

Rejoicing and Weeping **Luke 19:28-44**

We are going to take a break from where we're at in our study of Luke and jump forward about 6 months in the timeline of Jesus' ministry to look at the Triumphal Entry, which is what we commemorate on Palm Sunday. So we'll be in Luke 19 today.

The headlines this week have been all about the deadly shooting at a Christian School in Nashville on Monday (Picture) – a terrible tragedy for those families and that community, and something that affects all of us when we hear about it. It makes us think about our own kids and schools and how horrible it would be if something like that happened here.

Only three days before that the headlines were all about the deadly tornado (Picture) that ripped through Mississippi, killing at least 26 people. And again, it makes us think about how horrible it would be if that happened here.

News about major tragedies and catastrophes demands our attention and causes us think about things beyond just our normal, day-to-day activities, and the Bible tells us there's intention and purpose behind that. These things should have a sobering effect and as we grapple with them, the Bible reveals they should cause us to think about something that's coming in the future.

On the day Jesus triumphantly entered Jerusalem and was received as Israel's Messiah, we're going to see he was thinking about something beyond the crowds and fanfare. He was thinking about something that brought him to a place of overwhelming grief. And it's something very similar to what tragedies are to make us think about today. So I want us to look at what was on Jesus' mind on Palm Sunday and talk about how that relates with us today.

We've seen how Jesus' fame was spreading in our study of Luke, and the Triumphal Entry is even 6 months further along, so his fame was at its highest level when he entered Jerusalem.

Read Luke 19:28-35.

²⁸ And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹ When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is

called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples,³⁰ saying, "Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here.³¹ If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this: 'The Lord has need of it.'"³² So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them.³³ And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?"³⁴ And they said, "The Lord has need of it."³⁵ And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it.

This shows us some things that happened that were probably prearranged by Jesus for this significant occasion. There are just a couple things I want to point out in these verses. One is that what Jesus was doing was very intentional in regard to fulfilling the prophecies about him being the Messiah. To ride into Jerusalem on a colt wasn't something he would normally do. He was doing it for a purpose.

Matthew 21:4-5 mentions: *"This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying,⁵ "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'" This prophecy was in Zech. 9:9 and the people were very aware of it. They were also very aware of the promise God made to King David in 2 Samuel 7:12-13: "When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.¹³ He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." This was referring to Solomon right away, but ultimately to the Messiah and his everlasting kingdom.*

It was very interesting to learn that when David designated Solomon to be his heir, he actually had him ride into Jerusalem on his donkey to proclaim him as king (1 Kings 1:33, 38, 44). The parallel between that and what Jesus was doing on Palm Sunday was unmistakable.

So, in light of these prophecies, the people of Israel had been looking for the King who would fulfill them. And by doing what Jesus did, he was making a bold statement that he was that King. Prior to this time he would repeatedly say, "My time has not yet come." But that wasn't the case any longer. His time had come. And he wasn't holding back from identifying himself as the Messiah.

The other significant thing I see was Jesus' posture of humility... riding on the colt of a donkey was a sign of humility. Leon Morris says, "*A king on a donkey was distinctive. The donkey was the mount of a man of peace, a merchant or a priest. A king might ride on a donkey on occasion but he would be more likely to appear on a mighty war horse. Zechariah's prophecy saw the Messiah as the Prince of peace.*" The people were full of nationalistic zeal when it came to their expectations of the Messiah, and they would have expected him to come as a conquering king to overthrow the Romans, but that's not who Jesus was. He didn't come to start a war with Rome, he came to bring peace on earth to those who had become enemies of God in their sin. And that's what we see here. Later on in the week, this was one of the things that resulted in the crowd turning against Jesus and condemning him.

After Jesus mounted the colt, he began his approach to Jerusalem. There's a popular spot in Jerusalem where you can stand and take pictures. To the west you can see the famous temple mount, which is currently occupied by the Dome of the Rock with its shiny golden roof, and to the east you see a valley that drops down and then rises up on the other side to another mountain ridge that's covered with olive trees, and that's the Mount of Olives. That's exactly where these things were taking place.

Read Luke 19:36-40.

