

SERVANT KING

Matthew 21:1-11

I. Intro

- A. Welcome everyone! So glad to have you joining us this morning.
 - 1. Good Friday service @ 7p here
 - 2. Easter is next Sunday! Providing dinner celebration afterwards. Celebrating 18 years as a church. A lot has changed since we got started but through it all we have seen and experienced the faithfulness, grace, and loving provision of our LORD Jesus Christ. We want to celebrate both the Resurrection and our anniversary, so please invite someone to join us next week, the more the merrier!
- B. Today is when the Church traditionally remembers the Sunday that Jesus entered into Jerusalem hailed as a king riding on a donkey. We call this Palm Sunday because many palm branches were laid at the foot of the donkey while Jesus rode into the city.
- C. This is a wonderful picture of Jesus being acknowledged and hailed as the King of His people. There is much joy that is experienced when we read the account of Matthew as he describes the people's response to Jesus.
 - 1. We will dig into the imagery of the donkey more in a few minutes, but it reminds us of the humble service of our King toward us, and to remind us that good and true kings are first and foremost servants of the people; they do not seek to lord over the people in a domineering, authoritarian, way, but to serve the people they are seeking to lead.

D. Big Idea: Jesus is the King who seeks out and serves His people

- E. Read, declare, thank

II. The Servant bring Joy

- A. A good servant will always bring joy to those they serve!
 - 1. Jesus intentionally chooses a way to enter the city of Jerusalem which would very self consciously fulfill a well known OT prophecy regarding the Messiah King that God's people had been waiting for for so long!
 - 2. Jesus tells His disciples to get a donkey which had never been ridden before, and rides on it into the city of Jerusalem.
 - 3. *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is He, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.* - Zechariah 9:9
 - a) Zechariah prophesied during the time right after the Jews starting coming back to Jerusalem post-Exile. He prophesied during a time when the Temple was rebuilt, and it seemed as though God was restoring Israel. Thus, this prophecy stands as a reminder that this wasn't the time when God was restoring the nation back to Israel, but was still looking forward to, and anticipating the time when, the true King would come to restore Israel.
 - b) This call is anchored in the reality that this humble Messiah king is coming with both righteousness and salvation; He is the embodiment of righteousness and He gives salvation. The presence of the Messiah King is itself cause for rejoicing, for worship, for honor.
 - 4. This call to joy is echoed in the NT as well. There are many places where, in light of seeing the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ the church is called to rejoice.
 - a) *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.* —Philippians 4:4
 - (1) *The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit glorify each other...At the center of the universe, self-giving love is the dynamic currency of the Trinitarian life of God. The persons within God exalt, commune with, and defer to one another...When early Greek Christians spoke of perichoresis in God, they meant that each divine person harbors the others at the center of His being. In constant movement of overture and acceptance each person envelops and encircles the others* —C.S. Lewis
 - b) Thus, the call to rejoice is a call to emulate the Trinitarian God we love and serve. To put God at the center of our universe, to defer to Him, to accept Him, to enjoy Him. In this way we glorify Him with our life, our love, and our actions.

- B. Jesus is the embodiment of righteousness. He is the very righteousness of God made flesh, and has visited us. Jesus is the humble King who, instead of demanding worship and honor, gives away His life so that His people would be saved. This humility is what draws us to His beauty, and connects us to His joy.
- C. We, too, are called to joy. To rejoice in who Jesus is and what He has done for us.
 - 1. The joy that the people are called to in the scene at Jerusalem was not connected to the ease of present circumstances. The Jews were under oppression by the Roman Empire and their lives were very harsh. Yet, they were called to respond in joy and rejoicing. Joy is something which is given by God to His people; joy is a deeply rooted reminder that I am the LORDs, and He is mine, and nothing can take that away!; and is not taken away in the face of difficult or trying circumstances.

