

**Oikos: The Passion**  
**April 13, 2014**  
**Luke 19:28-44 (Holman)**  
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As I was preparing for the message this week, a little story came to my mind. It was a story from our college years. Tanya and I attended a small liberal arts Christian college called Greenville College in Illinois, and to graduate you had to take a fine arts credit. And there were only two ways of getting that fine arts credit. You either had to take a 7:30 a.m. class on the fine arts, with lectures given by a very kind professor, but his nickname was “Monotone Martin”—so that was option number one. Option number two was your senior year, you could sign up for a January inter-term trip to go to Europe and to see the places that Monotone Martin lectured about.

So guess which one Tanya and I chose? We chose to go to Europe. I realized, as I was boarding the plane in St. Louis, St. Louis to Rome, Italy—I had never been on an airplane before. Fifteen hours—my first flight. I was either going to love it or I was going to hate it. But thankfully I survived. We got to Rome, Italy, we had that first day where you’re kind of trying get over jet lag and adjust to the time, and then we had our itinerary laid out. And one of the first sights we went to see one of those first mornings was St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome.

So of course having been a history major, having read about these places my whole life, I was so excited to get there. And we got there, and this was what you see as you step up towards the Basilica, in the courtyard there of St. Peter’s. And I was just overwhelmed. I had to get out my little guidebook and I wanted to read all about the history of the plaza and all of the different statues that were out there.



Well, there was a friend of mine whose name was Aaron, and Aaron decided—he was kind of a get-it-done-quick kind of guy—so he’s like, “Man, we’re just going to go ahead and we’re going to run on in here.” So he and a few of my buddies went, and they kind of disappeared in one of those doors off to the right. I was literally there taking pictures, just ooing and ahing—me and Tanya and some of our friends—for about 15 or 20 minutes. And we finally made our way up to the steps and began to walk in.

Well, Aaron and a few of our friends were coming out. And I said, “Man, are you guys going to join us? Do you want to walk in...?” He goes, “Nah, man. We already went in there. There’s not very much to see.” I was like, “Are you kidding me??” He’s like, “Nah, nah, it’s a big church. We kind of peaked in the corner there, but there wasn’t very much to see. So we’re going to go get a donut or something, you know. We’ll meet you guys later.”

So as I followed the direction they went, I found the archway they entered, and I realized that that wasn’t the main entrance. That was the walkway to the bathrooms. So we found the main entrance and we walked in, and this is what we saw.



Walk in a little further, and you look up and you see this massive dome.

Right there in the heart of the church is the historic burial place of St. Peter himself, so there's this archway that denotes that, that Peter's remains are there and that's what they built the church on top of.



You go a little farther and you see some of the most famous artwork that we know in Western civilization. This is the famous *Pietà*, just in a hallway.

And just a few doors down you walk into a little something called the Sistine Chapel—if you've ever heard of that before? Michelangelo's famous paintings are there.







So after about six hours of us being inside of St. Peter's, we wandered back into the courtyard to find my friend Aaron, and proceeded to tell him that he had gone in the bathroom entrance, and that he had missed it.

And it became one of these running jokes for the rest of the trip, because we went on to Florence, Italy, to see the Academy where Michelangelo's *David* sculpture is. "Hey, not much to see here, Aaron, is there?" We went on to Paris, to the Louvre. We came out. "Hey, not much to see here, Aaron." We went on to London, Buckingham Palace and Westminster Abbey and those kind of things. Running joke: "Man, not much to see here!" It was one of those moments when some boys from the Midwest had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see some sights—and some of my friends missed it. Caught just a little bit of it, but they missed it.

Two thousand years ago, a King rode into a city, and most of the world missed it. They missed the importance of this moment. They didn't clearly understand what was right in front of them. New Testament scholar Andreas Köstenberger, in his book *The Final Days of Jesus*, sets up this story for us very effectively.

The year was AD 33. The excitement in the cool spring air of Jerusalem was palpable. Thousands of Jewish pilgrims had gathered from around the world for the upcoming Passover feast, and word had spread that Jesus—a thirty-something itinerant rabbi, prophet, and healer from Galilee—had raised Lazarus from the dead, had withdrawn from Bethany—a village just a couple miles east of Jerusalem—to a town called Ephraim in the wilderness, and was staying at Bethany during the weekend prior to Passover. Many had gone to Bethany to see Jesus and Lazarus, with the result that they believed in Jesus and returned to the capital city with reports of His miracle-working power to raise the dead. The Passover crowds in Jerusalem were like a powder keg ready for a spark—filled to the brim with both messianic fervor and hatred of Roman rule.

