

Journey Mercies – Luke 19:28-40

Lk 19:28-40; If you were away for Spring Break, I trust you feel the same way I do – it's good to get away, and it's good to be home; Thankful for both
We were in PA at HBC Union County, where Becky spoke at a women's retreat while I preached at their services; And as always, we came away blessed
Especially so, b/c I never ceased to be encouraged by the like-minded believers in our Fellowship; God is good, and it's quite a treasure to see him moving there . . .
Just like he's moving here

- That said (**Intro**), we're commemorating Palm Sunday this weekend – the day when Jesus entered Jerusalem to the praises of his followers
A day, when you get right down to it, that marked the beginning of the end; The end of his journey; A journey that began with palms, and ended with nails

And I want to take some time to *reflect* on that journey; B/c there are some lessons we can't afford to miss for ours; Journey mercies if you will, for our *lives*

[28] *And when he had said these things* [*he* being Jesus; and *these things* referring to the parable he just told in Jericho about his kingdom and the way God had been bringing it about], *he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem* [up, b/c Jerusalem was at a much higher elevation than Jericho].

[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.*
Let's stop there for now

- The place was the **Mt of Olives** overlooking Jerusalem – just east of temple about a half mile across the Kidron Valley; It would have looked something like this
And just beyond that was *Bethany* (**map**) – a small village on *eastern* slopes of the Mt of Olives, near *Bethphage*; That's the place

And the time, was 5 days before the crucifixion of Jesus; Good Friday; And 5 days before Passover*****

When the population of Jerusalem would swell, with people from all over Palestine; God-fearing worshippers, who came to remember and celebrate all that he had done
So it was a journey for *everybody* involved; Full of anticipation, and risk, and sacrifice – just like ours; Just like our journey through life

And lesson #1 is this . . .

Don't be afraid to follow where he leads (v28)

V28 – *he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem*; IOW he led the way

And Matthew says in his account (Mt 20:29), that *as they went out of Jericho* [he and the disciples], *a great crowd followed him*; They followed

And make no mistake, they did so at great risk; B/c not only was it uphill and dry, it was 15 miles of one of the most treacherous and thief-ridden roads in all of Israel

In fact, it was the very place where the Good Samaritan helped a man who *fell* among robbers; It was brutal; And yet, they followed

And don't forget the risk posed by the *religious* authorities; In Jerusalem; Who were actually *looking* for Jesus, and wanted to kill him; Including those associated w/ him
And on top of that, the *political* authorities; Who not only had a short fuse, but crushed those who upset the apple cart or threatened their rule
The point is, they were walking into the heart of the enemy camp, with one of the most controversial figures in all of history; And yet they followed where he led

- Which is just the opposite of what we do sometimes
Jesus leads in the way of righteousness, and we walk in sin; He leads down the narrow path, and we take the wide one
Or maybe God's leading you to be a missionary; And instead of packing your bags to go, you busy yourself with lesser things and try to ignore it; Or obsess on the risks
Or succumb to analysis-paralysis; Or allow the evil one to prey on your fears
And instead of denying *yourself*, you deny the Lord

Is that you? Are you afraid to follow where he leads? Or scared to even consider it?

Is there a *neighbor* you need to meet? Or a place you need to *go*? Or people you need to *reach*, but you're not doing it b/c you're afraid to follow? Is that you?

If so, I'm going to give you an opportunity at the end of our service . . .

To come down front, get on your knees, and confess your fears; Confess them, and make a commitment to follow, no matter what; It's lesson #1

#2 is this . . .

Don't hesitate to do what he says (29-32)

Just like the 2 disciples in v29

[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.'"*

Notice that Jesus is *not* suggesting they *steal* the donkey; It was culturally acceptable in those days for a dignitary to procure the use of personal property

[32] *So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them.*

They *went away*; They did what he said; Without question and without hesitation
Even though they didn't have the whole picture, and didn't understand why
He spoke, and they obeyed

- Would that characterize you? Do you do what God says without hesitation?
Like when he says love your neighbor and gives you the impulse – do you respond?
How about forgiving those around you? Or doing good to those who persecute you? Or serving your brothers and sisters in Christ? Or standing up for justice?
Do you make it a practice to do what God says without hesitation?

Or do you hem and haw? And rationalize? Or procrastinate? Or ignore him altogether?

I hope not; B/c Jesus said in Jn 10:27 – *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.* They *do* what I say, and do what I do

Hesitate no more; Make a commitment to decrease the time between the Spirit's impulse, and your reaction; Just like the two disciples on Palm Sunday

3rd . . .

