

Christ's Tragic Entry to Jerusalem

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Preacher: Pastor Kenoyer

[0 : 0 0] Amen. Habits are hard things to break, and after preaching for 35 years and taking my watch off, which! seldom means much of anything, and putting it on the pulpit kind of to remind myself! of where I am now that I wear a Fitbit that keeps track of my heart rate never anything else. It's like, I just take it off out of habit, and I put it in my pocket, and I hope that this is accurate. Let me ask you to pray for me this coming Thursday at 3 o'clock. I will be preaching the funeral service for my son's father-in-law. In case you wonder, Tim Knoyer loves weddings and loves funerals. Here's why. God in His providence gives me a captive audience to which I may freely and joyfully proclaim the gospel. And in some cases, that venue is the only time people ever hear the truth.

God in His providence to the Lord. And in some cases, I may be praying for you to pray for me at 3, and that's Jesus. So pray for me at 3, Thursday. Pray for me this morning because I need the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

But there's much in the text. Let's pray together. Father, the prophet Zechariah rightly said under the prompting of the Spirit of God that apart from you, it can't be done in the sense that not by might nor by power, but my spirit saith the Lord.

And I ask that you would work this morning that the Lord Jesus Christ, who came into the world to be the Savior of sinners, would be the one that is supremely adored, that the ambition and affection of our souls would be Jesus, and that as a result of our attending to the Scriptures, as we are reminded in 2 Corinthians chapter 3, that our hearts and lives the way we think would be affected, and that we through your Spirit would grow to be more like Christ, that our behavior, our attitudes, our relationships, our conduct at work, the things that we think would all be marked by the sensitivity we have to the character and Word of Christ.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. I want you to think with me just for a moment at the start, and it has tremendous bearing on the passage.

[3 : 5 1] I want you to think with me just clearly, quietly. Here's what I want you to do. I want you to think of some of the thoughts you've had already this morning that you would prefer no one else knows about.

I want you to think about some of the attitudes you've had towards other people.

I want you to think about where your eyes have been that nobody else knows. I want you to think about where your eyes have been.

I want you to think of your discontentment you've had with some of the circumstances that God has allowed. I want you to think of the things you've thought about saying that age and discretion have kept you from saying.

Practically speaking, I think one of the things that I will first enjoy a great deal about heaven is that I will not deal with sin anymore.

[5 : 3 2] I don't know about you. But Tim Knoyer is fully persuaded that the biggest problem he has in life is himself.

And that the biggest battle I have is with sin. So I want you to think just with me about this for a moment.

And that's what we're going to be looking at today is Christ's tragic, not triumphal entry into Jerusalem. I just want you to imagine this morning that we are in a completely different political season than we actually are.

And you are stunned to hear that Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton both came to the platform and made an absolutely stunning statement that the greatest problem in our nation today is sin.

Is sin. I bring that up because if that were to happen, I want you to recognize that the media would be as apoplectic about that statement today as the entire nation of Israel was when Jesus came into Jerusalem on the week of his death on the donkey in complete contradiction to what those people thought they needed.

[7 : 32] Let me read the passage. John chapter 12 verse 12 The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem.

So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him crying out Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord even the King of Israel! Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it just as it is written Fear not daughter of Zion Behold your King is coming sitting on a donkey's colt.

Most of us have Bibles that probably break down the paragraphs etc.

and give us little headers to kind of let us know what that passage is about. Am I right? Most of you have that there? And I'm going to venture to guess that every one of you that have a header over that speaks of this as the triumphal entry.

Am I right? Triumphal. I not original with me but I have to tell you that over the years as I have as I've read this passage repeatedly and as I've thought about this passage I've always wondered at the triumph piece.

[9 : 11] I've got to tell you honestly where's the triumph piece? I mean it's a little off-putting to ride a donkey. How many of you have ever ridden a donkey?

The donkey crowd out here. Bill for real? It had to be a profoundly exhilarating experience right? Not really.

