

“THE KING IS COMING!”  
Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29, Philippians 2:5-11, Luke 19:28-40  
Palm Sunday - April 9 & 10, 2022

“He was always in trouble at school, so when the parents of the junior high boy received one more call to come in and meet with his teacher and the principal, they knew what was coming. Or so they thought.

“The teacher sat down with the boy's father and said, ‘Thanks for coming in. I wanted you to hear what I have to say.’

“The father crossed his arms and waited, thinking what defense he could use this time. The teacher proceeded to go down a list of ten things—ten positive affirmations of the junior high ‘troublemaker.’ When she finished, the father said, ‘And what else? Let's hear the bad things.’

“That's all I wanted to say,’ the teacher said.

“That night when the father got home, he repeated the conversation to his son. And not surprisingly, almost overnight, the troublemaker's attitude and behavior changed dramatically. All because a teacher looked past the negatives” and saw something good in her student.<sup>1</sup>

**Encouragement and affirmation are things that God delights in for us.** He constantly invites us to see the good that we have received from Him, and to look at how we might be transformed from “troublemakers” in our own day, into followers who desire to do our very best at serving and pleasing Him in all that we do and say. So it is right that we are here in this place, to hear the good things that the Lord has done for us, and to be “*transformed by the renewing of our minds,*” so that we might not conform to the patterns of this world, but to be able to test and approve what the will of God is - that which is good, pleasing to Him, and perfect (Romans 12:2).

So we come toward the end of our Lenten season, having looked at how we are to live. We’ve been following the Apostle Paul’s guidance to his young disciple, Timothy, on how our lives are to be lived in such a way as to bring glory and honor to the Lord our God. It is in great contrast to the ways of

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<sup>1</sup> (PreachingToday.com, *Perfect Illustrations*, [Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2002] pg. 7)

this world, but seeking to follow all of the ways of God so that we might be found ready and willing to work for the Lord, even if it means our own personal disadvantage, knowing that the Lord our God will never leave us, abandon us, or lead us into eternal destruction. **Our lives are to become a living sacrifice for the Lord**, doing His work each and every day in order to bring Salvation to the whole world through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

So we come to this last Sunday of Lent, called Palm Sunday, remembering Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem just prior to Passover. This begins the final week of Jesus' earthly life with His disciples, and oh, what a day it turned out to be. Listen to how the Gospel writer Luke has recorded it in Chapter 19, verses 28-40. (READ Luke 19:28-40)

**Now Jesus did not enter into Jerusalem upon a whim or by a quick decision.** It was a part of the whole plan for His life as the Messiah, that He would end His earthly ministry in the capitol city of the people of Israel. He had taught about the kingdom of God, He had performed many miraculous events, He had healed many people, and He had even raised people back from the dead. But in the process, He had riled up the Pharisees and Temple leaders and the Chief Priest by His teachings and by His miraculous healings, to the point that they had set a watch for Him in expectancy of His attending the upcoming Passover feast. The desire was to arrest Jesus and put an end to His "disruptive ministry" (John 11:55-57).

These leaders of the Temple were very aware that the Roman government had little tolerance for uprisings or threats to their occupation, so to protect their religion, the religious leaders had to play a very careful game of politics to keep the appearance of conforming to the laws of the land, while worshipping the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But they also wanted desperately to end the disturbance that Jesus was making within the Temple itself.

You see, Jesus was challenging all of the actions of the Scribes, Pharisees and Priests. They had made themselves bigger than life and had lifted themselves up to be super spiritual leaders of the Jewish faith. However they were distorting and perverting the Laws and commands of the Lord God Almighty

and were misleading the people in how to come into a right relationship with the Lord. **Jesus was exposing their hypocrisy and they had not taken too kindly to His correction** of their theology and actions. Jesus was challenging their authority and they didn't like it one bit, and yet they were unable to remove Him. So their hope was to arrest Jesus when He was alone and make Him "disappear" before He could ire the anger of the Romans and bring down their wrath upon the whole country. They would then be fulfilling two agendas with one action.

But Jesus didn't play according to their rules. When He left Jericho having given sight to a blind beggar and liberating Zacchaeus from his love of money, Jesus set His focus on this last work of ministry that needed to be accomplished in Jerusalem in order to bring about the salvation of the world.

Three times He had told His disciples that they were going to go to Jerusalem to fulfill what the prophets had written about the Messiah. Three times Jesus informed them that He would be "*handed over to the Gentiles, [where] they [would] mock Him, insult Him, spit on Him, flog Him and kill Him. [Then] on the third day he [would] rise again*" (Luke 18:31-33). And three times they did not understand what needed to be done to bring about a transformation of the soul and spirit of those who would seek the Lord. The 12 disciples could not get their minds past Jesus being arrested, beaten, crucified, and killed. They totally missed Jesus' words about rising again on the third day. But whether or not the disciples understood what Jesus needed to do, He headed into Jerusalem.

