



## The Triumphal, Tearful Entry Luke Series #49

Luke 19:28-48

David Sunday

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We continue our journey through Luke's Gospel. Six weeks after Christmas and we're already at the Palm Sunday passage, the triumphal entry. Over the next three months between now and Easter, we are going to have the privilege of slowing down and deeply concentrating on the final week of Jesus' life which is very fitting because the four Gospels really are passion narratives with an extended introduction. It's all moving to the Savior's passion, to the work that He does in Jerusalem on the cross to atone for our sins. As we come to the passage known as the triumphal entry here in Luke 19, it is very significant because up until this point Jesus often had concealed His identity as the Messiah but now He encourages His disciples to openly proclaim Him as King, not Caesar. He embraces the confrontation that He knows is going to come. Justin Taylor and Andreas Kostenberger just wrote a book called, The Final Week of Jesus. They write:

"Up until this point in Jesus' ministry, He could have still managed to have a long, happy, peaceful life, but His actions on Palm 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 will be no turning back. Caesar could allow no rival kings."

So this is a very significant point in Luke's Gospel, a very significant point in redemptive history. Our Savior enters the city of His destiny where He knows that He will be put to death on the cross. As we look at the portrait in Luke's Gospel, we're going to do an overview of the whole narrative from verses 28-48 and then we're going to narrow in on one particular section and meditate on it more deeply.

As I look at this passage, I'm reminded of a portrait of Rembrandt's that I've read about where Jesus is portrayed in such a way that if you cover one eye it looks like His face is sparkling in hope, but then you cover the other eye and it looks as if He is about to burst into tears. That is the Jesus we see in this passage. He's a Jesus Who defies bland generalizations. He doesn't just fit into a box the way we want to characterize Him. We'll see three images of Jesus which are aptly summarized by John Stott:

“In verses 28-40, we see Jesus riding into the city; then in verses 41-44, we see Jesus weeping over the city; and then in verses 45-48, we see Jesus ridding the city of its impurity as He goes into the temple and cleanses it.”

### **A. Riding Into the City -- Luke 19:28-40**

In the first section, we see Jesus, the King, riding into Jerusalem as a King Whose praise cannot and will not be stifled. He’s riding in on a colt, a donkey. Not a war horse but a donkey, a gentle beast that bears burdens and works for men. Can you imagine Queen Elizabeth riding into London on a donkey, not a regal war horse, but a humble beast of burden? From this, says Martin Luther: “We see that Christ comes, not to terrify, to drive and to oppress, but to help and to take from ourselves our load.”

He comes to us in humility. You do not seek Him; He seeks you. You do not find Him; He finds you. His preachers come from Him not from you. The preaching comes from Him not from you. Your faith comes, not from you but from Him. He comes in humility. A humble King—not two words that we usually find paired together. Luke has taken great pains to show us His sovereignty in His preparation to enter Jerusalem. In verse 30, Jesus knows where the colt will be. *“Go into the village in front of you whereupon entering, in front of you, you will find a colt...”* He knows that it would be tied up. He knows its history—that it would be one on which no one has ever yet sat. He knows how the arrangements will be made for the colt to be brought to Him.

*“If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘The Lord has need of it.’”* (Luke 19:31)

I think these are important words. *“The Lord has need of it.”* Imagine going out into the parking lot. You see your car and it’s surrounded by five guys who have coat hangers. They’re breaking into your car and you yell, “What are you doing!” They respond (fill in the blank here), “\_\_\_\_\_ has need of it.” Whose name would be appropriate in that blank? Whose name would satisfy you? “Well, if David Sunday has need of it, sure! Let him have my car!” Would that satisfy you? *“The Lord has need of it.”* He is sovereign over all. The earth is His and all that is in it belongs to Him (Psalm 24:1). Is there anything in your life, if your sovereign King required of you, that you would not willingly and gladly yield to Him because He is Lord? He is Lord of all.

We also see His sovereignty in the people spreading their cloaks along the road as He begins to enter Jerusalem in verse 35 and as He’s already heading down the Mount of Olives in verse 37. The whole multitude of His disciples begins to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen. They had seen Him give the blind their sight. They had

seen Him cause the lame to walk. They had seen Him raise the dead and they're praising Him with a loud voice in the words of the Psalmist.

*As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” (Luke 19:37-38)*

When I hear these words, it reminds me of another place in Luke's Gospel. When Jesus was born and the whole multitude of the heavenly host filled the heavens, what did they say? “*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased*” (Luke 2:14). Now His followers are not saying, “*Peace on earth*”; they're saying, “*Peace in heaven...*” Before Jesus can bring peace on earth to sinful men, He needs to go to Jerusalem, die on a cross and shed His blood so that there can be peace in heaven for sinful people. Peace with God—the knowledge that our sins are forgiven and our consciences are cleansed. Until we have peace with heaven, we cannot have peace on earth.