I you know just imagine that. And I've got to tell you as I think about the triumphal entry I'm kind of struck by the fact that it was just days after this that the entire crowd is screaming crucify him.

and I have to tell you I think honestly that little statement triumphal entry is a little off-putting to the truth. I don't want you to go take your magic marker or pen and line it out and write in tragic because you know it'll bleed through the other side and confuse you terribly so just kind of stay with it whatever you have.

But I want to break the passage into two parts. One dealing with Christ's intentional entrance into Jerusalem. As we take up verse 12 one of the things I want you to mark there is it says that a large crowd had come to the feast the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem.

[10 : 42] Christ's coming was not merely a rumor and it was not just an anticipation of the throng that gathered hoping that there may be a chance that they might see Jesus.

The fact of the matter is that in the perfect choreography of God's sovereign control of all details Lazarus falling sick and ultimately dying and then Jesus coming to Bethany and healing or raising him and then subsequently coming back again and engaging in a dinner party together was bringing Jesus within a two mile distance from the city in which he was going to die.

The fact that the crowd knew that he was coming into Jerusalem tells me that Jesus let his disciples know the fact and he let them know that it was appropriate to let other people know.

Now in case you're wondering what went through the disciples' minds when Jesus said to them hey we are going up to Jerusalem all you have to do is remember that the disciples had the attitude that when Jesus came this last time what was he going to do?

he had told them over and over again I'm going to Jerusalem I'm going to die and three days later I'm going to rise again. Did any of them understand or believe him?

[12 : 17] The answer is not in your life. The last recorded little intramural dispute! You know what I mean by intramural disputes it's when people who are believers have little snitty attitudes and argue about stupid things and here are the disciples what were they arguing with about the night of Jesus' betrayal?

Does anybody remember? With your eyes closed I can tell you they were arguing about who was going to be number one when Jesus pulled it off and came stomping into Jerusalem and put the smack down on the low life Romans and took over.

Now I can hear Peter. I'll be there. And you know what? The rest of you are going to be kind of my sidekicks as I run the show for Jesus.

James and John the sons of thunder you know what they were thinking? It's time. He held me back from frying them in the past but this is going to be the day when I bring fire from heaven and we're going to settle score.

I mean in their dramatic little pea brains you know they had it all worked out. Jesus let them know he was coming into town. And I want you to understand that Jesus really had no intention of people missing his great purpose.

[13 : 49] He planned his final journey into Jerusalem and set the stage perfectly. The grand plan of heaven for our salvation through the death of Christ on the cross for our sins and his resurrection had been structured and put together by God in eternity past with perfect placement and time and thought.

And it was not an accident that when Jesus arrived in Jerusalem that he arrived at the time of the celebration of the Passover. He had done an incredible miracle in raising Lazarus from the dead just so close to Jerusalem that the entire city was buzzing with the undeniable evidence of his power.

And you can understand how the entire city would have been enthusiastically expecting Jesus to finally come into town and clean house.

We do see something else in the text here that I want you to recognize and it's this. Jesus let people know exactly why he came. In eternity I want you to recognize that no one will ever be able to claim ignorance for the reason of their rebellion and rejection of Christ.

There are some of you sitting here today the truth of the matter is who do not know the Lord Jesus. There will be none of you that will ever be able to say I really didn't understand the clarity and truthfulness of the gospel which announces this all men stand justly condemned before a holy God their sin bringing eternal condemnation in hell Christ Jesus being the only remedy for their sins and here was Jesus coming into town and he made it very very clear that he was coming into town to be the sin bearer and he was coming into town with abject humility and tenderness and meekness I have been around donkeys growing up in India and I can tell you I have never I would rather walk than ride a donkey bony back so low slung to the ground that it's almost offensive to imagine straddling one insufferably stinky just a vile animal and yet an animal of burden and while