Because of the work that Jesus had done in His 3½ years of ministry, when people found out that He was in Bethany on His way to Jerusalem, they gathered around Him to welcome Him as the new King of Israel. They believed that Jesus was the Messiah, but they also misunderstood what kind of Messiah He would be. Instead of being a military savior arousing the people to revolt against the Romans and become a free people once more through violence, as was the great desire, Jesus was looking beyond the troubles of the day and was looking at what needed to be done for the eternal life of all who would follow Him.

Nonetheless, **the people came to Jesus in order to welcome their new king**. So Jesus

instructed a couple of His disciples to go into Bethany and bring to Him a colt of a donkey that had never been ridden before. This was not a war horse, but a gentle, working animal that had never felt the burden of a yoke or a harness before. The very first work it would do would be to carry the Son of God from Bethany into Jerusalem. The owners were very uncertain what was going on until the disciples explained that the “Master” needed it. Even with this proclamation, more excitement would have grown among the people as word would have quickly spread that the Master, Jesus, was coming into town. So many lives had been changed, and the people quickly assembled to lead and present Jesus as the new King.

This wasn't the first time the people had wanted to make Jesus their King. The first time was after Jesus had miraculously fed the thousands of people by the Sea of Galilee (John 6:15) having only 5 loaves of bread and two fish. Jesus had evaded their desire to make Him king by force that day, but on this day, just six days before the Passover, Jesus consents to allow a parade to usher Him into the city of Jerusalem.

People laid their coats on the ground before Jesus on the colt of the donkey to form a sort of “red carpet” for their king. They quickly cut palm branches from the trees and waved them in the air and also laid them before Jesus as a sign of their loyalty to Him as the new King of Israel. And as they approached the city of Jerusalem, the people began to “*thank God and praise Him in loud voices for all the great things that they had seen...*” They called out together, “*God bless the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory to God!*” (Luke 19:37-38).

Probably without knowing it, **they were fulfilling the prophetic words of Psalm 118, reciting this ancient prayer of thanks for victory for the defeat of their enemies.** And with such a large crowd of people, it could easily become quite a loud roar ascending up into Jerusalem. It could easily have been misunderstood by the Romans as a riot starting outside of the city with the intent of overtaking Jerusalem. With the Roman garrison already on high alert in preparation for the Jewish feast of the Passover, this parade could easily have been seen as a war party attempting to liberate the city.

And I'm sure that as those in Jerusalem heard the procession coming, it would have instigated even more interest and excitement. I can only imagine that as the crowd walking with Jesus would shout out, "*Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord!*" that those within the city would respond, "*Glory to God in the highest!*" Back and forth it would go, starting outside the city and resounding in reply from within the city, getting the people more and more excited.

Enter the Pharisees into this picture. They were always looking at the dark side of the possibilities of life, so when they heard the noise, they immediately thought the worst, so they demanded that Jesus tell everyone to be quiet. Surely the noise of this procession would get the attention of the Roman army and there would be hell to pay for it.

*"Teacher,' they said, 'Command your disciples to be quiet!"* (Luke 19:33). They did not want attention brought onto Jesus by the people of Israel. Nor did they want attention to be brought to the Romans, who would certainly misunderstand and respond violently, not only against those in the parade, but also against all the people of the city, even the Temple. **Since the Pharisees did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah in the first place, they wanted this parade shut down immediately so as not to deceive the people into believing that Jesus might be the Messiah.** And their fear of the retaliation of the Romans could get ugly real fast, bringing the wrath of Caesar against them. On one side they were filled with doubt and contempt, and on the other side they were filled with fear and anxiety. Neither side of the argument was very compelling. Neither side of their demand would work, either.

Instead of following the command of the Pharisees to quiet the people, Jesus must have smiled real big and then responded to them, "*I tell you that if they keep quiet, the stones themselves will start shouting*" (Luke 19:40).

Jesus wasn't being disrespectful to the Pharisees. He was being honest. He is the Son of God, God in human form, the Messiah sent from God for the transformation and salvation of the world! At that moment, all of creation was acknowledging that fact. **The very stones of the walls around Jerusalem echoed the voices of the people already, but if those voices would have been stilled,**

**those stones would have continued to echo the praises of all the good that God had done.** There was no sudden stopping of the praise and glory given to God. Misunderstood or not, the Romans needed to hear that indeed the new King of Israel had come to the city. The voices would reverberate the pronouncement until all within those walls had heard the great news of Jesus' arrival.

But let me ask you some very important questions. **How are you responding to the coming of the King of Israel?** How are you telling the world that 'The King Is Coming!?' Are you listening to the voices of those who are demanding that you stop proclaiming the praise and glory of the Lord Jesus? Are you conforming to the demand to keep quiet about your faith? Are you consenting to the earthly authorities' demand to keep your religion to yourself? Or are you willing to live what you believe, proclaim to those around you that Jesus Christ is King, and be loud enough that the whole world might know about our Savior?

