

Luke 19:28-44 BLESSING THE KING 4-13-14

(Luke 19) This morning we go back to a passage I mentioned briefly last Lord's Day. Luke 19:28-44

After He had said these things, He was going on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29 When He approached Bethphage and Bethany, near the mount that is called Olivet, He sent two of the disciples, 30 saying, "Go into the village ahead of you; there, as you enter, you will find a colt tied on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here. 31 "If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say, 'The Lord has need of it.'" 32 So those who were sent went away and found it just as He had told them. 33 As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" 34 They said, "The Lord has need of it." 35 They brought it to Jesus, and they threw their coats on the colt and put Jesus on it. 36 As He was going, they were spreading their coats on the road. 37 As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, 38 shouting: "BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" 39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples. 40 But Jesus answered, "I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!" 41 When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. 43 "For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, 44 and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."

Today the church celebrates what we call Palm Sunday. I was so surprised when I moved to Pittsburgh and discovered that we celebrate Palm Sunday here. I thought it was just a Florida Holiday. But no, Palm Sunday is celebrated in Iceland too because it is a day of religious significance for Christians. It is the day when Jesus entered Jerusalem - how? We usually say, "triumphantly." In my Bible, maybe yours, you find a heading that says, "Triumphal Entry Into Jerusalem." This, you see, is the story of Palm Sunday. But what we read doesn't mention palms nor does it mention Sunday. Both of those do get a mention in the other gospels. In the parallel accounts of this event we are told that as Jesus rode into Jerusalem the people not only spread their garments on the road but also palm leaves. If Luke's version were all we had I suppose we would annually celebrate Garment Sunday. But the other gospels do mention the palms. They tell us it happened on the first day of the week and there is one other well-known feature they have that is missing in Luke. Do you know what that is? Hint: "ho-ho-ho". How about the term "hosanna?" We used to sing a neat little song that said, "Ho-ho-ho, hosanna, ha-ha-hallelujah, he-he-he he saved me and I've got the joy of the Lord." All the songs about Palm Sunday mention, "hosanna." "Ride on, ride on in majesty, hark all the tribes hosanna sing." "Hosanna, hosanna, the little children

sang.” “All Glory, laud and honor to Thee Redeemer King, to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring.” Where is your hosanna, Luke? Luke omits it along with the palms and the day of the week and that’s okay because none of those things really tell you what’s happening here. And, by the way, what is happening here?

Let me see if I can explain it. For a whole year now Jesus had been ministering in the land of the Jews, but outside Jerusalem. His movement had become tremendously popular, as he went from place to place teaching and healing and picking up new disciples. More and more the people were beginning to see Jesus as a possible Messiah. They hoped that by his miracle-working power he would overthrow Rome and establish Israel as a purified and independent world power. 19:**11** *While they were listening to these things, Jesus went on to tell a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately.* But there was opposition from the power-brokers of Jewish religion and government. Jesus was seen by them as a threat to their position and reputation. They had plotted to kill Jesus and were just waiting for Jesus to enter Jerusalem for the Passover. Jerusalem was their home field, their lair and Jesus was coming. So the scribes and the Pharisees awaited Christ’s entry into Jerusalem so they could get rid of him. The disciples were excited about it because they saw His entry in terms of conquest. And here now, the hour had come. This is what the disciples of Jesus, the 12, and many others had waited for - Jesus was ready to make His move. This was His triumphal entry! At least, that is what my Bible’s heading says. Was it really?