[16 : 50] John doesn't give us much background we find it in all the other gospels that when Jesus prepared to enter into Jerusalem he gave instructions to his disciples to go find a donkey the foal of a donkey actually it was a younger donkey that had never been broken to a saddle yet now any of you that have ever dealt with animals know that the process of moving from being saddle free to being saddled is a process that animals don't take too normally and enjoyably you don't just walk up to a donkey and say so what you know I've been thinking about the fact that I'm going to sling about a couple hundred pounds on your back and you're going to spend the rest of your low life just kind of walking around making me happy carrying what I don't want to carry and donkeys don't say good idea put it up there man I'm ready this donkey had never had the privilege of being saddled Jesus said to his disciples you walk into town and you find a donkey on the little foal and you bring the donkey to me and I'm going to ride it well they did what

Jesus said can you imagine what they were thinking triumphal entry right it's in your bibles and hey we're going to go get something for Jesus to ride had he ever ridden a donkey before this no indication that he did so he says to his disciples we're going into Jerusalem today go find me a ride in southern Ohio vernacular he asked for a pickup truck that was about 30 years old and it doesn't even have a bed in the back it just has pieces of board stuck back there how many have you ever seen those okay that's a real ride find me a donkey oh yeah okay we'll do it and here comes Jesus I gotta tell you I have to respect the fact that the crowd looked beyond the clear physical evidence of how Jesus was coming into town and they still got pretty enthused at the prospect of what they thought he was going to do you know if you were to read a little bit of ancient history you would understand that the rich and powerful rode in chariots or on horses or on camels donkeys were not their chosen means of travel now there's no doubt picking up there in verse 13 that as the people saw Jesus coming into sight they were so enthusiastic and expectant in what he was coming to do for them that they grabbed palm fronds and they laid their coats down in front of him and they were just enthused beyond imagination listen to what they said

Hosanna blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord even the king of Israel now what they expected Jesus to do was be the remedy for their political economic cultural circumstances they had suffered under first Greek rule and now under Roman rule and I want to tell you the Roman rule that they had endured was incredibly brutal it was taxation without representation it was abuse at every hand the Roman legion was absolutely disrespectful of the nation in every way conceivable and there was a visceral hatred for the

Romans who were in Jerusalem an entire nation hated them and so here comes Jesus into the city and the expectation of the throng was that Jesus was coming to be their political savior the word Hosanna means save now now question do you think they were thinking about their physical spiritual salvation or they were thinking about their political salvation which do you think they were concerned about if you were to ask most people and I actually made a note to myself and changed my mind I wondered if I were to ask you so what's the biggest problem you would like help with or if I could grant you one wish now that's a question I often use in counseling I will say to a person so if I could and I can't get that off your mind but if I could answer one request you have what would you like

I really wish you'd do something for my wife I've had them say that Pastor Saul you've had similar experiences right and Pastor Andrew you've had that Pastor Shear and Sarah are two weeks from finishing their counseling training and I can promise you Pastor if you ask that question people are going to come up with pretty simplistic problems that are you know solutions it's like well you know if you'd change my wife it'd be okay or you know hey I know Pastor you probably couldn't do that but if you'd write me a check for a million dollars that would really that help you see when they said save now that's what Hosanna means save now save now and they were shouting this that they were do it now do it now do it you get that and they were fired here comes

[23 : 08] Jesus I mean this is a guy who brings people back from the dead right I mean dealing with Rome is no big thing save now save now save now then they kind of added on to it blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord even the king of Israel they were all caught up in believing that Jesus was going to be their political savior and if you are going to do something for us go ahead and take care of the food stamp problem I mean after all he'd shown he could feed people right on a moment's notice and what about health care Christo care instead of Obamacare or whatever else the plan is it's like you know hey there will be healing stations and I'm going to do a little bit of training and put a little bit of power into all my disciples and they're going to scatter around a little clinics all over the place and whatever the problem is

I'll take care of it I mean the people were enthused at the prospect of Jesus taking care of their problems look at verse 14 and Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it just as it is written fear not daughter of Zion behold your king is coming sitting on a donkey's colt you know the thing I want you to understand here is as you look at this passage Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah 9 verse 9 and came in peace and humility it's interesting that as we read in John 12 verse 16 that after Christ's death and resurrection that the disciples understood this a little better look at verse 16 his disciples did not understand these things at first but when