You see, many today misunderstand our proclamation that Jesus is King. They understand it as a threat to all that they know and believe. They see our demonstration of faith as trying to turn things upside-down as in rebellion or revolt. Many see our lifting the ways and teachings of Jesus as a threat to their "authority." They are offended that we would lift Jesus up as the One and True Savior for the world, and they do their best to get us to quiet down. Jesus threatens their positions of power, their unjust treatment of the people, and their distortion of the Word of God. While He calls them to "Follow Me!" they want nothing to do with Him, and they seek their own glory.

So they call out, "Quiet your disciples!" And even if our voices are silenced, the sound of the call, "The King Is Coming!" continues to reverberate all around the world. It cries out in the concentration camps in China. It calls out in the slums of India. It calls out in the camps of the terrorists in Africa. It calls out in the Afghan and Ukraine refugee camps. It calls out in the city, and the urban communities. It calls out to the rich and the poor, to the powerful and the weak, to the educated and the simple, and it calls out to every nation of the world. **Jesus, the King, Is Coming!** He is here, at our doorstep, knocking at the very door of our hearts, asking for us to open the door and let Him come in to

bring His peace and the glory of the Lord. He is calling all people to come to know Him as the Savior of the world and to acknowledge Him as the One Who comes in the Name of the Lord to bring life to all who will believe in Him.

You see, Jesus “*was humble and walked the path of obedience all the way to death - his death on the cross. For this reason God raised Him to the highest place above and gave Him the Name that is greater than any other name. And so, in honor of the Name of Jesus all beings in heaven, on earth, and in the world below will fall on their knees and all will openly proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*” (Philippians 2:8-11).

**Jesus has come to transform our lives from rebellious and troublemakers in God’s eyes, to become children of God as we come to believe in Jesus and receive Him into our lives as our Savior.** He knows the good within us and desires us to let go of all of the wicked and evil things in our lives to live as people of God. He desires us to look beyond the disrespect and anger and belligerence of those who stand against us, to see them as God sees them, precious and desperately in need of liberation from the ways of this world. God desires that all people come to Him so that they might not face eternal death as enemies of God, but be found by Him as His very own people as they come to recognize Jesus as the Messiah for the world.

And that, my friends, is what is happening all over the world today. People are stepping up to proclaim Jesus Christ as the Savior, even in the face of terrorists and militants because God has given them a vision of Jesus who is calling them to Himself. These people are going into places where it’s likely they will not return because of the anger and hostilities and violence. But because they are stepping up with the message that The King Is Coming, thousands, tens of thousands, are coming to know Jesus Christ and are receiving Him as their Savior. **There is a revival taking place in every land and nation around this world.** And yet, as this revival is taking place, there is even greater effort to silence it by those who refuse to listen, those whose position may be compromised, those whose authority might be removed or diminished, or those who will not be transformed from their old life.

But the voice of the Truth of Jesus cannot be silenced, for there are those who are willing to face even their own death in order that others might come to hear the Good News of the love of God and the Salvation that He has given to humanity through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They are willing to be misunderstood in order to share the greatest message that the world has ever received. They are proclaiming “*the great things they have seen*” (Luke 19:37), and they are praising God for new life in Jesus Christ.

But what about you? Has your life been touched by the great love of Jesus? Have you experienced His healing touch, His transforming call out of the darkness of this world, or found hope through His teachings? Don't keep it to yourself! The world needs to know, and God has chosen you to share your message to those who have not yet experienced Jesus in their life. **Don't be shamed into silence by those who refuse to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah.** Shout out to the world, “*Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, the King*” and Savior of the world (Lu. 19:38).

Let me close with this. In her book, *Your Influence is Showing* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1967, pg. 11), “Leslie Flynn points out that the Italian word for *influence* is *influenza*. The word *influenza* was introduced into English in the mid-1700s, apparently coming from the Italian phrase which attributed the origin of this malady to an *influenza di freddo* making (influence of the cold).

**“We are, by our very nature, very contagious people - our example tends to spread to others as easily as the flu. Everyone exerts influence.” The big question however, is what kind of influence are you making. How contagious are you for the love of Jesus Christ?** How infectious is your faith to those around you? Are you quarantining yourself so that no one sees the difference that Jesus makes in your life? Or are you willing to unmask and spread the love and compassion of the Lord Jesus Christ so that everyone might become infected with His Salvation? Let's pray...

Father, make us bold witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank You for His example and His love for all of us. As we prepare for this Holy Week between Palm Sunday and Easter, give us the joy and delight to live for Jesus, to infect and transform the whole world with the message, “The King Is Coming.” This we pray in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. AMEN.