Winds of revolution whipped through the air of Palestine throughout the first century, and Jesus, with His teaching authority and ability to capture the imagination of the masses, not least on account of His ability to heal and raise the dead, looked very much the part of the long-awaited Messiah. In order to gain and maintain power, the Romans could kill—which they did quite effectively—but how could they defeat a leader who could raise the dead at will?

After observing the Sabbath (Friday evening through Saturday evening) at Bethany, Jesus arose Sunday morning to enter the city of Jerusalem. It was March 29, AD 33—the first day of the last week of his earthly life.

Will you stand with me as we read that account together this morning from Luke, the 19th chapter, verses 28-44 this morning?

28 When He had said these things, He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29 As He approached Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of

Olives, He sent two of the disciples 30 and said, “Go into the village ahead of you. As you enter it, you will find a young donkey tied there, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it here. 31 If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ say this: ‘The Lord needs it.’” 32 So those who were sent left and found it just as He had told them. 33 As they were untying the young donkey, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the donkey?” 34 “The Lord needs it,” they said. 35 Then they brought it to Jesus, and after throwing their robes on the donkey, they helped Jesus get on it. 36 As He was going along, they were spreading their robes on the road.

37 Now He came near the path down the Mount of Olives, and the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles they had seen: 38 Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heaven! 39 Some of the Pharisees from the crowd told Him, “Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.” 40 He answered, “I tell you, if they were to keep silent, the stones would cry out!”

41 As He approached and saw the city, He wept over it, 42 saying, “If you knew this day what would bring peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. 43 For the days will come on you when your enemies will build an embankment against you, surround you, and hem you in on every side. 44 They will crush you and your children within you to the ground, and they will not leave one stone on another in you, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.”

“Because you did not recognize the time, the opportunity, the Savior.” Speak Lord, for Your servants are listening. Pray with me this morning. *Heavenly Father, we come to this text with mixed emotions. The Triumphal Entry of Jesus—a joyous moment in which He’s recognized for a fleeting moment as the King that He truly was. And yet Father our hearts are heavy, because we*

*know what He came to do, and we know the price that He paid. To this day there are many who reject the love of Jesus. Just as He wept, Father, may You break our hearts as well with a desire for all to know You and to call You Lord. Open our eyes and our ears and our hearts and our lives to Your truth today, and it's in Your Son's name we pray these things, and all God's people said, Amen.*

As I've been telling you, Luke is the master storyteller, and so today he's going to give us three scenes that we absolutely do not want to miss. We don't want to just take the bathroom entrance like my buddy, and miss the power and wonder and all that God wants us to see in this text today. So three scenes. The first one is this: the King arrives. The King finally arrives on the scene. This is the time—this is the time for Him to fulfill all that had been promised, all that had been foretold, all that His ministry was about.

We're going to look at several different texts today. If you flip back just a few pages to Luke 9:21, you'll remember the story in which Peter had confessed that Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus said, "Who do you say that I am? The crowds say that I'm this, but who do you say that I am?" And Peter said, "You are the Christ of God. You are the Messiah."

And what was Jesus' response in verse 21? "He strictly warned and instructed them to tell this to no one, saying, 'The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the scribes, to be killed and raised on the third day.'" All throughout the ministry of Jesus, there were people wanting to tell about what He had done, who He truly was, what His true identity was. But He repeatedly told them, "Don't tell anybody! Keep this to yourself." Because the time was not yet right.

There was even a time when they wanted to make Jesus king. Look in John 6. After Jesus fed the 5,000, there is this moment where the crowds are so impressed with what Jesus can do. In verse 14 it says, "When the people saw the sign He had done, they said, 'This really is the

prophet who has come into the world.’ Therefore when Jesus knew that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He withdrew again to the mountain by Himself.” Jesus would not allow them to make Him king, because He knew the motivation of their heart. He knew it was for all the wrong reasons.

