

The Significance of Palm Sunday – Then and Now (3/28/10); Lk 19:28-44

Today is PS, and I'm wondering if you've ever seen a ticker tape parade

You know, when somebody important returns home from doing something really great, and people come out to cheer and throw confetti and lavish them with praise?

Have you ever seen that?

Like when some of the soldiers (**photo**) returned home at the end of WWII – TT parade
Or when the astronauts (**photo**) came back from the moon – some of u remember that
Or more recently (**photo**) when the Yankees won the World Series

That's the idea behind Palm Sunday

Jesus had just healed ten lepers in Galilee; He gave sight to a blind man in Jericho . . .
Granted salvation to a tax collector; And to top it all off – raised Lazarus from the dead
So when he entered Jerusalem they gave him a ticker tape parade first century style
Complete with the waving of palm branches, shouts of praise, and great crowds

• But here's the thing

How many ticker tape parades do you continue to celebrate on their anniversary?
You might be a rabid Yankees fan, but I doubt you celebrate their parades
And some of you don't even know when WWII ended, let alone remember the parade
But chances are, most of u celebrated Palm Sunday last year – or at least heard it about it

Why? Why remember that "ticker tape" parade, as opposed to all the rest?

Why *that* Sunday, as opposed to all the others in Jesus' life?

And is there any lasting significance for us, or do we remember it just for nostalgia sake?
Just to prepare ourselves for Easter

• Those are the questions I want to answer, so that Palm Sunday isn't just another day in your repertoire of church attendance
I want u to understand not only why we *celebrate* it, but why it's significant for *your life*
So why don't you turn with me to Luke 19:28-44, and as we read I'll give you a bit of **background** on what's going on

28 – *These things* refer to the parable he had just told about th kingdom he was establish'g
And this occurs 5 days before his crucifixion, and the celebration of Passover
Which is important b/c Passover was one of the 3 major feasts observed in the OT . . .
When people from all over the Middle East came to Jerusalem, causing the population to swell from 25k to 125k in a matter of days
Put that together with the anticipation and mystique surrounding *Jesus*, and you start to understand why there was so much hoopla over his appearance

29 – *Bethpage and Bethany (map)* – two villages on the eastern slopes of the Mt of Olives
Which is about a ½ mile across the Kidron Valley from Jerusalem
And here's a **picture** from the Mt of Olives over looking Jerusalem – just to give you an idea of what Jesus might have seen, and where this took place

30-34 – Whether the owners of the donkey knew of Jesus or even followed him, we don't know
What we do know is that his name obviously carried a lot of weight with them

No wonder they said, *Peace in heaven and glory in the highest* – their prayers had been heard, this was it
This was the day; Hosanna is here; Salvation has come!

Did they fully understand it? Probably not
But at least they were explicit about it w/ their words, and showed it in their worship
And we should do the same

Palm Sunday was significant *then* – to welcome Jesus as *their king* . . .

And it still is now . . . To worship him as ours

Do you fully grasp the significance of your salvation? I don't; And I'm sure u don't either
But should that keep us fr expressing our praise and adoration in word/action? Never
He's king of kings and Lord of lords for crying out loud
Just b/c we can't get our minds around that, doesn't mean we should w/hold our worship or stand here like statues

Especially when u take into account what we know, compared to what *they* knew
We know the *sacrifice* Jesus went on to make – a sacrifice they couldn't have imagined
And we know the presence of his Spirit in a way they would have never thought
And we know the power of his resurrection like they wouldn't have believed
And the finality of his forgiveness, that they wouldn't have expected

We know things they didn't, which makes the overflow of *our* worship all the more necessary and meaningful
And yet when you compare the two, there's no comparison – they put us to shame

• We're going to sing *Hosanna* again to close our service
You are the God who saves us; Worthy of all our praises
Come have your way among us; We welcome you here Lord Jesus

And palm branches or not, I hope you sing that song with a renewed passion
B/c while PS was significant then, to *welcome* Jesus as their king . . .
It's significant now, to *worship* him as ours

Unfortunately, some people don't get it; And they didn't then either
Which is another significant purpose of PS

It was intended . . .

To show that some people didn't get it (v39-44)

Like the Pharisees in the crowd, from v39

They were the religious nitpickers, the legalists
Who those who saw Jesus as a threat to the law, a threat to the purity of God's people, and a threat to their hold on the religious establishment

And I can just see them scurrying around scolding the people . . .
And trying to get them to be quiet, and getting more and more frustrated . . .
Until finally they go straight to the top and say – *Teacher, rebuke your disciples.* (39)
IOW tell them to be quiet

• Why? Why would they advocate such a thing? B/c they didn't get it

35-40 – Matthew says in his account that this was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet **Zechariah**, who said –
Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! [people of God] Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Zech 9:9)

So Jesus was doing 3 things when he commandeered that donkey

- (1) He was identifying himself as the *Messiah*, the one bringing salvation
- (2) He was portraying himself as a *servant*, by entering in such a humble way
- (3) He was revealing himself as the *king*, about whom Zechariah prophesied*****

So **Palm Sunday** was significant *then* . . .

