

The King Arrives

Luke 19:28-44

We come this morning to a very familiar passage. Even if a person is only a C&E attender, meaning Christmas and Easter, that person would also be familiar with this passage. Traditionally this passage is preached on Palm Sunday, but I am opting to handle it today as we have been going through the book of Luke verse by verse and this is the next section in this Gospel. In case you are wondering, if we stay on schedule we will finish our study of Luke at Easter.

With that, please turn to Luke 19:28-44 and the account of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. In one way or another, all four Gospels record this important event.

Let's quickly recap. For the past several chapters Jesus has been traveling to Jerusalem. In Luke 9:51 we read "And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,"

The Message says Jesus "gathered up His courage and steeled Himself for the journey to Jerusalem."

That means He was unwavering in His determination to get to Jerusalem. It wasn't because He was looking forward to the Passover celebration as a Jew, but because He knew that this was the time He would offer Himself as our sacrifice for sin on the cross. He was fixed on that goal, resolute in His determination. We learned a couple weeks ago that Jesus came to seek and save sinners. That was His purpose. In order to save sinners He had to go to the cross, go through the agony of rejection by God because He would bear our sin. There is no salvation without the cross.

Because of the miracle He performed in giving Bartameus His sight and the salvation given to both the blind man and Zacchaeus, and because

verse 11 tells us they were anticipating that Jesus would establish an earthly kingdom once He reached Jerusalem the crowd following Jesus on this momentous occasion had swelled.

People are beginning to arrive in Jerusalem for the Passover festival. Verse 28 tells us that Jesus Himself was also going up to Jerusalem. The trip from Jericho was 15 miles long and would take anywhere from 6-8 hours to walk. It was also an uphill climb, ascending some 3,500 feet above sea level. That's about 2/3's of a mile up. It was a challenging hike.

Okay, let's have a little quiz. It's open book. According to verse 10 what was Jesus' purpose? To seek and to save the lost.

According to verse 11 why was the crowd following Jesus?

Because they assumed He was going to establish His earthly kingdom. They were following Him because they thought He was to be a political king.

If we are going to follow the king, three things are expected.

If we are going to follow the king, obedience is expected.

If we are going to follow the king, praise is expected.

If we are going to follow the king, opposition is expected.

I. IF WE ARE GOING TO FOLLOW THE KING, OBEDIENCE IS EXPECTED – v. 28-35

We simply think of obedience in terms of doing what you are told.

Your boss tells you to have a report done by the end of the week.

Your mother tells you to clean your room.

Your teacher tells you to turn in your assignment.

The government tells you to pay your taxes.

The police officer tells you to hand over your license and registration.

Obedience is when someone in greater authority than you tells you to do something.

The dictionary also suggests that there is a willingness to obey, a state of submission to the one asking something to be done, often done out of duty, not desire or devotion.

There is a story before seatbelt laws were in affect about a mother who continually told her small daughter to sit down in the car. Finally in exasperation the little girl sat down in a huff and said "I may be sitting on the outside, but I'm still standing on the inside."

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia defines it this way: "In its simpler Old Testament meaning the word signifies "to hear," "to listen." It carries with it, however, the ethical significance of hearing with reverence and obedient assent. In the New Testament a different origin is suggestive of "hearing under" or of subordinating one's self to the person or thing heard, hence, "to obey.""

Now, I hope you caught the subtle difference between the standard meaning and the Biblical meaning. It is the idea of showing reverence to the one who is asking us to do something. To me that implies that I don't do it out of duty, but that I do it out of respect for that person.

Under Roman rule any soldier could command a Jew to carry his equipment up to a mile outside of town. A marker indicated the point in which the bearer was no longer obligated to carry the burden any longer. Jesus told His hearers to go an extra mile.

As it is conveyed in the Old Testament, obedience is the ultimate test of faith in God. Our obedience to God keeps a close relationship with Him. Throughout the Old Testament we see the results of

what happened to Israel when they chose to disobey God.

Consider a couple of events while Saul served as king. He had gathered the troops to fight against the Philistines (I Samuel 13) and was told to wait for Samuel to come and offer the sacrifice. A week passed and Samuel still had not arrived. Saul grew impatient and made the sacrifice himself, something that only the priest was to do. When Samuel finally arrived and realized what had happened, he chastised Saul for his blatant disregard for God's commands and informed Saul that the kingdom would be stripped from him and given to another, someone who sought or obeyed God with all his heart.

In chapter 15 Saul was told to utterly destroy the Amalekites because of what they did to Israel while they were leaving Egypt. Not one thing was to be spared. Yet we read in the chapter that they spared the best of the livestock and all that was good and even spared the king. In verse 11 God says that Saul had not obeyed His commands.

To get the full impact turn to I Samuel 15:22-23. I Samuel 15:22-23

Folks, true obedience is more than the act, it is the attitude. If I do something because I am told to do, but grumble all the while I'm doing it then that is not true obedience.