We even see His sovereignty in Luke 19:40:

*He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”*

The Pharisees want to silence the disciples. In verse 39, they want Jesus to silence the crowd, “*Teacher, rebuke your disciples.*” Let's give them the benefit of the doubt. Maybe they're just concerned about the political implications of what's taking place here, knowing this is going to produce a conflict from which Jesus will not be able to turn back. But Jesus says, “No! Don't silence them. I'm the Lord of all. I'm worthy of all praise. All things were made by Me and through Me and for Me and if their mouths don't praise Me, the very stones will cry out.” All of creation is one day going to praise Christ, the sovereign King.

## **B. Weeping Over the City – Luke 19:41-44**

Then in verses 41-44, we see Jesus as a Prophet Whose word will not be broken. He speaks of things that are about to take place in a generation's time in Jerusalem. In AD 66-70, great destruction and desolation will come upon Jerusalem. As Jesus prophesies these things, He does so, not gloating in disdain, but weeping. He's a weeping Prophet like Jeremiah. We will return to that but let's glance at verses 45-48.

### **C. Ridding the City of its Impurity – Luke 19:45-48**

Here we see that this humble King, this weeping Prophet, is not a wimpy leader. He is a holy Priest Who is coming to cleanse the temple with a severe and righteous rage that foreshadows the destruction of the temple which signifies that Jesus is going to become the ultimate meeting place of God. In Jesus, people of every nation are going to gather to offer true spiritual worship through Him and He will cleanse their lives from impurity and make them a living temple. To Him shall endless prayer be made and endless praises will crown His head. A name like sweet perfume will rise with every morning sacrifice. He will become the living temple and so He goes into Jerusalem and as the holy Priest, the Messenger of the covenant that Malachi prophesied, He comes and purifies the sons of Levi. He does what the priests had failed to do and drives out the corruption that had made the temple not a house of prayer but a den of robbers.

### **D. Jesus, Our King, Priest & Prophet**

We see Jesus as Prophet, Priest and King in reverse order in this passage. King, Priest and Prophet. He functions in all of these offices today. He wants to rule in your life with humility and gentleness. He wants to speak God's word to you and He is a faithful and true witness. He wants to cleanse you of all impurity and corruption so that you can become a living temple who worships Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24). Jesus is spiritually active today, doing the very things that He did when He entered into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. There are many, many theological implications that we can draw from this passage but I want to focus in on the one that is most evocative to me and that I think we need to think about and identify with in a special way.

We call it the triumphal entry but it could just as easily be called the tearful entry. It was full of tears and sorrow. I want us to focus in on that. Have you ever had an experience where you hurt someone relationally? They may have even tried to tell you, "That was hurtful to me," but it didn't register. You don't realize what you've done. You're oblivious to it. As they keep trying to explain it to you, suddenly they start weeping and sobbing. Their tears alert you to how out of touch with reality you've become. Their tears show you that something has taken place and that you've become involved in something of which you do not understand the significance.

Tears often have a way of reorienting our hearts to reality and I think the tears of Jesus can do that for us. As we see Him weeping over Jerusalem, we are learning something about God's character and about the character of this humble King. Look at verse 41, where it says, "*When He drew near and saw the city, he wept over it.*" The word for "weep" is a strong term.

It's not the same word that is used in John 11 when Jesus wept at the gravesite of His friend, Lazarus. We think it means tears streamed down His face; but this is a deeper, more convulsive type of sorrow. It's the word that's used in Matthew 2:18, where it says,

*"A voice was heard in Ramah,  
weeping and loud lamentation,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
she refused to be comforted, because they are no more."*

Think of mothers bereft of their children. The weeping. The sobbing. Those are the kind of tears that flooded Jesus' heart. Think of Jairus, the synagogue ruler, when his only daughter died. They came to the hall of the ruler and there was a great commotion and loud weeping (Luke 8:40-56). Or think of Peter on the morning after he denied Jesus. The Bible tells us that he broke down and wept (Mark 14:66-72).

That's how our Savior weeps as He comes to Jerusalem. He draws near and sees the city on which God has been so merciful. The city that has heard the prophets. The city where God's temple dwells. I imagine Him dismounting His donkey, looking out over that city and burying His face in His hands. We see His chest begin to heave. We hear sobs coming forth and our Savior laments. He's a weeping Prophet. We know that Jesus often wept before His Father in prayer but not often do we see Him weeping in the presence of men. Why, I want to ask, is Jesus weeping like this?