In some ways it certainly was. In this event Jesus was presented to Jerusalem and the nation of Jews as their King. The strewn clothes and palms was the typical honor given to conquering monarchs. The cry went up **38a** *Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.* Granted, Jesus would have appeared an unusual conqueror, riding not on a mighty Warrior steed but on a peace-time young donkey. Yet, even that would fuel the fire of Messianic fervor. The Jews would likely remember Zechariah 9:**9** *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.* You see, everything that took place here: the young donkey as a mount, the garments on the road, the praises and the chants all served to make one grand statement. They said, “Jesus is Messiah, the long awaited Son of David.” He is the new king - that is what the multitudes were shouting and Jesus never denied it. Before this Jesus had sought to conceal His identity as Messiah. He had moved away from the limelight. He seemed

uninterested in public acclaim, but in this great day, Jesus was going to press the issue of who He was. The hour, or the week of decision had come. Jesus had entered Jerusalem as a King. The disciples were determined to see that Jesus got His kingdom. The Pharisees were determined that he would not. Only Jesus knew that both groups were wrong. Opposing Jesus, like the Jewish leaders, is always wrong. But the disciples were confused about what kind of kingdom Jesus would rule. They expected Jesus to be seated as King on Monday and they were excited and thrilled but as for Jesus 41 *When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it.* Jesus wasn't excited by what we call the triumphal entry. He was looking to the next Sunday when He would enjoy a triumphal exit (P) - a triumphal exit from the tomb. The Lord had already said that when he came into Jerusalem there would be disputes, an arrest, a mocking, a scourging, a sentence and a death. But before we get to all that we focus on the so-called triumphal entry and the practical lessons we find for us who love the Lord

I find in our story three exhortations for us. Exhortation #1 is to be available for the King. ® I like the part of the story about how Jesus obtained his humble mount. 30-34 *Go into the village ahead of you; there, as you enter, you will find a colt tied on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here. 31 "If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say, 'The Lord has need of it.'"32 So those who were sent went away and found it just as He had told them. 33 As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?"34 They said, "The Lord has need of it.* That is what Jesus told them to say. That's all they did say. That is all that needed to be said. "The Lord needs it." Is that enough for you? Are you and your possessions available to the Lord so that all He has to say is, "Okay, I need your talent, your money, your Wednesday evenings." Are they His for the asking? I know that's the case for so many of you. All you have to hear is, "the Lord needs it" and you say, "It's His." When someone needs a car you hand over the keys. When the nursery worker doesn't show up I don't worry because some of you are quick to say, "If the Lord needs me in the nursery I'm available." These last two weeks it has been a privilege to see this willing spirit on display from so many of you. It's a wonderful thing to see and I'm convinced that the attitude is rooted in a general recognition on the part of Christ's servants that all I have belongs to the Lord. Without contradicting the notion of private property, it is the Biblical way of seeing for us to view our possessions as belonging to the Lord and only being loaned out to us as His stewards, His managers to the end that we distribute our resources not as one who asks, "What do I do with what is mine?" but as one who asks, "Father, how should I

manage and invest what is yours?" Jesus got the young donkey because some disciples had already determined that it was the Lord's donkey. How about your donkey? Your car, your house, your money, is it available for the Master? How about you? And your time? Are you available for the King? Or, are you too busy, too scattered, too committed to other things? That's the first exhortation - to be available for the King.

Exhortation #2 is to be a worshipper of the King ®. Now, by "worshipper" here I don't mean someone who attends worship services. A lot of folks attend ball games but aren't really fans. Just so, a lot of folks attend services but aren't really worshippers. I mean, by *worshippers*, folks like we have in our story who were really blessing Jesus. 37c *the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen.* Isn't that great? They were rejoicing in God. But wait a minute - the Pharisees didn't think it was great. This is so often the case that when a group of people get really turned on to the Lord, when a part of the church experiences revival that it threatens the ones who want a more comfortable, respectable, less fervent brand of Christianity. Joseph Tracy writes about the reactions of some to the Great Awakening Revival under Jonathan Edwards in Northampton, Massachusetts. He says, *They must of necessity think ill, either of the work at Northampton or of the religion which they themselves professed and perhaps taught. It was inevitable, therefore, human nature being what it is, that evidence should be sought and found against the work at Northampton; that all real faults should be gathered and reported; that a bad interpretation should be put upon every thing that the hearer or beholder could not understand, that every evil report be exaggerated, till the sum total met the wishes of those (Listen Now) of those who were anxious to condemn the work, let the work condemn them.*" In other words, people must criticize revival, lest the revival criticize them. This has been going on since the fall and we see this attitude on display on Palm Sunday. The worship was too loud, too enthusiastic. 39 *Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples."* Why would they say that? What did they see that was so wrong in this? A couple of things I think. One is that they feared what the Romans might do if the Jews enthroned their own King. That wouldn't sit very well with the loyal subjects of Caesar. The luke-warm are always wanting to make sure that our religion doesn't upset the people with political power. And parading in a new King would certainly do that. So, the pharisees said, *You had better calm your boys down or else we could get in trouble.* They were Roma-phobes, fearful of the Romans. Secondly, they were envious. Envy is common but have you ever thought how terrible it is? It is

