

Palm Sunday Unplugged

Good morning, thanks for joining us! I know I keep saying it, but I'm gonna say it one more time because today is Palm Sunday leading us into Passion Week and it's crazy that we can't be together to celebrate all that Jesus did in the greatest week in human history! It doesn't feel right somehow...but it is right, and it's where God has us – meaning Christians all around the world – right now.

And I think on this Palm Sunday there also may be an opportunity for us to take a quieter, more reflective look at Jesus' triumphal entry. Kind of a "Palm Sunday Unplugged". So grab a cup of coffee and let's open God's word to Luke 19 and read vv. 28-44.

There's a movie that came out a few years ago called Vantage Point. The movie was about an assassination attempt on the President, but as the name suggests, it kept rewinding the events leading up to the assassination attempt and looking at these events from different vantage points, first from one person's perspective, then another, and then still another, in the effort to figure out what really happened. The tagline of the movie was, "If you think you've seen it all, look again."

We all know the Triumphant Entry story, but on this quiet, unplugged Palm Sunday, let's look at it from 3 different vantage points and then close by putting them together to see what God might say to us through them right here, right now.

Vantage Point #1 – we see the majesty of Jesus revealed...a little

As Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey he knows that everyone will see it as a fulfillment of Zech. 9:9 and a declaration that he is king.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! (Get loud!) 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

And so you've got this noisy scene: the crowds are noisy – people are laying palm branches and shouting *blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!* The city's all stirred up wondering who this man is. Even the Pharisees are adding to the noise as they tell Jesus he should rebuke the noisy crowd and tell them to be quiet. Jesus tells them that wouldn't help. If the crowd gets quiet, the rocks are gonna get loud. This is going to be a noisy event one way or another!

And if we were together in church we'd be making noise too with guitars and keyboards and drums helping us sing praise to our King. But on this Palm Sunday unplugged let's look at this event from a different vantage point. Let's filter out the noise going on, and maybe for a few minutes we can turn down the noise going on in our own hearts and see the majesty of King Jesus from a different vantage point on this Palm Sunday.

History is full of small kings who called themselves great, but Jesus goes in the opposite direction. Jesus spent most of his ministry trying to conceal the full extent of his majesty. He would do amazing things and then order people not to tell anyone about it! While most kings wrap themselves in impressive robes, Jesus wrapped himself in humility, made himself to be nothing, took the form of a servant. In fact the triumphal entry is one of those rare moments in Jesus' ministry when he pulled back the robes of humility to reveal his majesty...but only a little bit. We aren't seeing the whole picture – not even close! Like the movie says, if we think we see it all, we need to look again!

- Look at creation

- One word from Jesus and the winds and waves obeyed him.
 - One word from Jesus and the fig tree died
 - One word from Jesus and the blind and deaf and lame were healed and the demon possessed was delivered
 - One word from Jesus and death released its grip and gave back its victim
 - When demons saw Jesus, they knew who he was and they'd shout out, "I know who you are! You're the Son of the Most High God!"
 - Then we come to the rocks. Jesus said, if the crowds are quiet, the stones will cry out! For 33 years the stones have been holding it in, feeling the feet of their Creator and King walking upon them, dying to cry out their praises of the One who created them! As Jesus entered Jerusalem in fulfillment of Zech. 9:9 the rocks are saying, "We can't take it anymore! If these knuckleheads don't praise our King, we're breaking our silence!" To see Jesus' majesty, look at creation.
- Look at the length of his rule. The Bible says Jesus' throne is from everlasting and will be established forever. Forever and ever in eternity past, forever and forever in eternity future Jesus has always been and always be king.
 - Look at his kingdom - what a kingdom! Jesus said, "my kingdom is not of this world." His kingdom isn't like any kingdom this world has ever seen. Perfect in glory, forever in duration, limitless in power. Comparing Jesus' kingdom to an earthly kingdom is like trying to compare lighting a match to the brilliance of the sun.
 - Look at his warriors. Jesus said he could call on his Father and He would send 12 legions of angels to fight for him. That's serious overkill. One angel could destroy every army known to man. 60K angels is more power than we can comprehend. But with all this power they all bow and wait for the slightest command from their king – this man riding into Jerusalem on a donkey.
 - Finally look at who will acknowledge his Lordship. Phil. 2 says one day every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Everyone won't love him, but all will bow before his power and authority and confess that he is Lord. We get to do that now with hearts full of love and worship!