After Jesus teaches in just a few moments, we see some of the saddest verses in the Bible at the end of John 6, where many say, “His teachings are hard—who can follow them?” And many disciples left that day, is what the text tells us. But now is the time, and Jesus allows Himself to be portrayed as a king. And this passage of text that we just read in Luke 19 is filled with all kinds of intentional allusions to the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah.

There’s Number 19, that the animal He would use would be unspoiled, never ridden upon. There’s 1 Kings 1, where we see the coronation of Solomon, who also rode on a donkey, pointing to the future and greatest King of Israel, who their hopes would be in. In 2 Kings 9 we see how they laid the robes before the king of Israel, again foreshadowing the time when the robes would be laid on the path of Jesus.

But maybe the most important prophecy is Zechariah 9:9. And here’s what it says. “Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout in triumph, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your King is coming to you; He is righteous and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” Hundreds of years before this moment would happen, it would be predicted and foretold that the Savior of God, the Messiah, would come on a donkey. Isn’t it incredible to see all throughout Scripture how God is always keeping His word, that He is watching over it to fulfill it?

And this lets Luke’s audience, and it lets us know, that he had no doubt in his mind that this was the Messiah, that on that day the people who knew Scripture, who knew what the future King of Israel, the great Messiah, what He was supposed to do, what this moment was supposed to



be like—they got it. They understood it, and they recognized Him for a moment as the King that He truly was.

And what a moment this is for us to begin to realize what it means for the King to come into our lives, to realize the power that even in this moment that the Creator had over His creation.

Have you ever thought about this before? I grew up in the farm fields of southern Illinois. Riding a donkey is not as easy as it looks.

As a matter of fact, I had an experience one time in my early days as a youth pastor in which I had to ride on a donkey in front of a crowd. Okay? It was called “donkey basketball.” Has anybody heard of this before? So the local ministerial alliance in the little town I was serving, and the fire and police departments got together with some kind of fund raiser, and so of course the ministerial alliance assigned their youth pastors to play against the firefighters and police officers in a game called donkey basketball.

My first clue that this was going to be difficult should have been when they sat us down in the locker room and they made us read like a 15-page waiver, about what happens if a donkey kicks you in the head, and what happens if one tramples you to death. And they gave us these crash helmets that we had to put on.





So of course I get out there, and which donkey did I get? I got the one that wouldn't let me get on him, and when I did, he immediately bucked me off. This isn't me, but this is exactly what I looked like most of the time. I think my back is still in pain from that moment.

But can you imagine riding on a donkey that had never been ridden upon, through a crowd of people—thousands,

hundreds of thousands of people—in Jerusalem, pressing in, people shouting hosanna, waving stuff. And you realize the power of Jesus fulfilling prophecy, His power over His creation, that everything happens exactly the way that it was foretold.

And what does this mean for you and me? It means that the King has arrived. And here's the reality of this moment. If the true King has arrived, then all false kings have to get off the throne. So why did only a handful of people respond to Jesus as the rightful King? Well, because only a handful knew—and I'm not sure even those disciples and many of the crowds of disciples were fully aware of the implications of this moment.

Because the reality is, we kind of like the status quo. We all would clamor for a Messiah, for a hero to come and rescue us. But if that hero truly walks on the scene, then we have to relent. We have to recognize that we can no longer save ourselves. We have to look at what is on the throne of our heart and our life. And if it's anything but Jesus, that usurper has to be thrown off the throne. Whatever we've placed there has to change.

And that leads us to scene number two. The King arrives, but scene number two, the King divides. Take a look at the different response of the crowd of disciples in comparison with those who thought they knew what was on the throne. Verse 37, “Now He came near the path down the Mount of Olives, and the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice.” That’s one of Luke’s themes in his Gospel. It’s a symbol that this is truly a moment to reckon with, for all the miracles they had seen. They take this pilgrim psalm, from Psalm 118. This was something, as they all made their journey to Jerusalem, they would speak and say and sing to one another.

But they add the phrase, “to the King,” instead of just “the one.” “The King who comes in the name of the Lord is the blessed one.” They break out in song. They break out in waving palm branches. Now, we don’t get that in Luke, we get that from John—because the palm branch was a symbol of Jewish nationalism, and Luke (writing his Gospel as we talked about last week for the whole world) didn’t want to get into the whole nationalistic Jewish thing, those overtones. So he doesn’t give us that detail. But that’s the scene that’s taking place in this story.