Jesus was glorified then they remembered that these things had been written about him and it had been done to him there's another little interesting historical question here how many of you know when we celebrate Christ's death what day is it normally we call it good Friday I'm not here to raise the dispute or cause any angst in any of your hearts but there are some Bible scholars that suggest actually Jesus came into Jerusalem on Thursday and he died on Thursday I'm not going to get into all the details of the argument but if that is true then it is in keeping with that frame that

Jesus came in to Jerusalem at the same day that the Old Testament passage in which the process of choosing a Passover lamb and bringing it into your own home was to play out the Passover lamb by the way what was the significance of the Passover lamb you'll remember the story of the Passover God said to the nation of Israel you are to choose a lamb and you are to bring it into your home and you are to keep it there with you and then on the fourth day you are to slaughter that lamb and you are to put the blood of the lamb on the doorpost and on the lintel so that when I see the blood I'll pass over and bringing that little lamb into the home of every Jewish believer was an expression of hope but of sorrow do you follow that during those days in which that lamb was so close to the family there was a bonding of sorts and then that lamb was going to die for that family and here is

Jesus actually coming in to the city in the same context and on the same day perhaps in which the lambs came in to the city in preparation for the Passover and remember Jesus was going to die on the day proportionate to that actual sacrifice I want you to mark this as certainly true Christ's first coming and his present appeal is as our Savior and as the Lamb of God let me point out a couple different passages have fixed in your mind for one in John chapter 1 verse 29 remember when John the Baptist saw Jesus he said this behold the Lamb of God what that takes away the sins of the world here was John the Baptist that had grown up with a singular desire to see the Messiah it had been his responsibility to preach repentance make straight the way of the

[28 : 32] Lord prepare the way of the Lord repent for the kingdom of God is at hand and when he sees Jesus do you know what he says behold the Lamb of God that comes to take away the sins of the world and Jesus when he spoke about himself over in John chapter or Luke chapter 19 verse 10 he said this For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which is lost why did he come he came because I was lost because I was destroyed and broken by my sin and he came to be my savior and I have to tell you the way and the day in which Jesus chose to enter Jerusalem announced that the greatest problem we have is our sin oh that our hearts would be gripped by that truth and our longing for his grace to save us and also help us to grow to be more like him and less like our old selves!

older I am more persuaded of the doctrine of depravity than I used to be I know more about the darkness of my own soul than I used to and as a result of my growing to understand the darkness of my own soul I am growing in my affection for Christ there's only one person who can take care of the darkness of this soul and Jesus I want you to notice something else you look here at this passage and get this truth in your mind the Jews didn't get it but they're not the only one so we put it this way I guess as you go back again to look there in verse 13 the world's rejection of their greatest need it must have been fairly frustrating to all the people who were waving palm fronds and saying save now save now be the king we need you to do something with those skunks who are giving us a hard time we'd like better health care and we need something about the food they're waving the palm fronds

I want you to understand that the use of palm branches was not something that was a part of Jewish history for most of their record actually it had only happened in the last couple centuries and what had happened actually is this is Judas and Simon Maccabeus had driven out Syrian invaders from Israel and when they had driven them out and they came how many of you understand that victorious generals had the victory march into the city where they had they had rescued the nation right and so it was I wasn't there don't care that much but I understand that after the Cavaliers won the game in Cleveland I mean they were the national champions for one whole year blah blah blah they had a victory party I mean do you follow what

I'm saying and I understand there was just a riotous good time ahead and that was the way ancient general got to kind of come into town and when the Maccabees their revolt against the Syrians actually was successful the nation celebrated that victory with palm branches waving them as expressions of their enthusiasm at their victory it became a symbol of Jewish nationalism and their victory over their enemies and so when you would see coins and this is one of the things that characterized making of coins in the ancient day you stamped the coin with a signal or a symbol of your significant victory and the palm branch was one of the things that was stamped on a coin and so when you looked at the coins hey we beat them you know and so palm branches were oh yeah and here comes Jesus riding on a donkey they stuck with it though waving their branches and you know their ambitions were for a political solution not a spiritual one hey look at me do you know how edgy it makes people when you tell them that their real problem is their sin do you follow that