III. The King deserves Praise

- A. How do the people respond to the presence of the Messiah King?
 - 1. They honored Him as best they could. Notice that all they have are humble offerings: their everyday cloaks, branches from the trees to ease the passage of the donkey. These are not great and glorious offerings, but are freely and joyfully given. I believe that we respond to the presence of God in freely and joyfully given ways to honoring Jesus. Serving others often has a way of causing us to temporarily forget ourselves, to take us out of the emotions we are feeling when we are focused on another person. It is one of God's gifts to us to call us to serve, and in serving find joy.
 - 2. They welcomed Jesus as the Messiah King. They followed Him and went before Him. Jesus set the pace and the tone for His people. How are we welcoming Jesus in our lives. How are we allowing Him to set the pace for us in our lives right now? How are we being called to follow His lead in the unique ways of our lives?
 - 3. The people shouted out praise to Jesus. They blessed Him and proclaimed Him to be the King. There is something stirring about singing and praising Jesus which stirs up that joy in us again and again.
 - a) *"My lips will shout for joy, when I sing praises to You; my soul also, which You have redeemed."*
- Psalm 71:23
 - b) Notice the order is singing praise to the LORD elicits shouts of joy from our lips. Sometimes, in order for us to experience God's joy, we must discipline ourselves to first sing and let the emotions follow. One interesting study showed that if you want to change your mood from bad to happy, first play music which acknowledges your mood, then start to play happier music.
- B. Our passage this morning ends with the crowds asking about who this man was that was stirring everyone up.
 - 1. This is kind of funny because Jesus had been in and around Jerusalem for 3 years now, teaching and ministering. So what are they really asking? I believe that the veil of Christ's divine kingship was starting to be pulled back so that they would see a bit of the glory of the Great King. And when they looked at Jesus and saw this kind of glory, they would naturally ask "who is this?"!
 - a) Entrance as the promised High King
 - b) Declared to be the promised **Prophet** of the LORD, who is Himself very God of very God
 - c) Bringing atonement and salvation as the true High **Priest** of the LORD
 - 2. The Greek word used for stirred is the same one for quaking in fear; to tremble. It is so interesting that Jesus' presence, caused some to worship in joy, and caused others to shake in fear and trembling. Why is that?
 - a) **Status quo was being shaken**
 - (1) Jesus is being hailed as the King. This obviously sets up the city for a strong armed Roman response to this. The Romans did not take well or kindly to usurpers claiming authority over their provinces if they didn't give permission. Thus, there is a political fear here of potential military response.
 - (a) Something that we must remember as Christians in this post-Christian era, is that our allegiance to Christ and His values, His Word, will at times threaten the status quo of the world and the new moral order. We may even be seen as the enemies of "progress" or of

“culture”: The world has always been threatened by Jesus, for He is the light of the world whose light comes in to expose sin.

(b) “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” — John 15:18-19

b) Shaking up of worship and restoration of human dignity

- (1) They were shaken because Jesus is the great Shaker of our lives. When He comes into the city, the first place He stops is the Temple. Why does He go there and what does He do there?
 - (a) “And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. He said to them, ‘It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers.’ And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David!’ they were indignant, and they said to him, ‘Do you hear what these are saying?’ And Jesus said to them, ‘Yes; have you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise?’” — Matthew 21:12-16
 - (b) He shakes up the city by restoring their proper worship.
 - (c) He cleanses it of all the money-changers, the sellers of animals, of the clutter which had clogged up the Temple.
 - i) The Jews had fallen in love with the riches and profit of the world, which is why they desecrated their holy Temple to make a few bucks.
 - ii) Jesus quotes an OT prophet Isaiah in His justification for cleansing the Temple. What we find in that quote gives us the purpose and vision for what God’s Temple was to be all about:
 - iii) “And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to Him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be His servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant— these I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.” - Isaiah 56:6-7
 - iv) We can see from this text that part of why Jesus was so upset was that the Jews had set up a market where the Gentile nations were supposed to be free to gather and worship Yahweh. Part of the Temple was dedicated to the “foreigners”, or non-Jews, who wanted to worship Yahweh. This was the section which had become overrun with a market, thus preventing the nations to worship the true God!
 - (d) This area of the Temple was to be a safe place for all the nations to gather together in worship, yet it had become so cluttered that they could not. Jesus is indignant because it had become so corrupt and cluttered. This place was to be a place where non-Jews could come to worship and pray, yet they were not allowed in. This place was sacred to God, yet man had corrupted it. Jesus cleansing it was a stinging rebuke to the racial pride and arrogance of the Jews at the time, who did not seem to care or want others to worship God.
 - (e) This cleaning ought to remind us that no matter who we are, or where we come from, God desires to have us relate to Him in prayer; that He is welcoming us with open arms. This cleansing also ought to warn us about those things in our lives which can so quickly and easily clutter up our lives, or cause us to lose sight of who we are meant to be as God’s children first. It is more important to God to have us relate to Him in prayer and devotion than to put stock in our family lineage, or national pride, or anything else which we tend to look to to give us our sense of purpose and identity.