In all of this, there's still so much we won't see until that day when we see Jesus in all his glory. But put together we get a little glimpse of Jesus' majesty and it's awesome!

From vantage point #1 we see Jesus' majesty revealed – a little.

Vantage Point #2 – we see the Perfect Lamb of God

The first thing we see as Jesus enters Jerusalem is that he is a King, but what's amazing is if we rewind this triumphal entry scene and look at it from another vantage point, we also see Jesus as the Perfect Lamb of God.

This is a little more involved so track with me here: Jesus rides into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the beginning of the Passover Week. Thursday is the 14th of the month when they celebrate Passover. We know how God had commanded each family to kill a lamb on Passover evening, eating the lamb and sprinkling its blood on the doorposts of their home, remembering that first Passover when the angel of death passed over any home that had the blood of the lamb on the doorposts. We know that.

What we may not know is that Moses commanded them to *choose* their perfect Passover lamb – without blemish or flaw – on the 10th of the month, which that year was on Palm Sunday. Palm Sunday, the 10th, was the day God told them to *choose* their perfect lamb.

As Jesus rode into Jerusalem on that Palm Sunday, he rode in as the Lamb that God had chosen to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29). From vantage point #2 we Jesus is the Perfect Lamb of God.

Vantage Point #3: The rejoicing and the coming rejection of the crowds

On Palm Sunday the crowds are rejoicing and praising Jesus and calling him their king. It's a joyful, noisy, exciting party so it's really weird and unexpected that Jesus looks at Jerusalem and weeps. Weeps. Tears running down his face and the reason is he knows that the crowd's rejoicing over him will soon turn to the crowd's rejection of him. He says if you had only known *on this day* – this Palm Sunday – what would bring you peace, but now it is hidden from your eyes. Why?

Verse 44: because you did not know the time of your visitation. The NIV says it this way: *because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you.*

Cries of hosanna will turn to cries of "crucify him!" Rejoicing will turn to rejection because they don't really recognize that Jesus is God coming to them. This is why we may have a better vantage point removed from all the noise. Because the praise and noise wasn't coming from hearts of love and worship. They were just caught up in the excitement of the moment. When that moment switched to rejecting Jesus, they went with that too.

On this Palm Sunday, let's put this all together and ask God to soak our hearts with what we've seen.

1. Jesus is the perfect King who rules over all. Personally I don't think God said, "hey, I'm going to give the world COVID-19". I think it's a product of a fallen, broken world. But Jesus is king over all, and we can trust him in the midst of this hard time, and we can ask him to heal and restore.

Let's give King Jesus rule over our lives. let's yield our lives to Jesus' rule. Let's welcome him as the rightful king over our lives. He promises to rule over our hearts with peace and he will take care of us. Even in the hardest of times.

2. Jesus is the perfect Lamb – by faith his blood is sprinkled over the doorposts of our lives and we are safe from judgment. Eternal death will pass over us – we will never die (Easter Sunday!). Maybe you struggle with condemnation and guilt because you sin, you mess up, you're broken, you're flawed. Join the club! Let's look and see that Jesus is our perfect Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. Live in the freedom that truth brings!
3. Let's recognize the time of God's coming to us. If you're not a Christian, I urge you not to reject Jesus, don't miss the love and forgiveness God is freely offering you, but accept it for yourself by faith. For every Christian, let's also recognize what God wants to do in you and through you. Step out in faith and see how God uses you in His good work!

Let's close by praying for God to have mercy and bring this crisis to an end sooner than later and to use us in these challenging times to bring hope and comfort to hurting people around us.