

Journey to the Cross: Palm Sunday

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Preacher: Scott Liddell

[0 : 0 0] Well good morning church. Melissa has her optimism and I for to usher in spring and I am trying with a short sleeve shirt. I don't think either one of those moves the needle on weather patterns. Only Lord can do that but nonetheless. If you're a guest with us today we are in the middle of a sermon series where we are looking at the last journey to the cross where we are looking at Jesus's last journey that began in Luke chapter 9 and that begins and concludes in Luke chapter 19 is which where we will be today. In that journey we read in Luke chapter 9 that Jesus sets his face toward Jerusalem. It is now time for him to die a death for sin. It is now time for him to make payment for sin. It's now time for him to take the wrath of God that all who believe in him could be set free. It's now the time and he sets his face toward Jerusalem beginning in

Luke chapter 9 concluding today. So today we're going to conclude his last journey and we will begin his last week. So this is preparing us for Easter. We will on Easter morning his resurrection. We will celebrate that and Good Friday and so what are we going to do for the last several next Sundays? For the last for the next several Sundays. Today we're going to talk about what happened on the Sunday preceding his death. What happened on next week will be Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and then Good Friday we will recognize what happened on that dreadful day and then celebrate on Easter Sunday. So that's what we have ahead of us over the next several weeks and to get into the message today I want to share with you a story but this story could be told with different actors, different names, different people but the but the principle of what I'm talking about has happened millions of times throughout history. The story goes something like this. Let's assume you were to ask a young man on a college campus and he were to ask you, you were sharing your faith with him and he were to ask you why should I follow Jesus and you were to respond and you say well because Jesus said in John 10:10 that I have come that you might have life and you may have life more abundant and Jesus has come not only that he will give you you can have peace with God your sins are forgiven for those who believe in his life death and resurrection you can have a relationship with the Lord and he can give you peace that surpasses all understanding and you'll have a purpose for your life unlike any other living for his glory the one who made you and that person says that's fine and it begins a relationship with the person and then there's a Christian concert you go to the Christian concert together and he thinks well Christians are not all that weird and they worship they sing songs to their Lord and afterward though there's an appeal for salvation and so he goes forward during the concert and he talks to someone who is upfront and the person talks to him about repenting of sins and accepting

Jesus as Savior and he leads the person through a sinner's prayer but in subsequent weeks he the counselor that would met him down front at the concert said you need to get plugged into a church and so he attends a church and and he and he and he begins to hear God's word taught over him and he he finds out that there's also cute girls that attend church and he he begins to attend church for a while but then he's confronted with some bad news his mother falls ill and she in fact increases in her illness and she ultimately dies of cancer and he watches his mother fade away slowly and painfully and in his sorrow he turns to some old friends and he's carried away with some old habits into some form of addiction and he meets a different girl and one of his old friends and she gives herself willingly to him they fall into sin and his

Christian experience begins to fade into the background and this young lady begins to come the center of his life and they if you were to talk to him then this is what he would say he would say well I've tried Jesus and he has helped me for a while and if it works for you that's great but now this is just kind of where I'm at and that's how he would summarize his Christian experience and he's summarize the relationship with the Lord at that time and what can what contributed to this young man's spiritual defection if you will and I would say he had two faulty assumptions and again that story of what I just said could be told a million different ways with a million different scenarios and what happens what what is at the root perhaps of that spiritual defection first I would say this he saw truth as personal and subjective and not absolute and objective if it makes you feel better and if it works for you then it must be true and if something else works better than try it and and and the test of spiritual truth then is how it makes you feel and whether it works or not and if this thing of trusting Jesus is yours then that's cool but it has worked for many people but it doesn't work for me and living a licentious life and doing these things and living for myself that that just fits better so the first false assumption is that truth is defined as personal and subjective the second faulty assumption is that personal happiness is the most important thing in life that God if he is there he exists to make me happy and if Jesus can make me feel good and I'll give him a try and if Jesus does not make me feel good and seems too hard then I'll try something else and man's happiness not

God and his glory is what matters the most and you may be wondering Scott what on earth does this have to do with Jesus's triumphal entry that Josh just read as our text for today it matters because I submit to you those who we find in the account of Jesus's triumphal entry all had reasons for following Jesus and he did not meet their expectation of who Jesus should have been they missed the ultimate purpose of why he was going to Jerusalem to die for sin so for Jesus why was he going to Jerusalem it signaled his official presentation to the nation that he is king and he is the Christ the Messiah and while he knew he would ultimately be ejected and he knew he would ultimately be crucified that's why he was in Jerusalem and that's why he publicly allowed people to praise him and say blessed are you the king of Israel who comes in the name of the Lord that's why he was there but the 12 and the other followers of Jesus saw him as

