**Jesus’ Unstoppable Entry**

 ***12****The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem.****13****So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!”****14****And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written,*

***15****“Fear not, daughter of Zion;
behold, your king is coming,
    sitting on a donkey's colt!”*

***16****His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him.****17****The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness.****18****The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign.****19****So the Pharisees said to one another, “You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him.” (John 12:12-19)*

 Palm Sunday is God’s unstoppable entry into our lives, inviting us to recognize Jesus’ true identity. Greetings to you dear brothers and sisters in Christ, as we are gathered here today to remember our Lord’s royal entry into Jerusalem. Truly Palm Sunday is one of the most beautiful celebrations, mainly because it reminds us that Jesus did not avoid His peoples’ ignorance about Himself but rather entered among them and prepared them for His death and resurrection with love. Thus, we are going to speak about people’s stance towards the Lord as He processed into the city of Jerusalem and then tie that into our daily lives. My prayer is that God would revive our spirits to know the Lord in a greater way through this message. Let’s go through the event and then think deeply about it…

 The main issue connected to the Palm Sunday event is what our response is going to be when Jesus is headed in our direction – either we respond with acceptance based on faith, or rejection based on doubt. In the previous chapter in John, Jesus had resurrected Lazarus and then had attracted persecution for it, resulting in a change in His ministry. He now had to stay away from major cities and be very careful in his mission (not to be arrested by the religious leaders). When the Passover feast was about one week away, He entered Bethany where Mary anointed His feet with costly nard perfume in Lazarus’ house. Meanwhile, the news of Lazarus’ resurrection had spread to the point where the religious leadership had decided to execute Lazarus as well to get rid of the evidence, according to John the Apostle. It is after all the above that Jesus finally began His procession into Jerusalem.

Each deed that He and the crowd performed had deep meaning. The crowd came out of the city and were waving palm branches. This would take place whenever there was a military victory or when a king was returning from such a victory. This had taken place relatively recently (about a century and a half prior) with the Maccabean revolt, when a priest and his sons started a successful uprising against the Seleucid ruler and then had a similar procession.[[1]](#footnote-1) The excited crowd shouted “Hosanna!”, which, in Hebrew, meant “Save!” It could also have meant “Please save,” and “Save now!” Today it has more of a “Praise God!” meaning. The crowd also greeted Him with, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord,” an expression reserved for the Coming Messiah. “Even the King of Israel,” they said, correctly ascertaining, however imperfectly, Jesus general motive.

 Jesus’ deeds, in turn, were not a rejection of those things at all, but rather an acceptance of the crowd’s invitation to Kingship, but with a different goal. He found a donkey, which was consistent with His people’s kings’ means of transport; the use of horses was not popularized in their area then. He sat on it, showing that He knew what He was doing as King – that He was not pulling back from His kingly calling anymore. His kingdom, however, would be of a different kind. It is interesting that even the animal on which he sat was a purebred male donkey, which was the royal standard of animal, connected to a peace-bringing ruler and not an oppressive and conquering one. Jesus came to be glorified, but not by ascending a golden throne, but a cross. God-in-the-flesh came to be king over Israel, but first He would need to be glorified by His death and resurrection. Notice God’s priorities here.

 There is a story that shows peoples’ weakness when it comes to the latter subject. There was once a group of deer hunters who went out and split up into pairs. The very same night one of the hunters came staggering toward camp, with a huge deer on his shoulders. “Where is your buddy?” it was asked of him. “O, he had some sort of stroke and is a couple miles behind up the trail.” “You left him laying there and carried the deer back?” “Well,” said the hunter, “I figured no one was going to steal my buddy.” Often, by not recognizing what is important, namely what is Godly, we go after things that are temporary, material and falsely glorious.

 The question is: when Jesus approaches us in our daily lives to present Himself to us, ought to ask ourselves if we recognize who the One who invites us really is… Do we recognize He Who invites us as our King Whom we should obey and before Whom we should humble ourselves? Or are we going to be like that stupid hunter, thinking that Jesus was just a political teacher, cultural guru, or professor of ethics? May the Lord give us the grace to recognize Him as God Who desires to approach our life-doors and bring us under the protection of His Father as a Victorious King. May our eyes be opened in this regard, and may we see just how serious Jesus is, as He waits for us to know Him as Lord and King. If some of us have already done this, then our calling is to share His identity with others at every opportunity that arises.

 Finally, whatever our response turns out to be, God is still going to come to us – it is not possible to stop the opportunities to be saved through Jesus; the only thing we can do is either to reject Him or to accept Him and be changed. The main issue connected to the Palm Sunday event is what our response is going to be when Jesus is headed in our direction – either we respond with acceptance based on faith, or rejection based on doubt. Palm Sunday is God’s unstoppable entry into our lives, inviting us to recognize Jesus’ true identity. God bless you all. Amen.

1. See pastor for more information, if you’re interested in that history. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)