**April 14, 2019 Luke 19:28-40**

***Fit For a King***

**Scripture:** Luke 19:28-40 NRSV

(28)After he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. (29)When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, (30)saying, "Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. (31)If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it.'" (32)So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. (33)As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" (34)They said, "The Lord needs it." (35)Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. (36)As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. (37)As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, (38)saying, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!" (39)Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." (40)He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

**Notes:**

1. Jesus came with a different ***triumphal*** ***entry***.
   1. His entry was into the heart of Jewish ***faith***.
   2. Victory comes through ***humility***.
   3. Jesus points to a new exodus of ***freedom***.
   4. ***Salvation*** was arriving through the sacrifice of God’s only Son.
   5. Jesus rode on a ride fit for a ***king***.
2. Look at the ***obedience*** on the way to the cross
   1. “The Lord needs it” and he lends his ***donkey***.
   2. Why do the people ***cheer*** for Jesus?
   3. Jesus ***knew*** what the entry would ultimately mean.
3. We are called to embody the ***kingdom*** ***of*** ***God***.
   1. Live as citizens of the ***kingdom*** ***of*** ***God***.
   2. Pick up your cross daily and follow ***Jesus***.
   3. Walk a path of ***sacrifice*** out of love for God and others.
   4. Answer the call to be a ***peacemaker***.
   5. ***Celebrate*** the faithfulness of God in hope.
   6. Mark the ***victory*** of Jesus through our celebrations.
   7. ***Dying*** to self leads you to a resurrected life.
   8. Are you a ***humble*** ***servant*** of Jesus?

**Transcript:**

A common theme that I have seen lately, has been people making a grand entrance. Prom time is coming upon us and I have noticed the big thing to do is to go and watch those attending, make their grand entrance. Parents, friends, and relatives rush to the site of the prom, and line up to watch the people enter the venue, some may even take lawn chairs to sit and wait in.

In preparation those attending, rent or buy fancy clothes. Girls may think, I can’t go to the prom in a normal everyday dress, so they go out and buy or rent an expensive gown, so they may look glamorous. Guys wait until their date gets a gown and then rent or buy a tuxedo that matches. And let’s not forget the ride. The guy doesn’t want to drive up to the prom in mom and dad’s sedan, they want to go in style; a sports car, a hot rod car, or maybe a beefed up truck, some even rent limousines. My favorite was the young man who drove a tractor to the event.

We clamor to the site waiting and watching, we wait with cameras or video recorders, We bring our lawn chairs and make an event out of their entrance. And some people cheer, clap, and whistle as their children or friends enter the dance. We place a priority on all of the details regarding the appearances, even when the costs are precious.

Well today we celebrate the entrance Jesus makes coming into the city of Jerusalem. This is the week before the Passover. The city is filled with the faithful who come to Jerusalem every year for the festival. But when they hear this teacher Jesus is coming word gets around. And they gather to see how the Messiah is going to make his triumphant entry. Turn with me to Luke 19: 28-40 and stand for the reading of the Gospel passage.

*(28)After he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. (29)When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, (30)saying, "Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. (31)If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it.'" (32)So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. (33)As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" (34)They said, "The Lord needs it." (35)Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. (36)As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. (37)As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, (38)saying, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!" (39)Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." (40)He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."* (Luke 19:28-40 NRSV )

Donkeys aren’t typically thought of as noble creatures. Donkeys are more accurately described as a noisy, barnyard animals. They eat large amounts of food, rest during the hottest part of the day, and don’t like living outside of a group. They are fairly small, so they are not suited for heavy farm work like an ox. They aren’t regal or quick-footed like a horse. They are often used as pack animals because carrying things and people from one place to another seems to be their best skill.

However, donkeys are also often known for their stubbornness. Unlike horses, they aren’t skittish. They don’t run away from danger, but their curiosity and intelligence often make them examine what would cause them fear in the first place. In that regard, they are not afraid to look danger in the face. They are not afraid to walk bravely toward that which could cause them harm, making them an excellent choice of animal to ride toward death on. Because, while we consider this Palm Sunday triumphant, the march of triumph was still a march toward death. The cheers of joy in one moment all too quickly will turn to cheers for execution in the next.

This image in Luke of a donkey, though, is not just an image of a simple barnyard animal. It is also a symbol of obedience and faith in the face of insurmountable odds; a symbol of peace ushering in of a new kind of kingdom in the presence of a violent, worldly kingdom. With this type of radical obedience and faith, we are once again called to follow Jesus. The Romans were known for their triumphal entries.

The Roman triumph was the highest honor granted to emperors and generals during the Roman Empire. It was a processional into the city of Rome, led by government officials, followed by the sacrificial animals (for the temples of the Roman gods), followed by the champion in a chariot, usually in regalia of embroidered purple followed by the spoils and captives of war. This processional was given to those who were victorious in war, some saying only to those who had killed at least five thousand of their enemies. The processional included festivals, dancing, singing, flower petals strewn on the ground. The path for the processional was often cleaned beforehand, prepared by the government to usher in the triumphant victor of war.