sorrow over another person's good. Envy turns people into fools, distorts their thinking, twists their perspectives. One of the things you hear about winning basketball teams is that they exhibit great teamwork because no one cares who gets the credit for their success. To the Pharisees however, Jesus was a rival for the devotion and esteem of the people. So, they would not see Jesus have His honor. On the other hand, the disciples didn't care about Rome and they had to see Jesus honored. At this critical point in the career of Jesus the disciples remembered, they thought about, what Jesus had been doing, all that they had seen and heard and they burst forth with joyful praise. They were freed up from petty self-interest because they got caught up in the magnificence of Christ.

So, the snooty ole Pharisees told Jesus to rebuke them. Certainly, certainly if Jesus were not worthy of praise, certainly if He were not the Messiah this is what He should have and would have done - but He didn't do it. Far from it. In fact, Jesus says 40 *I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out.* What's he getting at? I think the point is that somebody had to praise Jesus on this occasion. It would not have been right for Him to enter the city without it. So, if man wouldn't do it - the stones would. And He isn't talking about Mick Jagger and his boys. He's referring to the Igneous family so prevalent near Jerusalem. In Luke 3 Jesus says this in verse 8 *do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.* Again we have mention of the stones and the point is somewhat the same. God could, if He desired, turn rocks into men of faith. He could raise up the stones to worship Him. Oh yes He could. He offers the privilege of worship to humans. He offers that opportunity to you, but if you refuse God hasn't lost anything. You are the loser. Somebody gets to praise our Jesus. Will it be you or the stones? (Acts 13) This is a critical chapter in Biblical history, for in it we read of how the Jews, as a group, rejected the gospel and God turned from them to shed His grace on the Gentiles. Paul is in Antioch and seeing a great stir over the gospel 44-46 *The next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of the Lord. 45 But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming. 46 Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.* Do you see what he is saying? The offer was first made to you, but if you won't worship Christ the privilege will go to the Gentiles 47 *For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I have placed you as a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the end of the earth.* But what if the Gentiles would not embrace the word? Might God have begun to

raise up stones to honor His Son? John 4 says that the Father is seeking worshippers and I'm convinced that what the Father seeks the Father finds. Maybe you have heard the prayer, "Oh Lord, do something with us and if you can't do something with us then do something without us. But please do something." Let me tell ya - He will. You can be a sorry, puffed-up Pharisee, you can do what you like but God will get His praise! Hey man, it's you or the stones! The greatest privilege we have is to worship God; it is the highest calling of the human spirit but you can forfeit that to rocks. God does whatever it takes to get His worshippers. He broke Jacob's hip but He got His heart. He swallowed Jonah whole. He blinded Saul of Tarsus. He turned Nebuchadnezzar into a bird. He struck Martin Luther with lightning - what must He do with you? I don't know either, but you better pray that He does something with you cause He may do it without you. Jesus says it is either you or the stones, so will you leave worship to the stones or will you be a worshipper of the King?