To welcome Jesus as their king (v28-38)

That's what they said in v38 – *Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!*

And Mark records them in his gospel as saying – *Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!* (Mk 11:10)

And then there were those famous words that we usually hear around PS – *Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest!*

Which is actually a Hebrew word from the OT, not a Greek word like most in the NT, that means "save us" or "you're the God who saves us"

• And here's the interesting part – they didn't just pull that word out of the blue
They used it, b/c it comes from a *Psalms* that the people sang, as they made their way to Jerusalem for the Passover
And that Psalm is Ps 118, where it says in **v25-26** – *Save us we pray, O LORD [which in Hebrew is Hosanna we pray O Lord]! O LORD, we pray, give us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!*

Sound familiar? That's v38; The very words they spoke to Jesus

B/c (A) they were on the tip of their tongue, having just sung them as they traveled
And (B) they saw *him* as the fulfillment of those words; the fulfillment of that Psalm
The answer to their prayer for a deliverer, a savior

So PS was significant *then*, to welcome Jesus as the king/savior they had been looking for
The one who would save them from tyranny, and restore their nation to the glory days of David

It was on their mind, and it came out of their mouths – explicitly so *****

• Not only that, but their words were reinforced by the waving of palm branches, and the laying of their coats on the road and on the donkey
The latter being a traditional way in first century Judaism, to welcome royalty . . .
And the former, the waving of palm branches, was a part of their worship during *another* feast that they celebrated each year – the Feast of Tabernacles

In addition to the spring, they also gathered in the fall, cut palm branches and leafy branches per God's instructions in Lev 23:40 . . .
And waved them during worship, to express their longing for a Savior and deliverer

So here they were, coming out to meet Jesus with palm branches in hand . . .
B/c they saw him as the Savior/King they had been looking for after all these centuries

They didn't *believe* that Jesus was the Promised One, the long-expected King
And therefore, to them, the people's words were blasphemous and irreverent – offensive to God and offensive to them
It's like someone using the Lord's name in vain today

So they told him to rebuke his disciples

And Jesus responds in v40 by saying – *I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.*

IOW my praise is so inevitable, and my glory so compelling . . .
That if I were to tell *them* to be quiet, nature itself would take up the cause
Inanimate objects would sing my praise

They didn't get that the worship of Jesus can't be silenced – then *or* now
That once your heart of stone is replaced w/ a heart of flesh, u *can't* be quiet (Ez 11:19)
And you *won't* be quiet
Having tasted and seen that the Lord is good, you can do no *other* than praise him

• They didn't get that the worship of Jesus can't be silenced . . .
And they didn't get that there are severe consequences for rejecting him – v41-44

42 – he's referring not to his faithful followers, but to the population at large
Saying you long for peace, but you don't have a clue as to how to get it
And now, the key to it all is hidden from you – not b/c I'm concealing myself, or concealing my message, but b/c you can't *see* it

You're looking for answers in all the wrong places . . .
Or the eyes of your hearts have been blinded by the deceit of sin . . .
Or you're content w/ the status quo in your life, and oblivious to what you're missing

44 – you didn't recognize your savior when you saw him; when he was right in front of your face; when the evidence was irrefutable
(Read 41-42, 44b)

• No matter where Jesus looked, he found cause for weeping – and I wonder if the same is true now
If he looked *back*, he saw how the nation had wasted its opp's to prepare for his coming
If he looked *within*, he saw spiritual blindness in the hearts of people
If he looked *around*, he saw religious activity that was high on form, but low on function
And if he looked *ahead*, he saw judgment (Warren Wiersbe; BEC, 255)
No wonder he wept – they didn't get it; they didn't get who he was, or why he came

Is that you? Does he weep over you?

If so, I hope you see today as the day of your visitation, and find peace

B/c while PS was significant then – to show that some people didn't get it . . .
It's significant *now* . . .

(And it still is now) . . . To make sure that we do

To make sure we *do* get that Jesus is Hosanna – the God who saves us
That *true* salvation, eternal salvation, is found in him – through faith and repentance

That *true* peace comes from the presence of *God*, *within* you – not people or things,
around you
And that there are consequences for rejecting him – consequences of eternal punishment
and eternal suffering

Don't miss your day of visitation – it may very well be right now
If Jesus is knocking at the door of your heart – get it; open it
Take that step of faith to believe, repent of your sins, and receive him into your life

And finally, PS was significant then . . .

To warn them of hardship (v43-44)

His words in v41-44 were not metaphorical

They were literally fulfilled 40 years later during the Roman siege of Jerusalem, that
brought untold death, untold suffering, and “told” destruction . . .

B/c they left a huge pile of rubble – just like Jesus said in v44

It was a warning meant to wake them from their slumber, and jolt them out of their
complacency
A warning meant to spare them from hardship, if they would only turn

That was the significance then; But now, it's . . .

(And it still is *now*) . . . To prepare us for heaven (Rev 7:9-10)

The furthest thing from hardship; This is the best part of the whole thing

We celebrate Palm Sunday to not only remember Christ's *first* triumphal entry, but to
prepare for his second, when he comes again

This time riding on the clouds

And this time, resulting in worship not just for a day, but forever

That's what the apostle John tells us we can look forward to in **Rev 7:9-10**

Where he has a vision of heaven at the end of time, and describes it by saying . . .

*After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every
nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and
before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and
crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb!"*

Do you see it?

Just like the OT believers waved their branches in longing for Hosanna . . .

And just like the PS crowd waved their branches to express the joy of their heart that
he was here, that their king had finally come . . .

That their prayers had been answered, that salvation was theirs . . .

We too, someday, will stand before the throne in *heaven*, with a crowd *far* bigger than
theirs, and with our *own* palm branches in hand . . .

To worship the King of kings and Lord of lords, forever and ever

That's why celebrating PS is significant – b/c it prepares us for heaven (**summary**)

- The question is – are you going there? Do you get it? Do you believe?
And if so, are you *ready* – are you *prepared* to worship?

If not, now would be a good time to start

A good time to prepare for *your* entry into the New Jerusalem, just like *his* into the old

Where we'll stand with God's people from every tribe, tongue, and nation . . .

To life high the name of Jesus in worship – so the stones don't have to

I guarantee you, it'll be the ultimate ticker tape parade

Except, he's going to welcome *us*, and we're going to *worship him*

So why don't you stand, and prepare your heart to do exactly that, while I pray