



Saint John United Methodist Church
12700 W. Hwy. 42, Prospect, KY 40059
stjohnky.com

Message for April 5, 2020
“According to Luke: Hosannas”
Speaker: Pastor Tom Grieb
Scripture: Luke 19:28-40

After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it.’”

Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?”

They replied, “The Lord needs it.”

They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!”

“I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.” (Luke 19:28-40)

Christ Is in Our Midst

A little boy woke up with a stomach ache on Palm Sunday and stayed home with his mom from church. His dad though went on and returned holding a palm branch.

The little boy was curious and asked his dad why he had a palm branch in his hand.

His dad replied, “Well, Jesus came into town and everyone waved palm branches to honor him.”

“Nuts,” said the little boy. “The one Sunday I miss is the Sunday Jesus shows up.”

It’s a bit more serious these days than a little boy getting a stomach ache. Even so, Christ is still showing up and sustaining us to know end.

We have every reason to praise him. Christ is getting us through this. We can be assured of that.

Prophecy Fulfilled

As parades go, it wasn't much of one. It certainly was no Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade or even a Kentucky Derby Festival Parade. There were no clowns or floats. There were no marching bands. There was only one entrant in this parade and his name was Jesus.

Even still, a number of people gathered to cheer him on. They were there from far and wide. It was Passover in Jerusalem and people had gathered from all over.

Some who gathered had benefitted directly from Christ's ministry. Others had heard reports about him and wanted to see him for themselves. Those who gathered couldn't help but get caught up in the excitement.

While the parade wasn't that big a deal as parades go, it was an event of tremendous significance. In effect, Christ was making a statement about himself.

Interestingly, Jesus came into town riding on a donkey and, by so doing, fulfilled a centuries old prophecy from the Book of Zechariah. Hear it, if you will.

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout daughter of Jerusalem! See your king come to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."
(Zechariah 9:9)

Prophecy fulfilled.

The King of a Heavenly Kingdom

Back in those days, a donkey was considered an animal of peace. It was also considered the mount of a king.

Christ was a king, but a king of a different sort. He was king over a Heavenly Kingdom and Jesus wanted to make sure everyone got that.

As Christ entered the city, some were unashamed in their praise. Others like the religious leaders of that day were angered by what Jesus was trying to say about himself as he rode in on a donkey.

Even still, Jesus persevered.

The Lord Has Need of It

The scripture reports that Jesus in making preparations for his Triumphant Entry sent a group of disciples ahead to retrieve the donkey.

Jesus didn't want to leave anything to chance. He had already set things up with the owner of the donkey, so that all the disciples would need to do was retrieve it.

"The Lord has need of it," was all they would have to say.

When the Lord has need of something, you and I would do well to oblige.

We're prone to think about things he comes calling. We are quick to consider the costs. We've even been known to offer excuses. In the end, it comes to us to oblige.

We'd do well to live in such a way that if *"the Lord needs it,"* we'll be ready to respond.

"If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9:23)

Settled on What We Believe

As we consider Christ's Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem let's consider those who lined the streets. I contend that we are much like them.

Just like those who lined the streets of Jerusalem that day, we need to get settled on what we believe about Jesus.

Luke has it that the crowd shouted, *"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!"*

That verse comes from Psalm 118:26 which is a part of a much broader Psalm that was traditionally sung by those on their way to Jerusalem. Psalm 118 is a psalm of adoration that dates back to the days of King David. Now that Psalm was being shouted in honor of a king of a different sort.

How about you? Are you ready to recognize *"the king who comes in the name of the Lord?"* Are you ready to proclaim that Jesus is Lord of your life?

Other gospels have the crowd shouting *"Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"*

"Hosanna" basically means, *"save us."* Do you trust Jesus for the salvation of your soul or do you figure you can handle that yourself?

You would do well to get settled on what you believe about Jesus. Is he Lord **and** Savior of your life?

Failure to resolve these two things leaves your shouts of *"Hosanna, blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord"* ringing pretty hollow.

Expressing Our Thanks

We'd do well not only to get settled on what we believe about Jesus, but to come to terms with what it means to consistently offer our praise and thanksgiving his way.

The people who gathered along the streets of Jerusalem the day of his Triumphant Entry had seemingly had done that. They were quick to shout their praise.

Many of them had been so touched by Christ that they could do no other but praise him.

As much as they had already experienced, Christ had so much more to offer. He was the One, after all, who not only lived, but would die and on the third day rise again.

Palm Sunday is a day to wave your palms in praise and thanksgiving. It is a day of great celebration.

Yet we know that praise and thanksgiving is more than just a one day affair. Those who consistently offer praise and thanksgiving Christ's way reflect a relationship with him that is alive and well.

I like what our Lenten devotional, *40 Days with Jesus*, has to say about such things.

"Thankfulness is not some sort of magic formula; it is the language of love, which enables you to communicate intimately with Christ. A thankful mind-set does not entail a denial of reality with its plethora of problems. Instead, it rejoices in Jesus your Savior in the midst of trials and tribulations. He is our refuge and strength an ever-present and well-proved help in trouble."

That's a word that speaks clearly to the very things we are facing in the challenge and uncertainty of the Covid-19 Pandemic. This present circumstance is a time of great proving for us all. We are all being refined.

In the midst of it all, let's offer Christ praise and thanksgiving. It is *"the language of love*, after all, that awakens us to the reality that he is present and at work to see us through.

So then, we'd do well to stay at it when it comes to praise. A word that comes to mind in this regard is consistency.

I have always contended that some of people who shouted their praise on Sunday, were some of the same ones who shouted, *"Crucify him, crucify him"* on Friday.

That's just the way people can be sometimes, particularly when they get caught up in a crowd.

I think we're not much different. We are just as fickle, just as fair-weathered.

We are quick to praise the Lord on Sunday, but on Friday when we face the stresses and strains of life, it's another thing entirely.

A consistency of praise means a consistency of relationship. Praise and thanksgiving takes commitment and discipline. Offered consistently, it has a way of drawing us closer to our Lord.

If we really have been touched, if our lives really have been affected, then we will stay at it when it comes to offering praise and thanksgiving. Before we know it, we will find ourselves overflowing with thanksgiving.

The Flow of Holy Week

There is a flow to Holy Week. I can't believe that Holy Week is upon us.

Upon celebrating Palm Sunday our thoughts and attention quickly turn to the week ahead and, in so doing, we don't get very far without a deep consideration of the cross and what it means for our lives.

We know full well that even as we offer our *"hosannas"* today, the next few days loom just over the horizon. Very soon things will take a drastic turn. That's the rhythm of Holy Week.

You may or may not know this, but Palm Sunday is also called Passion Sunday, recognizing the events that took place during the last week of Christ's life. One the first day of the week before Christ's death branches were spread before him as he entered Jerusalem. As we have already mentioned, those who lined the streets offered him praise and adoration.

The cheering though didn't last very long. There was a point where the tide turned against Jesus. His detractors became more and more emboldened. They attacked him publicly and worked behind the scenes to get rid of him. Before it was all over, a tidal wave of derision mounted to where Jesus was forced to bear the indignity of the cross.

And we wonder to this day why the crowd was so fickle. In hindsight we realize they didn't really understand. They didn't understand who Jesus was and what he had come to do. To many he was simply the next great hope to free Israel from Roman domination.

It wasn't until later, after all the cheering had stopped, after Jesus had died on the cross and risen from the dead that things became clearer.

From death came life. From despair came celebration and great rejoicing. Such was the flow of the last week of Christ's life. Let's get ready to experience it.

We have every reason to celebrate today. Good news is on its way.