty hands and yet rejoicing.

Just like these people rejoiced as they saw their king go to Jerusalem because they knew that their king was going to Jerusalem to accomplish mighty things for his people.

Help us to see that and to rejoice in it this morning. In your son's name we pray. Amen.