³⁶ And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. ³⁷ As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works 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!" ³⁹ And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." ⁴⁰ He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."

So it was Jesus' disciples that began the celebration – not just the 12, but many more who were devoted to him. They were spreading their cloaks on the ground before him, which Leon Morris sees as a triumphal carpet for him to ride on. As he rode down from the Mount of Olives they began praising him as their King – the Messiah sent from God who would bring peace with God and glory in the heavens. Matthew records that the huge crowds that had come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover soon joined in shouting these praises. Matthew 21:9 says: "*And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were*

shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”

The Reformation Study Bible says, spreading cloaks on the ground and shouting “Hosanna to the Son of David” indicates that the crowd recognized Jesus’ claim to be the Messiah. Hosanna is a Hebrew expression meaning “Save now.” The people were expecting Jesus to deliver them from Rome and lead in glorious victory.

The Pharisees saw what was happening too, only they weren’t at all in agreement and were very upset, so they tried to tell Jesus to stop what the people were doing, but he didn’t, saying, *“Even if the people kept quiet, the rocks would cry out.”* Jesus truly was God’s anointed Deliverer. His time had come to save his people – only in a way that none of them imagined.

So it was an incredible day and exuberant and joyous celebration by the crowds of people. And you might assume Jesus would be completely tuned in on all the excitement, but Luke continues the story by giving a look into what Jesus was thinking and feeling that is much, much different.

Read Luke 19:41-44.

⁴¹ And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴² saying, “Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side ⁴⁴ and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

So this took place at that very same time and is a stark contrast to the joyous celebration of the people. It almost seems out of place. But when Jesus saw the admiration of the people, he knew it was only skin deep and founded on faulty expectations. He knew the attitude would change quickly during the week when he didn’t do what they wanted him to do. He knew the crowds would reject him and join with the Pharisees and Jewish leaders in calling out for his death. And he knew the city of Zion would ultimately reject the Gospel and the church as well in the coming years.

And he knew what that would mean for them. It would result in God's righteous judgment falling on them about 40 years later. Hundreds of thousands would die in Jerusalem from civil war and famine, and hundreds of thousands more at the hands of the Roman army. The Jewish historian Josephus writes about the grizzly details and unimaginable atrocities. And it ended in 70 AD when the Roman army breached the walls of Jerusalem, slaughtered most of the people and demolished the city. Not one stone was left upon another. This is what Jesus foresaw that day when he rode into the city. So much hype and fanfare, but they would soon reject him and bring down horrific judgment upon themselves.

What does this have to do with us? Throughout this week it made me think about a similar contrast between what's happening in the world and the coming judgment of God when Christ returns again. The vast majority of the people in the world have rejected Christ and Truth of Scripture and are going about their busy lives, oblivious to the coming Day of Judgment. Jesus actually talked about it during the week following his Triumphal Entry. He says in Matthew 24:29-31: *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."*

He will gather his elect and then begin to pour out judgment on the wicked – all those who have rejected him. The book of Revelation foretells the horrific details. It will be even worse than what they experienced in Jerusalem. But most of the world will not heed the warnings. They will be unaware, just like the people of Israel on that Palm Sunday. Jesus says in Matthew 24:36-39: *"But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. ³⁷ For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man."*

This day is coming and Christ has called us to be ready and watchful so that we are not caught off guard. Paul writes this in 1 Thess. 5:2-11: *"For you yourselves*

are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. ⁴ But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. ⁵ For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶ So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing."

The contrast we've seen of what was happening on Palm Sunday should remind us to live our lives in a way that we are prepared for Christ's return. And whenever we see or hear about tragedies and catastrophes that happen in our world, like we've seen this week, they are to be a reminder as well. Jesus said that these are the beginning of birth pains, reminding us that labor and delivery aren't far off. We need to be prepared, and that involves being prepared ourselves, but also being involved in helping others prepare. That's why we come together for church and small groups – to encourage and build one another up. That's why we seek to influence the unbelievers God has placed in our lives – letting our light shine so that they might see and take notice and we might have the opportunity to point them to Christ.

Let us not be like the people of Israel who were oblivious to God's coming judgment, but let us seek to live in light of it every day.