

Where You There When He Rode Into Town?

Text: Luke 19:29-44; John 12:16-16

It is one week before Easter and millions of people around the world today will read the same piece from the Bible which was read for us.

Jesus enters Jerusalem.

Its 6 days before the Passover...

In less than a week Jesus would be hanging on a cross.

Wouldn't you love to have been there...wouldn't you have loved to be in that shouting, singing crowd as the King of Kings, As the Son of God, As Jesus our Lord and Savior rode triumphantly into Jerusalem.

Jesus is riding towards the Holy city, surround by thousands of people.

With every step the excitement and energy reached higher epic proportions... It was like a volcano that had suddenly erupted with tremendous power after weeks and months of shaking and smoking....

The people after waiting months for Jesus to make his claim...

Now they see him making it.

And their joy and emotion erupted and it was flowing down the winding road from Bethany to Jerusalem.

Matthew says that the whole city was stirred... The word Matthew uses here that is translated stirred is "seismos", which means quaking, trembling... Where we derive our word seismograph. A city swelled to nearly 3 million was exploding with excitement, it was an emotional earthquake. Jesus was surround by thousands were following him... And thousands more as he neared the city, came rushing out to meet him...

Now Jesus finally reveals his true self...

till now Jesus had been almost secretive about what he was doing.

But today was different.

Today he enters Jerusalem royally...not hiding, not a victim, not afraid.

It was on his terms, his schedule.

Imagine the scene...crowd going nuts...singing, waving palm branches, laying coats on the road.

There was the smell of victory in the air...

Here and now Pilate would be pushed aside, the Romans soldiers flee and they would be free.

And then the streets erupted with the sounds of praises, singing and shouting...

They sing a song that was sung every year at Passover.

A bible song We have it today as *Psalm 118*.

It begs God to save the people, and speaks of the coming of Messiah, the servant of God who would set the people free...

free from suffering, free from oppression,
the one who would bring... Peace.

Listen to some of the words:

"This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

O LORD save us.....

(that, by the way, is the meaning of this strange word "Hosanna!")

O LORD, grant us success!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD."

Hosanna blessed is the king of Israel.

They thought they had found the one whom the psalm spoke of.

Of course, we know from further pages of Scripture...

Jesus was indeed the King...but of a different sort than they expected.

He came to free people...to save.

But not from the oppressor Rome...

Rather from the greatest oppressor...sin and Satan.

Jesus the king came to set them free from a lifetime of loneliness and alienation from each other and God.

Jesus the King came to set them free to a life of purpose, meaning and hope.

Jesus the King came to lead them on the road to the eternal home with God.

Yes, Jesus the King came...but not on a beautiful stallion, leading the army, as the Romans did.

He didn't come in a shining chariot, like the Assyrians and Babylonians did.

He came on an animal of peace...to bring peace.

He came in humility and poverty.

Notice that he didn't even own the donkey.

It was borrowed...probably according to a pre-arranged plan.

Did you catch what Luke said about the donkey's owners?

It seems this donkey had more than one owner.

Donkeys were expensive.

Probably one person couldn't afford a good donkey.

So they pooled their funds & bought this donkey.

Jesus tells His disciples, "Go into town & you'll find a colt, a donkey. No one has ever ridden it. And when you find it, untie it, & if anyone asks what you are doing just say, 'The Lord needs it,' & that will be enough."

That is exactly what happens. They found the colt & untied it. And as they did, the

owners rushed out to ask them what they are doing. They reply, "The Lord needs it."

Donkeys were prized possessions. They were means of transportation. They were beasts of burden, & they pulled the farmer's plows. They did so many strenuous things that a man could not do by himself. So this donkey was a very valuable possession. Yet Jesus said, "Tell them `the Lord needs it.'"

When they heard that, they gave it. And when they gave that donkey they were giving the best & the most that they had to give.

Now what is the most important thing your life right now? Is it your money, your house, your car, or something else that is very dear to you? Your answer will tell a whole lot about yourself.

Ask yourself, "If Jesus came by today & said, `I have need of that,' whatever it is, would you give it?" Would you surrender it to Him as these owners surrendered this donkey? Would you be willing for Him to take it & use it for whatever time He needs it? Or would you hold on to it?

They said, "Whatever the Lord needs & we have, it is His."
And so they gave their donkey.

Understand that Jesus watches us today...

He awaits our response.

Just as the people gave their garments on the ground...so we lay our lives down.

The people called out 'Hosanna' 'Save us'.

We are called to do the same...to bow our hearts and minds...to bow every area of our lives in submission to Jesus, the Saviour, the King.

We need to call out to him...Hosanna! Save us!

Have you done that?

Have you cast your whole life, everything you have before Jesus?

Just count the cost.

When he calls you to bow in submission...he wants everything.

Everything you have and are is to be at his disposal.

Your family, Your time, Your talents

Your money Your social commitments

Your reputation Your devotion.

As it was said to the owners of the donkey...it may be asked of you...

The Lord needs it.

Perhaps for a short time, maybe an extended period, maybe for good!

A couple of fishermen let Jesus use their boat for a time, so he could safely teach the pressing crowd.

A young boy gave up his loaves and fish...and they were multiplied.

Joseph of Arimathea gave him a grave that he borrowed for a time.

Jesus seeks the common things, the things of our lives...whether we think them small or unimportant...when dedicated to him they become effective and powerful.

What have you got?

The Lord needs it.

What is the stuff of your life?

The Lord needs it.

The big and little things...

The Lord needs it.

On that Palm Sunday the crowd sang 'Hosanna!'

We still sing that today.

But when it came to the crunch...just a few days later, the crowd turned around in disappointment that Jesus didn't bring in the things he promised immediately.

They turned on Jesus!

They rejected and crucified him!

What about you?