[8 : 20] Messiah and King but mistakenly thought that he would set up a rule and a throne of David immediately and he would usher in his physical earthly kingdom at that time and the crowds they saw him perhaps as in political terms and they were enamored with Jesus's miracles and especially his recent raising of Lazarus from the dead and they hope that Jesus would lead a revolt and kick out Rome and Jewish leaders they were frustrated with the acclaim of Jesus that he was receiving and because that he threatened their power base and you say well Scott how do you know this that Jesus failed to meet their expectations well we'll see later through this week that one of his disciples will betray him another will deny him his followers will be scattered and confused and the crowds will have changed their shouts from Hosanna to crucify him and why why this change why the failure in part it is because various people had the wrong concept concept of who Jesus is and what he came to do and they were following him for what they thought he could that he could do for them and I am saying that is all too true for many and there is a lot that this passage has in common with that theme so today my encouragement is let's let's not have a wrong concept of who

Jesus is and discover reasons in this passage why we should follow Jesus not because of what he can do for us but for who he is and what he has done for us die a death none of us could die to make payment for sin to consume the wrath of God and set us free liberating us from sin for all who believe in him so let us look now at our text so why must we follow Jesus Jesus we find in this account that he is the Lord of authority he is the Lord of authority he is sovereign in this sovereign this story he inaugurates the week with that leads to Jesus's arrest and trial and crucifixion and it conveys a picture that he is in absolute control of his circumstances Jesus is absolute control of his circumstances he will not allow allow the the cheering crowd to deter him he will not be intimidated by the threats of the Pharisees he lived under the precise timetable of the Heavenly Father Jesus knew the hour was approaching his hour if you remember and you recall that Jesus commonly said my hour has not yet come through his public ministry he would often say to people he would heal and then he would say my hour please be quiet do not tell anyone about this why because my hour has not yet come we read the first time that that and what is this hour it is the hour of his death or the the hour of his ultimate rejection when he would make payment for sin in his death and in that moment make eternal life available to all who believe that's his hour if you remember the first time that that hour phrase is used it's in his first public ministry we find him in

Cana of Galilee and that Cana of Galilee Cana of Galilee he his family is there and there is something tragic that occurs and that is the the the wedding and all for all of the guests there's not enough wine and so his mother Jesus's mother makes a petition of him and says Jesus please turn this water into wine or do something about this turn and and Jesus's response to his mother is woman why do you involve me my hour has not yet come you see Jesus is pacing when he's willing to be revealed as Messiah as the Christ and it's not yet and so despite his attempts to keep who he is becoming too public the reaction of the disciples is very telling that day remember miracles give evidence of the the message and the messenger so as he healed it gave evidence that he is the

Messiah and the disciples who he recently in the previous chapters of the Gospel of John just came to believe in him or came to follow him Jesus said follow me follow me the belief the disciples began to follow Jesus and this is what after that miracle even though his time had not come notice the response of the disciples that says and his disciples believed him so here are these new disciples and they just began to follow Jesus he does this miracle he says my time is not yet let me pace when according to the Father's timetable when I am going to reveal myself as my hour then has come but it's not yet but the disciples they believed in him they believed him because of that miracle on this Palm Sunday Jesus staged a public demonstration to show the people and the rulers that he is the Messiah he allows them to publicly recognize him he is