Do you remember the lesson gave about the father who told his two sons to go out and do some work in the field? One said he didn't want to do it, but then later felt bad about it and went out and did what his father told him to do, while the other one said he would go and then never went. Maybe he was too busy texting or playing video games. Jesus asked of the two, which one obeyed the father. I have heard some say that neither obeyed, but the point Jesus made was that in truth the first was obedient even though he initially said no.

Did you catch what Samuel said to Saul, to disobey is just like practicing witchcraft or rebellion.

If we are going to follow the king, we must be obedient.

In the New Testament we see the example of Christ as the epitome of obedience, going to the cross because it was will of the Father.

Philippians 2:8 “He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death.”

Peter goes so far as to say that we are children of obedience (I Peter 1:14) and in both Testaments it is obedience by faith.

So when we come back to our passage we see this carried out when two disciples were asked by Jesus to go into the nearby town to make preparations for them to celebrate the Passover. As they entered the town they were told they would find a colt that had never before been ridden. They were to untie it and bring it back for Him to ride. If they were questioned Jesus gave instructions on what to say.

They obeyed and found everything just as Jesus had said.

Let me come back to the simple principle that Biblical obedience stems from faith or trust. And it doesn't mean I get to pick and choose what I will or will not obey. To obey only in part is like not obeying at all. That's what Saul did with the Amalekites.

Think for a moment if Christ only went through the beatings, but stopped there?

What if He went so far as to actually hang there on the cross but not die?

If He was only partially obedient, then we are still lost in sin, we still carry our sin, we still owe the debt of sin. Our ransom has not been paid. He is not the Savior

Unger's Bible Dictionary provides a rather probing or prodding thought. It's like pouring a little lemon juice in a wound. I read it and I wanted to run away like a dog with its tail between its legs, head drooping and ears down. See if this doesn't sting just a bit. “Perfect obedience to the commandments of God must be the object of our constant endeavors.” OUCH! How often I fall short of that. But there is hope in our lack of perfect obedience, because where I fail, God's grace is available. Yet that doesn't mean that I shouldn't strive to fully and completely obey. His grace doesn't let me off the hook. So let's ask for God's Spirit to strengthen us and help us to be obedient.

If we are going to follow the King, then obedience is expected.

Second, if we are going to follow the King, then praise is expected.

II. IF WE ARE GOING TO FOLLOW THE KING, PRAISE IS EXPECTED – v. 36-38

In 1838 the coronation of Queen Victoria was a very regal affair. A newspaper account of that event described the crowd as an excessive, heaving mass full of eager expectation. Resident and foreign dignitaries alike rode in ornately decorated carriages in procession. Everyone was dressed elegantly. As her carriage approached the Ordnance Office where the coronation would take place the band from the Royal Artillery began to play the national anthem.

That was an entirely different and completely opposite the scene we read about in Luke 19. While crowds lined the street, there was no official pomp and circumstance, no political elite accompanied Him, no band played. It was ignored by nobility.

As Jesus is ascending the road into Jerusalem riding that donkey two huge masses of people converge. There is the multitude that has been following Him

as He approaches the city. There is a multitude that comes out of the city when they hear that the Messiah is approaching. There are some who estimate that the swell of people could have been as many as one million.

It was a jubilant, festive crowd. Many threw their coats on the ground as Jesus approached. Such an act was symbolic and indicated that they were submitting to Him. In the Old Testament we read in II Kings 9:13 that the defeated army would lie prostrate on the ground while the conquering king would place his foot on their neck. It meant that they were now subservient to this new ruler. Throwing their coats down on the ground meant the same thing. They were indicating their willingness to submit to the rule of Christ.

While many spread their coats on the ground, others cut down palm branches. It was also symbolic. It was a symbol of victory, joy, and celebration now that the Messiah had arrived.

We read in verse 37 that “the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen.”

It was a collect shout of praise for the king who had come, for peace in heaven and glory in the highest place.

Matthew records that they shouted “hosanna”, which means save us and they also called Him the Son of David, a Messianic title.

Again, all of this is in reference to their belief in Messiah being a political Savior.

They were shouting praise to God, but was it real praise, heartfelt praise, sincere praise?

Is our praise real, heartfelt, sincere?

Scripture gives us examples of both.

Praise is a Latin term meaning price or value. An object would be given value or worth. False praise can be given to an unworthy object. Belshazzar gave a command to bring in the gold and silver vessels Nebechadnezzar had taken from the Temple in Jerusalem in order to drink from them. As they did, they praised the gods of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood and stone.

Any object or person can be falsely praised.

But – false praise can be given from an improper motive. We see that from our passage. The Jews had the right person, but they gave praise for the wrong motive. They did not praise God that Jesus was the true Messiah come to redeem Israel from sin, but because they believed they believed He would deliver them from Rome.

True praise on the other hand consists in a sincere acknowledgment of a real conviction of worth.