I've learned the hard way that you don't start there you got me best thing you do is you just listen to them talk what's going on oh my life is filled with jerks my boss he's the dumbest person ever I mean the only smart thing is he writes me a check you know my neighbors oh I need better neighbors my family you can't believe my family and and everybody has a tendency of thinking that the solution to the problem would be somebody else making significant changes I want you to understand that the crowd really had no idea that their deepest need was for salvation from their sins it is difficult for us to grasp how the crowd could go from praising to screaming for his crucifixion apart from this pay attention what they wanted is not what they got does that make sense there are some of you sitting here this morning that what you want is not what you need and there are some of you who are believers who've forgotten that what he did in your life is what you really needed done it is incredibly offensive to an unbeliever to actually let them know that what they need the most is forgiveness for their sins and the power of

[35 : 26] God to help them change being different than they've been you know we're so comfortable with our own sins are we not now we're pretty good at seeing sin in other people's lives and being a little irritated with it am I right huh you can be an inveterate you can be a specialized highly tuned gossip now Christians are better at it than non-believers do you follow that non-believers are just right up front in your face and let you know their bad attitudes but Christians are so much more subtle I need you to pray for my brother he's really struggling with an attitude you know and I'm here to help him I'm so full of righteous indignation that you know it's like I can hardly stand but you pray for me you know we get so comfortable with our sin we miss it and so here's

Jesus walks onto the scene and says hey guys the real problem you have is not political it's not economic it's not health care the real problem you have is a nasty wicked heart and nobody can change it except me you know the Bible makes it clear that sin blinds and wounds the human heart and there's no remedy apart from the cross of Christ and so here's Jesus coming in to Jerusalem for the last time he comes in on the day when the sacrificial lamb was brought into the city and then into the homes and it was just four days when the nation of Israel was killing the Passover lamb that the nation of Israel would kill their Passover lamb and I want you to understand that

Jesus came to die in our place does it get any better than that no does it get any better than that no it's interesting that the last thing that Jesus said when he died on the cross was it is finished do you know what he was referring to he wasn't talking about his death he was declaring that his death satisfied the debt your sin and my sin created in the presence of a holy God for all eternity next Sunday we're going to celebrate the Lord's table and a month ago

I preached on Romans chapter 8 verse 1 where it says there is therefore no condemnation right we concentrated on the blessing of no condemnation next week we're going to take the second part of it and it says to them who are was it in Christ Jesus we're going to ponder how sweet that statement is in Christ Jesus can I tell you that all humanity is really divided into only two camps and you're sitting here this morning either in Christ Jesus or not in Christ Jesus and my closing appeal would be this if you're here today and you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior I would be remiss not to tell you this there is no remedy for your sin there's no solution for the darkness of your heart there is no possible hope that you will ultimately change and be a better person and stand just and holy and deserving before the presence of the God of this universe apart from coming in brokenness and saying

I need Jesus as my Savior I think about the words of a song what can wash away my sin nothing but the blood of Jesus what can make me whole again nothing but the blood of Jesus and so if you're here today and you do not know Christ I would let you know this that the scriptures make it undeniably clear that the day will come when you will give an account to God and you will say I heard it that I am a sinner justly condemned before God but I didn't like the news I've never met anyone who's ever said to me Tim I just need a little more information about how nasty my heart is I've met many people who said but I don't want to deal with it now I would plead with you now is the hour now is the time let's close in prayer

[41 : 05] Father we are here this morning either in Christ Jesus or in desperate need of salvation and I would pray that you would strip away the pride of the unrepentant heart and draw sinners to the glory of the cross that you might be exalted and adored that the wisdom of your plan of salvation might be observed that we who are saints would rejoice together at the power of the cross we ask this in Jesus name amen holy