Messiah but he is not the kind of Messiah they were expecting the chief priests in the Sanhedrin were looking for Jesus and they had given the command to the crowds that if anyone knew him or knew where he was that they should report him to them and that he should be arrested Jesus bold action infuriates them and led him to the arrest in his crucifixion and at that very moment the Passover lambs that were slaughtered in Jerusalem and in the temple were to be a fulfillment of his offering or were occurring at the same time of his death on the cross offering himself as the Lamb of God for sinners even this day of the triumphal entry was a fulfillment of God's prophetic timetable we will look at that here in a moment Jesus was in control of every event Jesus was in command of the whole situation and he is the Lord who had need of a cult and he is in control of even his need for a cult and we will see that in a moment so to be a faithful follower of Christ he is even Lord over evil things that happen in this world he will work all things together for his glory and for the good of his saints Jesus is not a well-meaning reformer who is tragically murdered because he made a mistake in picking disloyal disciples or who betrayed him no no he laid down his life willingly and of his own initiative while the crucifixion of Jesus the Son of God was the most horrible crime imaginable and those who did it are responsible for their sin that sin did not thwart the sovereign plan of God but rather fulfilled it listen to what the disciples said in Acts chapter 4 the disciples after Pentecost they say this for truly in this city speaking of Jerusalem they were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus whom you anointed both Herod and Pontus Pilate along with the Gentiles and the other peoples of Israel to do whatever your hand and your purpose predestined to occur your being God the Father whatever your hand and your purpose predestined to occur that's what occurred in

[16:57] Jerusalem during this week and nothing can thwart God's plan and so we see that one of the reasons that we follow Jesus is because Jesus is Lord of all authority everything is under his command he is sovereign the in control the second thing we see is he is Lord of creation look with me in verse 30 and 31 Jesus says to some of his disciples go into the village in front of you where on entering you will find a cult tied and 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 that Jesus is Lord over creation it is evident in the fact that he rode on an unbroken cult now I only worked on a ranch for a few years through my junior high high school and college years I'm no horseman for sure rode on a few horses but that's I have a very limited experience but I will say this I'm not man enough to get on an unbroken horse I know that much the fact that this cult no one had sat on it serves two purposes he is Lord of creation he is Lord of creation his miraculous power over creation in this cult that he even spoke into existence by the word of his power this cult did not buck Jesus off it has two purposes I see is this there's a spiritual significance and that this that this cult is unbroken in the Old Testament both objects and animals could be used for two purposes sacred and common purpose and it was unthinkable to use a tool or something that was used for a common purpose in the tabernacle or in the temple and you would not want to do that for example you could have tongs to have touch coals of fire but if you were you were to take those tongs that you use in your household and you were to use it in the tabernacle and temple and you were to use that for a sacred purpose that is unthinkable so the fact that this is an unbroken cult that this is a cult that had never been written before it serves as a indicator to us this animal was suitable for sacred purposes it wasn't ever used for a common purpose to this time and since this animal was used by the Messiah to ride in the city of

David it had to be an animal which had never been written by man only the Lord of creation could do it and Jesus did if Jesus is the all-mighty creator then he can certainly then we can certainly follow him the cult received Jesus on its back without bucking but it is sad to see that his own people in Jerusalem would not receive him the cult did the people did not perhaps as with day Balaam's donkey this donkey that Jesus rode was perhaps more discerning than all the people if you want to have faith and be a faithful follower of Jesus we must recognize that Jesus is Lord of creation of this Jesus John wrote all things came into being through him and apart from him nothing came into being that has come into being Jesus is a Lord of creation we are not here as a result of some random chance plus trillions of years the personal God created us and has a purpose for our lives both in time and in eternity and we realize that purpose as we follow him Jesus is the Lord of authority we also find that he's the Lord of creation and thirdly we see that Jesus is Lord of prophecy there are three prophecies basically that I can find in this passage to indicate to us the things of old that were written of him he is fulfilling there are three of them that I can find easily in this passage first in Psalm 118 we find that the praise that they sang is a fulfillment of prophecy when they say in verse 38 the crowds who are laying the palm branches before the cult as Jesus enters into Jerusalem they they are they are singing they're singing Hosanna blessed is the king who comes in the name of the

Lord peace in heaven and glory to the highest that comes from Psalm 118 and this Psalm is sung by pilgrims going up to Jerusalem for the feast that refers to Jesus the cornerstone that is rejected by the Jewish leaders and to the day the Messiah that God has made the Hebrew word Hosanna which we don't find here in Luke but in Matthew's account of the same triumphal entry we do find the word Hosanna that word Hosanna says means do save Hosanna Jesus do save the crowds are calling out for Jesus to save them now they may have political terms of what they are thinking about that but salvation is come through Jesus and they are exclaiming they recognize that this event is happening in fulfillment of prophecy and so they proclaim this Psalm to Jesus quoting from Psalm 118 Lord save secondly the fact that he comes in on a cult is a fulfillment of prophecy and Zechariah 9 9 it says this Zechariah proclaims greatly rejoice oh daughter of Jerusalem behold your king is coming to you he is just and endowed with salvation humble mounted on a donkey even the cult and a full of a donkey this prophecy refers to the Messiah in his humiliation the word humble in Zechariah 9 9 point points to the one who is not only humble but also one who is oppressed and he was afflicted by evil men and after the time of Solomon donkeys were considered lowly animals to be ridden only by persons of lowly rank and positions after the time of Solomon kings and warriors and important people rode on horses but the donkey was considered a burden bearer an animal of peace not an animal of war and by riding on a donkey