After you finish the praise today and head back home?

Are you willing to submit your tempers to him?

Or do you say, 'Yes I know I'm called to forgive but...'

Are you willing to submit your tongue to him?

Or do you say, 'Hey that's just me, I talk like that.'

Are you willing to submit your entertainment choices?

Or do you say, 'It's all just fun.'

Are you willing to submit your reputation?

Or do remain silent when you should speak up.

Or do you go with the flow...even when you know it's wrong.

Are you willing to submit your passions, popularity, your family to Jesus?

The Lord needs these things.

Will you give them...or do you snatch them back like the fickle crowd?

So as Easter approaches...there is a question we all need to ask of ourselves...

And answer truthfully before God...

That question is asked of you whether you have been a church goer for years...

Or weeks, days or never.

Do I shout Hosanna on my terms...or on his?

Are you ready to let Jesus walk over the things of your life...into the community where you live and work.

You know, there is something that happened on the ride into Jerusalem that we do not often talk about.

We don't even link this part to the ride into Jerusalem.
We get caught up in the crowd, the shouts of Hosanna, the palm branches the excitement -- that this event just slips right by...

Luke is the only Gospel writer who records this event.

The Passover crowd was celebrating and praising Jesus, but at this moment, they were more concerned about the parade than the King.

And they didn't notice what the King was going through.

Verses 41-44 give the graphic picture of Jesus weeping for the city.

The word translated wept means more than tears;
it suggests that Jesus' whole body was heaving and sobbing,
his body shaking with emotion.

Like the deep, soulful sobbing we suffer at the loss of a loved one.
(Like we see in the news with deaths in Palestine, Israel, Iraq)

Do you see that picture? Do you see the contrast?

Do you see the crowds singing, shouting, praising Jesus,
surrounding Jesus thousands of them.

But not one notices Jesus.

No one sees the one they are calling King as he sits on the colt....
No one sees Jesus, His body heaving, shaking, tears flooding down his face...
Weeping violently unable to stop the tears, unable to still his quivering body...
The emotion is just too overwhelming.

Do you see Jesus? Why is Jesus crying?

Jesus isn't weeping for himself, for the death and humiliation that lay before him.
Jesus wept for the city...for the faces in the crowd that were standing around him.

Jesus wept for his disciples.

Jesus had told them of his coming death...

But now he sees them praising him wholeheartedly.

He wept because He knew what they would go through and what they would endure,
as they faithfully finished their race.

He saw the chains, the prison cells, the beatings...

He saw James beheaded, Thomas stoned, John exiled and Peter crucified upside down.

And what of the other disciples?

Jesus weeps for the Pharisees.

Luke tells us that they were in the crowd.

We can be sure that they weren't joining in the praise or the parade.

They were certainly not part of the celebration.

We read that they couldn't contain their boiling anger...

Couldn't take the shouts of the people calling Jesus the King.

Each Hosanna would have ripped through them.

They shout at Jesus to stop the shouting, the praise...

Stop them worshipping You!

Jesus told them no one could stop the worship of God.

The Son of God will always be worshipped.

And even if they did stop (but they won't), but even if they did then the rocks and stones would raise up and sing praises to my name.

The Psalms tells us that the heavens declare the glory of God.

The Pharisees were lost in their stubborn pride...

And their refusal to acknowledge Jesus.

But Jesus found no joy in their rejection...

He wept for these men who were so close to the father house,

but so far away from the Father;

As God has said, "They worship me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me."

Jesus weeps over the indifferent Romans.

Standing on the sidelines is another group of faces, the Roman soldiers.

During the Passover thousands of extra Roman troops were brought in as reinforcements,

to make sure the Jews were kept under control.

They were there to keep the peace, make sure no trouble erupted.

To put out any fires before they grew.

And we can be sure when this crowd of thousands began their celebration that it got their attention.

But they quickly discovered that this was a harmless gathering and offered no real threat to them.... It was best they determine to just leave them alone....

Their attitude was 'Just stay in your place Jesus and don't bother us, and we will leave you alone.'

They were indifferent to what was going on in the streets that day.....

Jesus weeps for the drifting crowds

There was another group of faces in the crowd and I suspect that they were the loudest, largest and the most exuberant...

These faces belong to the self-serving and drifting followers.

Sure they were all for Jesus now.

Yes they were ready to make Him King
but only because they believed that Jesus was coming to do what they had been wanting for years.

They believed Jesus was going to now issue in the physical Messianic kingdom, overthrow the bonds of Roman oppression and set up, a Jewish world Empire.

At this time they believed that Jesus was following their plan and they therefore loved Him.

But Jesus knew that their roots were shallow, and that their devotion temporary.

Yes Jesus wept for them as he saw those same faces shouting in just in a few days...
CRUCIFY HIM! CRUCIFY JESUS!!

There was quite a crowd on the road to Jerusalem that day.
And do you know that that crowd hasn't changed much in 2000 years.

Jesus is still surrounded by a crowd of people today.

Around him are the ***indifferent Romans...***
People who say...don't bother me with Jesus.

You carry on and worship him...just leave me doing my own thing.

There are still the ***hostile Pharisees.***

People who refuse to accept the truth about Jesus; don't want to hear what he has to say.

People who don't want to give up their hold on power and control and wrong attitudes.

And there are many ***drifters.***

Those who shout praise to Jesus one day...

but then take up their lives and praise turns to curses.

Jesus still weeps over them...

But he also cries tears for those who follow...

faithful disciples who will endure hardship for the gospel.

There are many faces in the crowd...

Which one is yours?

You see...we weren't there on that first Palm Sunday...

But you have the chance to be in another great crowd waving palm branches at Jesus.

There is a greater Palm Sunday to come!

Revelation 7:9-12.

Will you be in that parade?