Exhortation #3 for us today is to be loyal to the King. ® If you are looking at the text you might wonder where I see this point being made. I admit that it isn't there unless you read between the lines - or read the back of the book. That's what I did. I know what happens later in this story and I'm reading that into this part. It does help explain verse 41 where we read that 41 *When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it.* Why? He had just had His triumphal entry - why weep? Jesus too had read the rest of the book. He knew what these people who shouted his praise would be doing later in the week. Many of them forsook Him; some of them denied Him, and I bet a good number stood in a different crowd and shouted, "Crucify Him!" Of course, that was on Thursday and Friday. On Palm Sunday, Jesus was very popular and the multitudes proclaimed Him as King. Does that sound familiar? Isn't that happening every week in our land? We sing praise to His name on Sunday and on Friday we scorn His teaching. On Sunday Jesus is a hero, but on Thursday we aren't sure we even know Him. How many of us speak for Jesus on Sunday but seem to have no conscience in opposing His teaching on sexual ethics and more later in the week. We love Him, but we find His teachings embarrassing. Where is our loyalty? Listen to this Hosea 6:4 *What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? For your loyalty is like a morning cloud And like the dew which goes away early.*® I think it is great to hear you sing praises to Jesus. I love it when Christians speak boldly of their commitment to Christ and claim they would do anything for King Jesus. That's what Peter said, Luke 22:33 *"Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!* A great pledge of loyalty! I asked our son, Andrew,

when he was seven, what he would do if a soldier pointed a gun at him and said, “Curse Jesus or die.” Andrew, without hesitation said, “I’d take the gun away and make him become a Christian.” That’s what Peter would do too - but he was more realistic. He said *Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!* and by the end of that chapter Peter had denied Christ three times. Hosea 6:4 *What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? For your loyalty is like a morning cloud And like the dew which goes away early.* One thing I have learned in pastoral ministry is that the folks who, at some point, seem to be most enamored with me, end up, many times, despising me. I get a little nervous now when someone seems overly enthusiastic about Pastor Dan. Someone said wisely that when people think you are a messiah they usually end up crucifying you. I get it. I’ve experienced the wrath of some like that. They used to tell me I was a star. They used to say I was a great man. They used to say. Hosea 6:4 *What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? For your loyalty is like a morning cloud And like the dew which goes away early.* I can understand people changing their views on me, but Jesus? Jesus sure had his share of fans. It was a multitude that shouted for Him as He rode into Jerusalem. They loved Jesus until they found out that His kingdom was not what they thought it would be. A lot of people are very committed to husband and to wife until they find out that marriage isn’t all they thought it would be. I urge you to do better than that! If God’s Spirit has taken up residence in you, you can do better. Our challenge is to identify with Jesus, not only when he is riding high, not only when and where he is popular, but also when and where He is hated. The story of Jesus is about one who sank very low and rose very high. If he were a stock on the exchange He would fall to almost nothing, but then rise of the charts. Don’t sell out when Jesus is down. Keep investing in Him! ® Don’t abandon Christ when he is a Man of Sorrows because Jesus is going to rise again. He always does. Loyalty to Jesus is smart because He really will triumph. Loyalty to Jesus is also right because He really is King and a King who is ever so sacrificially loyal to his servants. So, be available for Him. Be a worshipper of Him. Be loyal to Him. The multitude shouted, “Blessed is the King” and Jesus wept. But persevering, faithful loyalty is what really blesses the King and earns not His tears but His smile.

What does loyalty to Jesus mean for you today? Is there some context in your life where you are tempted to be embarrassed by Christ? Stand up for Him there. Is there a context where you are tempted to ignore his teaching because following His word could cost you? Are you being called to invest financially in the Jesus cause, but just can't bring yourself to commit? Words are easy, but

parting with a chunk of your wealth, well that's a significant testimony to where your heart is. Jesus said you will put your treasure where your heart is. And you will invest in the One you believe in. On Palm Sunday they laid garments and palm fronds in the road and said to Jesus, "We want You as King!" Today the Lord may be asking you to lay down some funds, lay down a sick relationship, lay down a destructive habit, lay down a stronghold of pride. Whatever it is, the proclamation is the same, as we say to Jesus, "We want You as King!" King of our hearts, King of our families, King of our Church, King over all! Won't you take a few minutes before the Lord, to listen to His voice? Ask Him what He wants from you and then let's lay our treasures at His feet.