Jesus is showing himself to be the Messiah that is prophesied of in Zechariah 9 9 not the exalted political Messiah of war that the people expected in Jesus's first coming so we see that Jesus is the Lord of prophecy by the praise that is given to him we see that he's a Lord of prophecy by the cult that he is riding on and thirdly we see he is fulfilling prophecy by the day look with me in verse 42 would that you even you had known on this day the things that make for peace what is this day and why is it that Jesus in verse 39 and 40 when the Pharisee came to him and and said teacher rebuke your disciples for proclaiming you and recognizing you as Messiah make them be quiet Jesus and why does Jesus respond with I tell you that if they were silent even these stones would cry out why what is it about this day what is it about if everyone were not to recognize him on this day that the stones would cry out why because this is too is a fulfillment of prophecy the third prophecy and Daniel 9 24 through 27 I don't have time to demonstrate the calculations but in the 19th century a British man by Sir Robert Anderson showed that the Jesus's triumphal entry fulfilled the very day of prophecy of

Daniel 70 weeks and we won't get into all of that but Jesus is saying this is the time in fulfillment of prophecy that I must be recognized as Messiah and it's today it is the time when the appearance of the Messiah the Prince will show reveal himself so for us realizing that Jesus is Lord of prophecy should enable us to do some things it should enable us to persevere when we may wonder if history is running amok I don't know about you but sometimes I look at things and they're happening in the world and I think it's running amok so I have some encouragement turn off cable news quit becoming frenzied and stop worrying the Lord is the Lord of history the Lord is the Lord of prophecy things will happen on his time schedule you can take rest in that Psalm 2 says this the nation listen to this the nations may rage and the kings of the earth may take counsel together against the Lord and his anointed but he who sits in the heavens laughs at their puny attempts to cast off his rule since our God is sovereign over history bringing it right along on his schedule according to his prophetic timetable we can trust him in this we can submit him to him we can trust him even in our circumstances when they seem overwhelming Jesus is the Lord of authority he is the

[27 : 38] Lord of creation he is the Lord of prophecy and is he also he is also the Lord of judgment in verse 41 through 44 I said that he drew near and then he saw the city and 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 him you in on every side and tear you down to the ground and you and your children within you and they will not leave one stone upon another in you because you did not know the time of your visitation Luke predicts a terrible judgment that will come of Jerusalem in verse 41 you notice that he says that he wept over Jerusalem he wept over Jerusalem there are several times when Jesus weeps one of them one occasion is when he just before this he raises Lazarus from the dead but before he does that he weeps over his friend Lazarus but this word for weep is different in English we read the English word the same but in the Greek they're two different words one for

Lazarus is a kind of a quiet weeping it's a quiet sobbing but this one is a loud sobbing it's a cry of agony it's an ugly cry and Jesus is weeping and sobbing over the destruction that will become of Jerusalem because of the rejection of him as Messiah he does not delight in judgment but in mercy he is rich in mercy he is rich in kindness he is not willing that any should perish but all come to repentance he is slow to anger a bounding in love toward every sinner yet he is also a righteous judge and there is a mystery here and I like the way words words worth put it he says it this way Christ here proves his twofold nature by shedding tears as a man but for what he foretold as God judgment is coming God is not a God of love and grace not only a God of love and grace he is also a righteous God who has settled in his wrath against sin his day of grace is not forever Jerusalem's day of grace is rapidly ending and a time of terrible judgment was approaching and because they did not receive their time of visitation and received the Messiah God judged Jerusalem and in 70 AD under

Titus the Roman official the general he fulfilled this frightful prediction and if you read history of what happened in 70 AD when Titus the Roman general came and surrounded Jerusalem and made everything befall it is quite a horrific scene in history and Jesus prophesying of this that this is going to happen to you Jerusalem some day the same Messiah who came the first day first time writing on a humble donkey proclaiming peace will come again in great power but he's going to be writing a white horse of war to tread the winepress of his fierce wrath of God and on that day grace will be over and the time of judgment will have come what was true of the nations the nation of Israel and Jesus's day will become true of individuals in our day you can miss the time of God's gracious visitation right now he is calling you unto himself with the promise of grace but if you refuse to come and bow before the rightful