Don't refuse to give what he wants (33-36)

[33] *And as they were untying the colt* [the colt of a donkey], *its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?"* [34] *And they said, "The Lord has need of it."* [once again, they did what Jesus said] [35] *And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it.* [36] *And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road.*

The whole cloak thing was an expression of honor; Like rolling out the red carpet
And the Apostle John says, in his gospel, that *palm branches* were waved – symbols of victory and national pride

The point being, everybody gave; The owners of the colt gave their means of transportation; The disciples gave their coats; The crowds, the same
Even the owners of the *trees* gave something; Nobody refused
Whatever Jesus wanted, and whatever Jesus needed – they gave it

➤ And we should too; Starting with our lives
What Jesus wants, first and foremost, is our *lives*; The full surrender and passionate devotion of our heart, soul, mind, & strength
Starting with your decision to *receive* Christ

Which I did when I was 4 years old; My Mom let me sit in on an after-school Bible time each week, that she led in our home; She called it JOY Club
An acronym that stood for Jesus, Others, and You
“J is for Jesus cause he has first place; O is for others we meet face to face; Y is for you in whatever you do, so put yourself third and spell J-O-Y joy”; A bit hokey, but true

And after one of those JOY club meetings, I asked my Mom how I could be saved; I was convicted of my sin, and wanted to give my life to Jesus
So she sat me down on my brother's bed, explained the gospel, and led me in a prayer of salvation; It's literally the first memory I have in life
Which is quite appropriate, b/c it's the first moment I really lived
When I responded to his call, received what he offered, and gave what he wants

➤ That's where your journey *starts*; *For whoever would save his life will lose it* [Jesus said], *but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.* (Lk 9:24)
Whoever gives it up, whoever surrenders it, whoever *yields* himself to his lordship, begins a journey of mercy; Don't refuse to give what he wants

4th, from v37-38 . . .

Don't neglect to worship like he deserves (37-38)

[37] *As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives* [in full view of the entire city, friend and foe alike]—*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!"*

IOW they worshipped him; Like he deserved; Openly, joyfully, loudly, boldly, & freely

➤ *Openly*, in that *the whole multitude* took part; For *everyone* to see

They didn't wait for the temple – you know, the *designated* place of worship; Politically correct and all

Where you're *free* to be open about your faith, as long as it's within the walls of a church; On Sunday from the hours of 9 to noon; They didn't do that
And they didn't *withhold* their worship; In the name of “my faith is private”; That would have been *unimaginable* to them; And an insult to Jesus
No, no; They worshipped him openly

And *joyfully*; *The whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God* it says
And how could you not? Having found the pearl of greatest price, and the Savior you've been looking for – how could you do any other? How could you *not* be joyful?
It's not only what he deserves, it's natural

3rd, they worshipped him *loudly*

The whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice
Not some timid expression fit for a 3rd grade piano recital; Or a golfer, who gets the obligatory applause for a bogey

No, there were *shouts* of praise; Loud ones; Like we're going to experience in heaven
The voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder (Rev 19:6)
It was loud, it's *gonna* be loud, and it *should* be loud; B/c that's what he deserves

4th, they worshipped him *boldly*; Calling him a *King*; Knowing full well that to do so was considered treason, and was punishable by death
And, it risked the wrath of religious leaders in the meantime
It was bold; But once again, it didn't matter; B/c that's what he deserves

And last, they worshipped him *freely*; Complete with palm branches
Waving them to express with their *actions*, the same things they were saying with their words; That “you Lord, are victorious, and glorious, and worthy of our praise”
Much like we raise or clap our hands now; Or bow our heads; Or bend our knee
It was free, and it was meaningful; In addition to being open, joyful, loud, and bold

➤ And the same should be true now; B/c that's what God deserves
The furthest thing from stoic, apathetic, indifferent, or passive; *None* of those words should describe your worship; Ever
And if they do, you need to repent; It's lesson #4

And then last . . .

Don't fail to persevere under pressure (39-40)

In the midst of all this worship, it says in v39 . . .

[39] *Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples."*
What? Why would they say such a thing?

B/c they were concerned about reprisals from the government who didn't take the proclamation of a new king lightly; And, they didn't believe
They didn't *believe* Jesus was the Messiah; They didn't *believe* he was the Savior of the world – Hosanna; Which would have made the whole thing *blasphemous* in their eyes
So they pressured him, and presumably the crowd, to stop

➤ But thank God they didn't, b/c it was true; And *is* true
Just like Jesus implied in v40 – “*I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.*”
“IOW my praise and glory is so inevitable, and my worship so deserved, that nature *itself* would take up the cause if they dropped it”

Which it didn't, b/c *they* didn't; They persevered; They stayed the course; They *kept* the faith; They ran the race; They made the journey

And it's ours to do the same (**Summary**); To follow when we're afraid; To obey when we'd rather not; To give of our lives; And to worship like he deserves
Don't fail in that; Don't fail to persevere, even under pressure
B/c the only one to miss out, will be you

Pray – If you feel like I've been speaking to you; If you're afraid to follow where God leads these days; Or you're hesitant to do what he says, or give what he wants, or worship like he deserves – let me encourage you to come down front, get on your knees, and ask for help (music)

It could be something you need to *do*; It could be something you need to *stop*; It could be a desire for greater freedom in worship, or greater fervency in prayer
It could be strength to persevere in a difficult situation
Whatever the case, come now, get before the Lord, and call out to him (allow time)
And let the worship team sing this song over you

Before I close in prayer, if you'd like to remain up front during the offertory and closing song, please feel free

Prayer – Lord, in the words of Paul, help us to *count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing you* (Phil 3); Help us to live our lives and travel our journey with the mercies you give; Persevering for your glory
And help us steward the tithes we now give, for the same reason