The disciples are responding to the rightful King—but the Pharisees however have a very different response. “Some of the Pharisees from the crowd told Him, ‘Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.’” We’ve already talked about the fact that it was tense in Jerusalem, especially at the Passover. You had all of these political power plays going on between the chief priests and Herod and the Romans. It was a very, very intense time. The Romans had already warned the Jewish leaders repeatedly that if things got out of hand, then they would put a stop to it.

So there are all of these pressures in this moment, and the Pharisees clearly don’t perceive Jesus for who He truly is. So they try to get Jesus to shut up His disciples, and in yet another allusion to a prophecy from the book of Habakkuk, Jesus says, “I tell you, if they were to keep silent, the stones would cry out!” Why? Because all of creation recognizes that this is the rightful King.

And this brings us to the reality, as Jesus gets closer and closer to the cross, that we see Jesus and people's response to Him become the dividing line. Now I know in church so often we talk about the fact that Jesus unifies us. Yes, He unifies those of us who have responded to Him, who have surrendered in faith to His Lordship, who are obedient to Him. But the reality that you can't get around is that the closer and closer we get to Jesus fulfilling the mission of the gospel, the more and more the dividing lines are drawn.

Look with me just a couple of pages over in Luke 12:49. As Jesus is teaching His disciples about being ready for the Master's return, listen to these words. These aren't the kind of passages we usually read in church, but we cannot ignore them. Verse 49, Jesus says, "I came to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already set ablaze. But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how it consumes Me until it is finished." What is Jesus referring to? The reality of the cross, that He understood. His heart was set on the mission the Father had placed before Him.

In verse 51 Jesus says this, "Do you think that I came here to give peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. From now on five in one household will be divided—three against two and two against three." And He goes on to quote from the prophet Micah. As Jesus nears Jerusalem and the cross, you see more and more the difference between people who have responded to Him as the King, and people who have not.

And do you realize the importance of this moment? A lot of times Palm Sunday—ah, it's the weekend before Easter, we're waving our palm branches, we're thinking about who we're going to invite for Easter lunch, we're thinking about cute Easter bunnies and Easter egg hunts and all of this kind of stuff. Do you realize what Jesus had now set in motion? Again, Köstenberger makes it very, very clear for us.

It would be hard to overestimate the political and religious volatility incited by Jesus' actions. Up to this point in Jesus' ministry, He could still have managed to live a long, happy, peaceful life, but His actions on Sunday set in motion a series of events that could result only in either His overthrow of the Romans and the current religious establishment—or His brutal death. He has crossed the point of no return; there would be no turning back. Caesar could allow no rival kings.

The line had been drawn. Jesus had come to do what He came to do. And just as we talked about last week, even passing through Jericho, Him seeking out Zacchaeus and saying, "Today salvation has come to your household," in the midst of this moment Jesus' thoughts are about those who needed Him.

Look with me at verse 41. Scene three. Jesus weeps. "As He approached and saw the city, He wept over it." Now I need you to understand that this isn't some heroic, just a bit of a tear trickling down Jesus' face. No, this word literally means to wail! To cry out! To sob from your gut! Have you ever been in such emotional distress that you've cried that kind of cry, that when it's over your stomach muscles hurt and your entire body feels like it's been wrenched—because all of you have been poured into this moment, in this outpouring of emotion?

The only other time that the New Testament uses this word is in John 11, when Jesus learns of the death of Lazarus, His dear friend. And this is the way that Jesus approaches the city, the way that He is moved with deep passion and emotion. In this moment we see the full humanity of Jesus on display, right alongside of His full divinity. Fully man, fully God. Being fully God, He understands the importance of this moment, what's at stake here. This chain of events has been set in motion that's going to lead Him to the cross.

But He also realizes something else, and that's that many of these people are distracted. Remember? It's the week of Passover. There are preparations being made. It's "lamb selection"

day. The gates of the city are open. Tens of thousands are streaming in. The best comparison, as I thought about it this week, would be the weekend before Christmas in our culture, when everybody's running around, busy, distracted with all of their preparations for the holiday that's coming up. That's the scene that portrayed.