Lordship you will face an awful day of his judgment of before your sins JC Ryle observes that Christ's perfect knowledge of all these things should and this is a quote alarm sinners and awaken them to repentance the Lord Jesus knows everything about you why try to avoid him when he offers you a full pardon if you trust in him the day of judgment is coming but today is a day of grace today is a day when we see him writing on a donkey but there is a day that he will be coming and he'll be writing on a war horse and that age is over we should follow Jesus because he is the Lord of authority he is Lord of creation he is Lord of prophecy he is the Lord of judgment and he is also the Lord of salvation Jesus came the first time offering peace and that offer still stands until he comes again for judgment he offered himself as the Passover lamb if his blood is applied to your sins God will pass over you in the day of judgment and you will be safe his offer to you is peace with God through the forgiveness of sin on the cross Jesus satisfied the wrath of God for every sinner who trusts in him and on the cross the Christ the the offense to I'm sorry the cross of Christ is an offense to our proud and sinful hearts because we must lay aside any notion that we can save ourselves or we might be good enough to get into heaven we must admit that we are sinners who are in desperate need of a savior there are two wrong notions that keep many people out of heaven they usually go together the first people wrongfully believe that God is too loving to send decent moral people to hell most people can accept the fact that God will judge people like Hitler who are really evil but they can but they view God as being tolerant of normal sins that good law abiding folks like us commit but the Bible makes it clear that God is absolutely holy no sin will be tolerated in the day of judgment a single sin in thought in word indeed is enough to condemn a person to hell the second wrong notion is this that most of us are good enough to qualify for heaven sure we're only human we have our faults but we're not that bad like murderers or terrorists or rapists so we figure that the scales will tip in our direction when we stand before God because we were sincere and we meant well and even though we are not perfect but pretty good people do not qualify for the perfection of heaven it requires a perfect righteousness to get into heaven and the good news is Jesus has provided that for you on the cross if you have never accepted him today and believed in his sinless life his death for sin and his resurrection from the grave I encourage you to do that he did that on your behalf and mine so what was common about the first century followers of Jesus on this day of his triumphal entry what do we have in common I want to ask why do you follow

Jesus some of you may say honestly I follow Jesus because I'm hoping that he will heal my broken marriage or give me a happy home or fulfilling career I assume that he can do that but that is not a good enough reason to follow Jesus others say I'll follow Jesus because I want some help in my struggle for my emotional problems and I'm hoping that he can give me inner peace and joy well he can certainly do that but that is not an adequate reason to follow Jesus in fact following Jesus can also give you increased trials and persecution and what if Jesus did not meet your expectation do you see the truth in Jesus primarily as personal and subjective or absolute and objective do you have perhaps a faulty assumption that Jesus primarily exists for your personal happiness if so I can tell you what will occur it's the same thing that we read in our account here by the end of the week here some will deny him others will reject him others will leave him and others will write him off as a kook that's what will happen their main reason to follow

[37 : 24] Jesus is because he is Lord he is sovereign he is God there is none like him and he is Lord of authority he is Lord of creation he is Lord of prophecy he is Lord of judgment and he is Lord of salvation and I pray we would not follow Jesus be followers of Jesus for what he can do for us that we would follow Jesus because he has bought us with an incredible price he has forgiven us he is worthy of worship he is worthy of praise because of who he is and we can trust him I pray we would follow him to worship him and be about his life mission not ours let's pray we love you Lord thank you for an opportunity today to worship you to sing praises to you to hear from your word alright thank you for this account in scripture where you recognize that your time had come your timetable had been fulfilled it was now time for people to publicly recognize you as Messiah and you allowed them to do that so wonderfully fulfilling prophecy I pray that today we would willingly and freely and always recognize you not just today but today and forevermore and say you are caught and I am not you are with fall you're worth following not for you to fulfill my desires or meet my needs because I love you what you have done for me in the forgiving of sin is too great I follow you because of what you have done for me already and paying the penalty of sin we can give you nothing and you have given us everything but we give ourselves willingly as a living sacrifice to you Lord our lives to follow you all of the days of our life because you are Lord and you are sovereign thank you so much for amen