Jesus came with a different type of triumphal entry. His processional, his entry, wasn’t into Rome, the capital of the Empire, but rather into Jerusalem, the location of the temple and the religious heart of the Jewish faith. Jesus entry wasn’t as the victor of a war that killed thousands, but rather was a march toward death. Christ’s death and resurrection were an act of victory in a different way. Jesus also seems to be illustrating that victory does not come through violence but through humility an example of the upside-down nature of the kingdom of God; the last shall be first, blessed are the meek, and so on…

This triumphal entry took place at the beginning of a festival, the Passover, seeming to mirror some of the components of a Roman triumphal entry. Passover is not about war but about remembering the way God spared the lives of the Jews, How God delivered them from the enslavement at the hands of the Egyptians,and the miraculous ways he cared for them. This festival would be in stark contrast to the festivals of the Romans bringing offerings for gods like Jupiter. Jesus instead seems to be highlighting the remembrance of the exodus and pointing to a new exodus of freedom, bringing an offering of deliverance to the temple; an offering to save all people, not just the Jews, and this offering was himself.

There also seem to be some parallels that, while the Jews are celebrating the salvation of their firstborn sons, ultimately their salvation was arriving through the sacrifice of God’s only Son. Instead of a horse and chariot, Jesus rode in on a donkey. This was an illustration of humility. It was a young donkey, common in the area and not esteemed. Donkeys were pack animals, not war animals. Donkeys were also a symbol of peace in contrast to the horse being used in war.But in our passage today it is a ride fit for a king.

Lets look at the obedience on the Way to the Cross. “The Lord needs it” is the only phrase needed for the owner of the colt to let her go. This shows an obedience and faith that the colt will be used for good. While we don’t know who the owner is, we can assume some level of discipleship since he faithfully lends his donkey to the disciples. While the crowds appeared in celebration of Jesus’ entry into the city, why do the people cheer for Jesus as he enters Jerusalem? There is some question about the motives of the people present. Are they cheering for Jesus as the Messiah, the one who lays down his life for his people? Or do they think he is entering the city to overtake it with a violent rebellion, overthrowing the Roman Empire?

Jesus knew what the entry would ultimately mean, yet he still entered. The Jews longed for a Messiah, but there was a misunderstanding about what that Messiah would look like and what the Messiah would do. These crowds turn quickly from praise and admiration on Sunday to shouts for death just days later, which could indicate that their praise was motivated by hope that the Empire would be violently overthrown. Yet, despite the motivations of the crowd, whatever they may have been, Jesus still walked closer to the time and place of his crucifixion.

We are Called to Embody the Kingdom of God, what does that mean? We are called to live as citizens of the kingdom of God. We are called to pick up our cross and follow. We are also supposed to walk this path of sacrifice out of love for God and others. We are also supposed to remember that, ultimately, death leads to resurrection. We are called to be peacemakers. While the world calls for change through violent upheaval, Jesus teaches us to be people of peace. We are supposed to be humble servants. We are not supposed to seek glory in the ways of the world but in the meek and humble way of Jesus. Our festivals and sacrifices should look different. While the world celebrates at the altar of the war gods of our day, we celebrate the faithfulness of God. We celebrate in hope, not in a frenzied need to keep the gods satisfied.

We mark the victory and triumph of Jesus through our own festivals and celebrations. This is why we have times on the calendar like Lent to remind us of who we are and where our citizenship lies. Advent, Pentecost, and other days call us back to this reminder that we celebrate the victory of God through Jesus Christ. We are to remember whose we are and our citizenship.

As this Lenten season comes to a close, we are reminded that our citizenship, if we have given our life to Christ, is in the kingdom of God, which is a kingdom that looks so different than the world around us. We remember that we are to follow in the footsteps of our King, who rode on a common barnyard animal in humility and obedience. We follow in obedience as we walk toward the crosses we are called to carry and the ways we are supposed to embody the kingdom of God to the world around us.

When you look at your innermost being; at your faith, attitudes, and actions, who are you? If asked to stand up and identify yourself in regard to the Kingdom of God, How would you answer? Can you answer this question with “I am a Child of God”; “I belong to the King”? Are you a member of the Kingdom of God? Are you confident in your citizenship in the Kingdom of God? Do you pick up your cross daily and follow Jesus? Do you follow him to the places he wants you to go? Or do you follow at a distance, sort of like Peter on the night that Jesus is betrayed. Only making half a commitment, you like to watch the great things Jesus does; but you do not engage in the things that make a difference in other people’s lives. Are you walking your faith out on the path of sacrifice? Are you walking it out of love for God? Are you walking it out of love for others? Do you remember that, ultimately, death leads to resurrection? Dying to self and giving your life to Jesus in this life leads you to a new resurrected life here on this earth. And making the ultimate sacrifice in the name of Jesus will lead us to an eternity with Jesus forever.

Have you answered the call to be a peacemaker? Are you standing in the gap, are you promoting peaceful solutions to the difficulties of this world, are you encouraging others to make peaceful resolutions to their difficulties? Are you striving to be a humble servant of Jesus? Are you seeking glory in the meek and humble way of Jesus? Are you following the example of Jesus?

We celebrate today our Messiah who has come in the name of the Lord; not with swords, not with horses, not with sacrifices to Roman gods, but with love, with truth, with peace, with humility, with sacrifice, and with the hope of resurrection. May we follow passionately after our King, remembering that we are called to follow Jesus, remembering that we are called to be an active part of the kingdom of God?