And if you can imagine Jesus watching everybody go about all of their busy little tasks, He realizes the importance of this moment—and His love and His heart for people, and the realization of what He came to do on the cross overcomes Him, and He weeps. Why? Because He knows there are many who are going to miss it, so many who are going to reject Him. And His heart is broken.

And He looks forward to the point in history that would come in AD 70, when the Romans would do exactly here what He predicts they would do. And He says, "If you...." The 'you,' by the way, is emphatic in the Greek. "If *you* knew this day what would bring peace." The word 'Jerusalem' ironically means city of peace. In other words, "City of peace, you are blind to the very thing that could bring you peace."

But now it is hidden from your eyes. For the days will come on you when your enemies will build an embankment against you, surround you, and hem you in on every side. They will crush you and your children within you to the ground, and they will not leave one stone on another in you, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.

And that's exactly what would happen under the Roman commander Titus in AD 70, when the Romans said, "We're putting an end to this Jewish rebellion," and they tore down the temple.

I was reading that passage this week, because I'll be honest with you. This kind of emotion doesn't come easily to me. We're over-familiar with these stories. We've heard them too many



times. And I thought, “Man, Jesus gets a little gory there, doesn’t He? Talking about the fact that children are going to be crushed.” And then I remembered what we read last week in Luke 18, that Jesus was the one who said, “Let the children come to Me.”

And what does that invoke in us? The realization of the horror of those who are apart from Christ Jesus. When we hear about a child dying, a child sick, a child abused or trafficked, or worse yet, killed, there’s a certain kind of something that bubbles up inside of us, a certain kind of horror. What Jesus is saying is that’s what we’re staring at in the face—the horror of an eternity separated from God. “Unless the people repent, unless they respond to what I’m about to do on the cross in faith, unless they understand that the one thing they need is a relationship with their heavenly Father through Me, then they’ll have missed it all.”

Here’s my question for us today. As you’re praying for your friends and family, as you’re considering those that God has placed around you who need this kind of hope this Easter, are we like the crowds in Jerusalem? Are we distracted? Or do we understand what time it is—the urgency of telling people about Jesus? That word ‘time’ is not the word *chronos*. It’s not the word of the watch. It’s not the word that we use for chronicle and chronology. It’s *kairos*. It means this is God’s appointed time. This is the opportunity that is in front of us right now, and the King has come.

And we have the good news of knowing that the King has come and that the one thing we need most—to be reconciled to God—is available to us now through Christ Jesus. And it should break our hearts to watch the news, as we interact with our friends, as we consider all of the pain and suffering and evil of the world, and to realize the one thing people need most is Jesus.

So today as we come to this moment, this Palm Sunday, we certainly celebrate that the King has come. And yet there is also an urgency in our own lives that springs from the reality of knowing what Jesus came to do on the cross. Jesus knew the cross was in His focus. Jesus had

His feet and His heart and His life now pointed in that direction, where He Himself would take on the sin of the whole world. The sin of you and me, the sin of the very people Jesus wept over, He would take on Himself for you and me, so that by faith we could be reconciled to the Father.

And that's why on this Palm Sunday, as we begin this journey of Holy Week together as a church family, we take the Lord's Supper. Would you bow your heads with me this morning? As we prepare our hearts for this moment of worship, Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of Me." Why? Because we need to remember. We're forgetful as human beings. We forget the passion that Jesus had for the lost. We forget the tremendous love He demonstrated in this way. We forget too easily the price He paid so that you and I could know Him.

First Corinthians 11 reminds us that this is a moment of preparation in our hearts. So I want to invite you to prepare your hearts now, to ask the Lord—first of all, do you know Him? Have you responded in faith, or have you just been distracted, or like the Pharisees, unwilling to believe that He is the only one who can save? So there may be those of you here today who need to make that decision and take that step for the first time. But there are many of us who, like the crowds of Jerusalem, are swept up with what's going on in our culture, and we've forgotten the power of the cross to save, to heal, to forgive.

So in this moment as we take the bread, we're reminded that Jesus said He was the bread of life, that He is all we need. We take the cup and we remember the price He paid. The Bible says that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness for sin. And now His blood has been shed and it covers us. The price that Jesus paid for you and me is freely ours when we respond to Him in faith.