Revelation 4:11; 5:12

Isaiah 6:1-3

That is the expression of true praise. Praise stems from an acknowledgment of who God is and what He has done.

The Bible sets God as the only viable object worthy of praise. Our purpose as created beings is to that end – to give Him the praise He is due. It is the first question raised in the Westminster catechism – What is the chief end of man? The chief end, the main purpose of man is to give God glory and to enjoy Him forever.

Think for a moment that everything we do is to be for that end, to be an expression of praise to God. Whether in our eating or in our work, everything is to be an expression of giving God praise, giving Him glory.

Even the heavens declare the glory of God

Psalm 19:1-4

In the midst of life's tumultuous events as outlined in Psalms we are called to give God praise.

Psalms 100:1-6

Psalms 145:1-4

Psalms 146:1-2

Psalms 147:1

Psalms 148

Psalms 149

Psalms 150

Our days are to be filled with abundant and abounding praise.

Praise Him for His character.

Praise Him for His attributes.

Praise Him for His blessings.

Praise Him for His kindnesses, His mercies, His forgiveness, His grace, His compassion, His salvation.

To fail in giving Him praise is to be forgetful of His mercies. (Deuteronomy 6:12)

To fail in giving Him praise is to be unthankful for His kindnesses. (Luke 6:35) An unthankful heart breeds discontentment and contempt where we no longer give God praise and thanks.

Romans 1:21

If we are not to fall into the sins of forgetfulness of His mercies or an unthankful spirit, we must cultivate a spirit and heart of praise. Our soul must be awakened to praise.

If we are not to fall prey to forgetting God's blessings and unthankfulness we must fix our heart of God.

Psalms 108:1

We need to meditate on His works and His ways.

Psalms 77:11-14

We need to recount His benefits.

Psalms 103:2

We need to ponder His unspeakable gift.

II Corinthians 9:15

Here is the thing about praise that we see from Luke even though I believe their praise stemmed from false motivation. When we offer praise publically, the natural outcome is that others join in. Someone described praise as a social spirit calling for social expression – the person who praises God desires to do so in the hearing of others and desires his praise to be joined by others.

Psalms 34:3 "Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt His name together."

Psalms 40:10 "I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and salvation. I do not conceal your love and your truth from the great assembly."

Folks, let's be vocal and join each other in praising God. That's the great scene that John describes around the throne that when the four creatures give God praise, the 24 elders fall down and worship God as well and all heaven breaks forth in praise.

While all of Scripture is the unfolding drama of God's redemption of man through His Son Jesus Christ, our response for His unspeakable gift is praise.

Why is it we can praise a quarterback for a great game or praise a cook for a great meal or praise a student for academic achievement, but we seem so reluctant to give God praise? Maybe our challenge should be to write down one thing each day that we praise God for.

If we are going to follow the king, praise is expected.

If we are going to follow the king, opposition is expected.

III. IF WE ARE GOING TO FOLLOW THE KING, OPPOSITION IS EXPECTED –
v. 39-44

Isaiah 29:13 (Matthew 15:8)

Others will attempt to oppose our praise.
 They will incite us to join them in false praise.
 They will incite us to offer no praise, to keep it to ourselves.
 They will incite us through their own complacency.
 Our own sin will be a deterrent to give praise.
 Our own spiritual immaturity will deter us from giving proper praise.

The religious leaders mixed in with the crowd told Jesus to tell the disciples to stop. Rebuke them. Scold them. Reprimand them. It's wrong. Jesus told them that if they didn't continue then the very rocks would cry out. That phrase literally means to scream and refers to something that is in pain. Verse 41 says that as Jesus wept as He approached Jerusalem. That word used is the strongest word to convey sobbing. In the final verses He describes what rocks would cry out and why He was in such a sad state about the city. He knew that it would not be long and Rome would come in to squash a rebellion and would destroy the Temple and city walls. The rocks would scream out because of God's judgment on Israel for its wickedness and rejection of the king who had come as the city is laid waste in AD 70

Notice the contrast between the crowd and Jesus.
 The crowd was filled with joy
 Jesus was filled with sorrow.
 The crowd spoke of peace.
 Jesus spoke of destruction.
 The crowd spoke of glory.
 Jesus spoke of gloom.

They both wanted peace.
 The crowd wanted Him to give them political peace.
 Jesus came to offer them peace with God. He was offering Himself as the one through whom they could experience peace with God and sadly they would reject Him and the peace He offered them.

Consequently, judgment would come, not just physical judgment by destroying Jerusalem, but spiritual judgement because anyone who does not accept Jesus King and Savior will perish, a word that means to be destroyed.

If we are going to follow the king, obedience is expected, motivated by love for Him not mere duty to Him.

If we are going to follow the king, praise is expected, stemming from a heart of true gratitude. If we are going to follow the king, opposition is expected, but don't allow that to stifle your praise and worship.

Which king are you following today?