- (f) From time to time we need the holy Spirit to “clean house”, so to speak, in our souls so that we are transformed
- (2) What happens after Jesus cleanses the temple for it’s proper use? Healing happens. Jesus begins to engage in the true ministry of God in the healing of humanity. This reminds us that part of the purpose of our sanctification is for others; to seek to bring the healing of the gospel to others.
 - (a) The real ministry wasn’t for the purpose of making money, but for the purpose of restoring dignity to humankind. It is such a profound act of compassion and restoration that Jesus heals many of their afflictions. We have much opportunity in this time to seek the healing of others, to see those who are most vulnerable have their dignity restored, that they might know that they are loved by God and called to life with Him. It takes God’s people to do that, many of you are engaging in the various opportunities which are being presented to us, and I want to encourage us to continue to engage in the ministry of bringing the healing and restoration of the gospel to our city, one person at a time!
 - (b) The religious leaders were angry with Jesus for:
 - i) Taking away their “lucrative business”
 - ii) Receiving the praise and worship meant for YHWH
 - iii) Jesus affirms that He is in fact YHWH made flesh who deserves praise!
 - (3) I think that we too often over complicate our lives, and our relationship with God. I believe that He desires for us to be like these children and to simply trust, simply ask, and simply enjoy Him.
 - (4) Jesus also shakes up the city by restoring dignity to people through healing them. Jesus is all about restoring things to how we were made to be. To undo all the bad and wrong things that we have done or have ever done to us.
- c) **Sent to save His people**
 - (1) Jesus coming in on a donkey would have reminded the people of the coming King who also brings the judgement against His enemies. Thus, all those who reject the King are found under His judgement.
 - (a) The passage quoted from Zechariah points is the first part of the prophecy of Zechariah, which focuses on the humble King who comes first to save His chosen people. However, the second half of Zechariah’s prophecy is one which emphasizes the coming judgment of God against all His enemies by this same King. It emphasizes the rightful role of this universal King to exercise His judgment against sin. This could also in part be why the whole city was shaken to its core at the announcement of the King out of Zechariah. It was a way for God to get His people’s attention that the King is here, bow in honor and allegiance to Him! The next time Jesus comes, it will be to gather His elect, and execute judgment on those who have rejected Him!
 - (2) Jesus gives the reason for His coming:
 - (a) “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.” —John 3:16-21
 - (b) Jesus teaching about His purpose for coming in to the world
 - i) To save His people from their sins. What is true? What is coming in to the light? To believe in the name of the Son of God. To trust in His finished and completed work of

His life, death, and resurrection. All those who do are given eternal life. All those who don't are condemned already.

- (c) So yes, Jesus came to save, He came humbly and meekly. He, riding on the beast of burden showed that He would bear the burden of His people's sin and judgment on their behalf. He did not come to bring the final judgment. However, His coming did condemn all those who reject Him to the judgement of God Almighty.
- (d) We today have a decision to make: will we bow in allegiance and honor to this marvelous king? Or will we keep seeking to be the king and queen's of our own lives still?

C. When our city and our culture sees the way in which God's people are seeking to respond in joy to present circumstances, it will be a powerful witness to the truth and power of the gospel to truly transform lives. We are living in a time in which there are so many opportunities for the gospel to be seen and experienced, and responding in joy I believe is one of the most powerful testimonies to the gospel today.

D. May we rest in God's Lordship in our lives, may we continue to give of ourselves to others, and may we respond in joy to the love, healing, and hope of God in Jesus Christ.

1. May we imitate our Servant King as we close with this reminder from the Apostle Mark
 - a) *But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.* —Mark 10:43-45

IV. Response

A. **Confession:** *"Heavenly Father and King Jesus, we come to You this morning as people who would rather govern our own lives than submit to Your rule and shepherding care. Instead of bowing down in reverence, full of awe and wonder that You, the Almighty Creator King of the universe should stoop so low to love and care for us, we often treat You as a servant who should do our bidding and meet all our desires. Cause us to know and feel our King's great love for us until we are transformed into people who love others deeply because of a great sense of our own need, and our own sense of our forgiveness and adoption. Open our lips to join the heavenly worship service and sing praises to our King, today, tomorrow, and forevermore. Amen."*

B. **Assurance:** *"We give you thanks, O LORD, with our whole heart; before the rulers of men we sing your praise; we bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word. On the day we called, you answered us; our strength of soul you increased" —Psalm 138:1-3*

C. Lord's Supper

1. At the table we experience the servant lordship of Christ, as we take the bread and are reminded of His body willingly broken for us that we might be healed, and the wine, His blood, where we are reminded of His willingness to bleed so that our consciences might be cleansed. He did this out of His servant love, His kingly humility. May we take and eat/drink to His glory this morning, and seek to imitate His service in the world.