### **Not Tears of Fear**

It's Sunday and Jesus knows what is before Him this week. These are not tears of fear.

*And taking the twelve, he said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon.*

(Luke 18:31-32)

Now if I looked at my calendar this week and saw that Friday about noon, I have an appointment in downtown Chicago and I will be mocked, shamefully treated and spat upon, I may very well start to weep at the prospect of that appointment. But it gets worse.

*And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise.*

(Luke 18:33)

Now add that to the agenda. A flogging and a public execution on a cross. I might weep out of fear, but Jesus is not weeping because He is afraid. He is a man of invincible courage. Luke told us back in Luke 9:31 that Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem, knowing full well what would await Him there and He never for a moment turned back or shrunk from His destiny.

### **Not Tears of Frustration or Failure**

These aren't tears of fear nor are they tears of frustration or failure. There are times in my life when I have wept over the awareness of my own failure. Or frustration has driven me to tears. But we don't see a frustrated Savior here; we see a King, riding into Jerusalem in His sovereignty, Who knows what is happening and Who's in control of the whole situation.

So why does Jesus weep? John Piper says, "These are tears of sovereign mercy." It's a wonderful combination. Merciful and mighty. We sing in this song:

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.  
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty,  
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

(Holy, Holy, Holy by Reginald Heber, 1826)

We admire His might because it's a merciful might. We admire His mercy because it's a mighty mercy. These are tears of sovereign mercy.

### **Jesus weeps over the reluctance of sinners to approve His terms of peace.**

Let's break down this middle section to see the specific nature of Jesus' sorrow. In Luke 19:41-42, we read:

*And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes."*

Back in Luke 14:31-32, Jesus was telling this analogy.

*Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.*

God has been giving His people terms of peace. He's been calling to His people, "Repent for the Kingdom is at hand!" What terms of peace go like this? "Lay your weapons down. Your self-righteousness, your self-sufficiency, your love of independence, your commitment to doing it your own way. Realize that sin has defeated you. Acknowledge that your sin has separated you

from the righteousness of God. Admit your guilt. Accept the terms of peace. God comes to make you right with Him. God comes to bring you into His kingdom. So bow before your King and swear allegiance to Him. He's offering amnesty right now for sinners. He's offering forgiveness of sins. Repent!"

They knew these terms of peace but now, because they've rejected the King, it is too late for many of them.

*"Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But **now they are hidden from your eyes.** (Luke 19:42)*

God's sovereign judgment is coming and Jesus weeps. He weeps over the reluctance of sinners to approve His terms of peace.

### **Jesus weeps over the refusal of sinners to accept His invitations of grace.**

In verse 44, the last words say, "...because you did not know the time of your visitation." Jesus weeps over the refusal of sinners to accept His invitations of grace. Jerusalem has had a powerful visitation from God. The mightiest miracles. The most wonderful preaching. No group of people has heard preaching like this. No group of people has seen signs from God like Jerusalem has seen. God has come and promised in Ezekiel 34,

*I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord God. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice. God has come, seeking and saving His lost sheep, but they did not recognize. They did not know the time of their visitation. For many of them, it's too late. Not for all of them. (Ezekiel 34: 15-16)*

### **Jesus weeps over the ruin of sinners in view of God's judgment.**

I love that the passage ends with Jesus teaching them in the temple even though they know that He is weeping and that so many of them are going to fall under God's judgment. He continues to teach and people continue to hang on His words and today God continues to speak His gospel to us, to you. He continues to say, "There are terms of peace. There is a Kingdom for God that has come in Jesus Christ and that Kingdom is full of righteousness, peace and joy. And you, sinner, can enter into that Kingdom if you will lay down the weapons of your self-righteousness and receive and welcome King Jesus into your life."

Jesus weeps in this passage over the ruin of sinners in view of God's coming judgment. What we read in Luke 19:33-34 is just devastating. These things took place in just a generation's time (66-70 A.D.), as Jerusalem was surrounded by invading armies and people starved to death.

Jerusalem was torn to the ground; the people and the children within were destroyed. Jesus says the prophet knows that these things are about to take place. He prophesies in truth of what is to come. Yet He weeps of the ruin of sinners in view of God's judgment.

J.C. Ryle quotes a guy named Wordsworth who said, "Christ here proves His twofold nature by shedding tears as man for what He foretold as God." He speaks with perfect knowledge of God's judgment about what is coming in the future. But there's something about the character of God here, even though the judgment is coming, God's heart is breaking.

*Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?*  
(Ezekiel 33:11)

Hear the voice of God pleading. Pleading with sinful people as His judgment is coming. "Turn back! Turn back from your evil ways! For why will you die, oh house of Israel? Turn back and repent!" That's the heart of God. A God Who does not delight in the death of the wicked, but delights in the salvation of sinners and Who weeps over their ruin as God's judgment is coming.

We look at the tears of Jesus as we view the triumphal entry with tears in our vision. I want to ask two questions by way of application:

### **Does Jesus weep over you?**

You've heard the Gospel. You know the terms of peace. You know that salvation has been accomplished in Jerusalem over 2,000 years ago. You know that the message of reconciliation is being published for all to hear. In 2 Corinthians 5:18-21, the apostle Paul describes the nature of his ministry. All this is from God Who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself; not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ. God is making His appeal through us. God's doing that right now. He's making His appeal through me, His messenger. And He is employing you. He is pleading with you on behalf of Christ, "Be reconciled to God!"

God delights in the salvation of sinners and if you refuse the terms of peace, an excuse you'll never be able to make is that, "Why, Christ was not merciful to me." You'll never be able to say that God was not willing to save you because He shows His eagerness to save and His mercy toward all through His words and His tears in this passage. Even though He knows that the streets of Jerusalem will soon be stained by His blood, He wets those streets with His tears to show us His eagerness to be a Savior to sinners. We implore you on behalf of Christ, "Be reconciled to God!"

## Do you weep with Jesus?

Do you know anything of His sorrow for a world that will not approve His terms of peace? This world has been trying for 2,000 years to achieve peace on earth without bowing its knee to King Jesus. Do you share in that sorrow? Do you think of loved ones in your life who refuse to accept His invitations of grace? Do you think of the reality of God's judgment and its righteousness and its inevitability and the fact that it will not be escapable? Do you know what it's like to weep with Jesus over a world that's under God's judgment?

*Open my eyes, that I may behold  
wondrous things out of your law. (Psalms 119:18)*

Have you ever experienced anything like that?

*Oh that my head were waters,  
and my eyes a fountain of tears,  
that I might weep day and night  
for the slain of the daughter of my people! (Jeremiah 9:1)*

I see in the Lord Jesus, here outside Jerusalem, a beautiful fulfillment of that prophetic prayer of our Savior, the weeping Prophet. His head is like waters and His eyes are like a fountain of tears as He weeps over the city that's falling under God's judgment. Do you know what the Apostle Paul was talking about in Romans 9:1-3?

*I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.*

Do we know compassion like that? Do we know sorrow like that? That we could testify before God with a clear conscience? That we carry within our hearts an unceasing anguish for lost people who will not accept the terms of peace? Is the gospel of the Kingdom so real to us and are we so in tune with the priorities of God that we cry and weep over these things? Do we have anguish in our hearts about people in our lives who need the Savior? If we don't know anything about this kind of biblical experience, we've got to ask, "How far out of sync am I? How far removed is my heart from my Savior?"

I read a searching article in Christianity Today about Francis Schaeffer named Learning to Cry for the Culture:

He was a small man—barely five feet in his knickers, knee socks and ballooning white shirts. For two weeks, first as a freshman and then again as a senior, I sat in my assigned seat at Wheaton College's chapel and

heard him cry. He was the evangelical conscience at the end of the 20th century, weeping over a world that most of his peers dismissed as not worth saving... Schaeffer was the first Christian leader who taught me to weep over the world instead of judging it.

What do we feel more when we look at a lost world? When we look at the lost people in our lives and our homes? Do we feel more anger and indignation or do we feel sorrow? We need to ask ourselves if Jesus, the Judge of all, wept over a city that was going to be destroyed under God's righteous judgment. Do we not need to weep more?

Let's pray. Let's ask God for the gift of tears.

Our great God, as we bow before you, we confess that we are both convicted and comforted by the tears of our Savior over Jerusalem. We're comforted because it reveals to us that the deep, deep love of Jesus is vaster and more unmeasured and more boundless and more free than we could have ever imagined. We're convicted because too often we respond to people around us who need Your grace with a self-absorbed indignation, rather than a Christ-like compassion. So I pray Lord, that You would send us into the world as ambassadors for Christ. I pray as we go forth as Your ambassadors that we go forth, not with self-righteous judgment or selfish anger, but with tears. Tears of compassion.

Thus might I hide my blushing face,  
While his dear cross appears;  
Dissolve my heart in thankfulness,  
And melt mine eyes in tears.

(Alas! And Did My Savior Die by Isaac Watts)

We pray in Jesus' sake. Amen

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