

“Jesus Wept Over the City”
Sunday, April 5, 2009
By Pastor Peter F. Paine

For Palm Sunday, Pastor Paine looked at the story of Jesus entering Jerusalem. This time though, we had the opportunity to look at it in a different way. The text for the sermon comes from Luke 19: 28-44

28. And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem.
29. And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called [the mount] of Olives, he sent two of his disciples,
30. Saying, Go ye into the village over against [you]; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring [him hither].
31. And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose [him]? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him.
32. And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them.
33. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt?
34. And they said, The Lord hath need of him.
35. And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon.
36. And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way.
37. And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen;
38. Saying, Blessed [be] the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.
39. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.
40. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.
41. And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,
42. Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things [which belong] unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.
43. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,
44. And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

Pastor Paine started by discussing verses 30-31. Jesus told the disciples to go over to the next town, find a horse that was tied up, take it, bring it back to him, and tell anyone who asked “The Lord needs this horse”. That’s a tall order to start any scenario. The disciples had to be bold and use all their faith and trust that Jesus had a plan.

Throughout the gospels, there is no record of Jesus getting from one point to another in any way other than walking. There were occasional boat trips across the Sea of Galilee, but when he had the option of a boat, he didn’t always take it. We have an account of Jesus walking on the water in the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 14). So Jesus taking a colt to

enter the city of Jerusalem was very different than anything that had happened in His ministry before that point. Jesus rode into the city as a statement. Riding into the city was a declaration. Jesus was saying to anyone who saw him, “I am a king!”

Pastor Paine asked the congregation to think about what would come with a bold statement like the one Jesus was making. Would the people understand that he was king of a spiritual kingdom, or would they be looking for an earthly king of their city? Jesus could have been greeted with mocking, misunderstanding, or even anger. But that was a risk he chose to take.

The feast of the Passover was in full swing at this point. It is a time of great celebration in Jerusalem. Families were together, feasts were being eaten, and stories about Lazarus being raised from the dead were probably flying through the streets. In that time, there is no doubt that the Feast of the Passover brought great excitement, expectation, and energy to the city of Jerusalem. Would Zacchaeus be there, would Bartimaeus finally able to see Jesus after his blinded eyes were opened, or would the lepers that Jesus had healed be there to greet him since they were finally made whole? Even with all of these exciting prospects, not everyone in the city would have been happy to see Jesus. It’s possible that the Pharisees and Sadducees would greet him, or Romans who feared revolt would be waiting for him. Jesus knew very well what he was getting into.

Looking at the text, Pastor Paine asked us to consider what the disciples might have been feeling as Jesus entered the city. Maybe Peter was getting puffed up and proud, Andrew feeling overwhelmed, James and John were starting to picture their new roles as Jesus took over or maybe Judas was finding it hard to hide his grin of excitement.

All of the people we read about in the Bible weren’t fictional. They were real people. They had real personalities that they struggled with and challenges to overcome. All of those personalities were in full swing as the disciples entered the city with Jesus that day.

In the middle of all the excitement as they entered the city, things suddenly came to a halt. In verse 41, we see that Jesus stopped the procession and started to weep. In all the situations we see Jesus in throughout the gospels before this point, it is easy to see his overwhelming compassion. He spoke kindly to the woman who was caught in the act of adultery and told her to “sin no more”, and he reached out to all those who needed his love. But this time is strikingly different. We see Jesus break down and cry. He saw that the people who were shouting in the streets did not clearly understand what was going on. They had missed the point! They laid down palm branches because they thought that Jesus was there as a king on Earth. They did not understand that he was the king of a spiritual realm.

Jesus cried for those people in the city that did not see what he truly was. He was the messiah. The city only had one chance to receive him. They would never be in this

situation again. The same is true for us today. Jesus comes to each of us and wants a relationship that will change our lives. He offers hope and joy, but only if we choose to understand him for what he truly is. He is the messiah, and he is not offering eternal life here on Earth. He is offering an eternal spiritual life with him.