

THE UNTRIUMPHAL ENTRY

Saturday, August 12

Reading: Mark 11:1-11

Mark 11:8 *Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields.*
9 *Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"*

We often call Jesus' ride into Jerusalem on a donkey the "Triumphal Entry." But in fact it was a sad day for Jesus. The crowds greeted Him with praise from Psalm 118:25-26. They took off their outer cloaks and spread them in the street and waved palm branches which were a national symbol for Israel. We might compare it to waving the American flag. They cried out "Hosanna" which means save now (also from Psalm 118). Some even recognized Jesus' coming as the fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9 about the King riding on a donkey. But Luke's gospel tells us that while the crowds cheered, Jesus wept.

As He approached Jerusalem and saw the city, He wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you." (Luke 19:41-44)

These crowds were cheering Jesus as their political King. They wanted Him to drive out the Romans and set up His throne in Jerusalem. They were not looking for a suffering Savior who would die to give victory over their greatest enemies – sin and death. When Jesus did not fulfill their expectations they abandoned Him. That is why no one protested at His trial and crucifixion. He was not the kind of King they wanted! So Jesus cried as He looked 40 years into their future and saw the destruction of Jerusalem and its people.

POINTS TO PONDER:

1. "Blessed is He Who Comes in the Name of the Lord." This phrase from Psalm 118 was meant to be the welcome of a king. But Jesus knew their hearts. Only a few days later He would say, "You will not see Me again until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.'" Until they were ready to receive Jesus on His terms and not their own, they could not receive His salvation. While the crowds saw the fulfillment of prophecy in Jesus' actions, they still did not comprehend His mission. They could not grasp that Jesus' kingdom must first be bought with His blood. How do we sometimes lack the spiritual insight to see what God is doing in our lives? In the world?
2. "He Wept Over It" (Matthew 19:41). What is our reaction when we see the sin and unbelief around us? When we see people doing religious things but with no real faith in Jesus, how should we feel? Jesus saw the empty religion and vain praise of the crowd and wept over them. He was concerned for their final fate if they refused to turn to Him and be saved. How can we develop a tender heart for the lost? When we read or watch the news, does it make us frustrated or does it cause us to lift up our nation and its people in prayer? How are we making a difference in the hearts and lives of people for Christ?