

“When Jesus Comes To Town” Sermon by E A Terry; delivered 03 25 18
Jeremiah 7: 1 – 15; 1st Corinthians 3: 1 – 23; 1st Corinthians 6:1 – 20; **Luke 19: 28 – 48 (Sermon)**

Our text from Luke includes several events which occurred on Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday.

At first glance they appear to be individual events but as we will see all of Jesus’ actions were deliberate and were done to demonstrate Jesus’ role as our Messiah and as our Lord.

And each of Jesus’ actions demands a response from us.

I will briefly touch on all of Jesus’ actions and the people’s response.

But we will spend most of our time this morning on Jesus cleansing the temple.

In verses 28 – 36 Jesus sent two of His disciples ahead to get a colt for Jesus to ride on as He entered into Jerusalem.

Jesus demonstrated His ability to know and control the future by telling His disciples where they would find the colt, what the colt’s owner would say, and the owner’s agreement to let Jesus have the colt.

The response that Jesus’ expected was complete obedience.

Matthew 21:6 states ***“the disciples did as Jesus had instructed them”***.

It is interesting that these two unnamed disciples did not question, understand, or hesitate to do what Jesus asked them to do.

You see obedience is extremely important because obedience is one sign of a true disciple.

Obedience is a reflection of our love of Jesus and obedience is a true reflection of our relationship with Jesus Christ.

Jesus said; ***“If you love me you will obey my commandments.*** (John 14: 15) ***“Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teachings.”*** (John 14:24)

You and I say that Jesus is our Lord, but do we do whatever Jesus asks us to do without questioning or hesitating?

Obedience to all of Jesus’ commandments and to all of Jesus’ teachings is one of the marks of a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

In Jesus’ day, a king would ride a horse when he entered a city as a conqueror.

But a king would ride a colt if he entered a city in peace.

By riding a colt Jesus was boldly proclaiming that He is a king and that He is coming to Jerusalem in peace.

Jesus riding a colt into Jerusalem was a fulfillment of the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9. ***“Rejoice greatly Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See your king comes to you righteous and victorious, lowly riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”***

Jesus publicly declared that He was The Messiah - The King of Israel.

The response that Jesus expected as He rode the colt into Jerusalem was praise and worship.

Luke 19: 37 & 38 tell us that when Jesus rode the colt into Jerusalem the crowd ***“began to joyfully praise God for all the miracles they had seen.”***

They shouted ***“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord.”***

Matthew tells us, the people were also shouting out ***“Hosanna to the Son of David”***.

Hosanna literally means to *“save us now.”*

These people were going wild in their praises and expectations of what Jesus was going to do.

These people were hoping that Jesus was coming to overthrow the Roman government.

But remember Jesus did not come into the city riding a horse, Jesus came riding a colt.

Jesus was not coming to destroy the Romans, but rather Jesus came to deal with the issue of sin in our lives.

Jesus came to pay the price of their sins and Jesus came to save their souls.

We know that these people were praising Jesus for the wrong reason since the Hosannas and the palm branches had become rallying cry of Jewish nationalism during the Maccabean revolts.

The waving of the palm branches was saying we are willing to take up our swords and fight to liberate Israel under your leadership.

Their praise was not genuine praise because their praise was not based on who Jesus was; their praise was centered on themselves.

These people wanted an earthly king not a spiritual king.

They followed Jesus for the physical miracles.

Today we all need to ask ourselves; *“Am I looking for physical miracles or am I looking for spiritual miracles”*.

“Is my Christianity limited to what Jesus can do for me?”

“Do I want Jesus to change my circumstances or to change me?”

In verse 41 we read; ***“Jesus wept”***.

The word translated “*wept*” here suggests a heavy sobbing with great emotion like the deep soulful sobbing when we lose a loved one.

Remember Jesus was going to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover.

The detailed instructions for preparing for Passover are given in Exodus 12.

These instructions included the kind of lamb to be selected for sacrificing, when the lamb was to be selected, when the lamb was to be sacrificed, and how to care for the lamb from the time the lamb was selected until the lamb was sacrificed.

Each person was to select their Passover Lamb five days before Passover began.

In Exodus 14 God said; “*this is a day you are to commemorate; for generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord as a lasting ordinance.*”

So the day Jesus rode into Jerusalem was also “*Lamb Selection Day*” for the Jewish people.

By Jesus riding a colt into Jerusalem on *Lamb Selection Day* Jesus was clearly saying; “*Here I am – The Lamb of God – select me – I have come to take away the sins of the world.*”

In John 1:29 John The Baptist identified Jesus The Messiah when he said; “*Look the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.*”

And 1st Corinthians 5:8 tells us that Jesus is our Passover Lamb.

Jesus was weeping because these people did not select Him as their Passover Lamb.

Friends Jesus is weeping over you today if you have not selected Jesus as your Passover Lamb.

If you have never asked Jesus to save you from your sins and if you have not publicly acknowledged Jesus as your Lord you need to do that today.

Tomorrow may be too late for you.

Remember the only people who will end up in hell are the ones who refused or the people who neglect to ask Jesus to save them from their sins while they are physically alive on this earth.

Jesus wept over the crowd that day because He saw the emptiness in their lives.

These people had heard Jesus’ messages of love and peace but they wanted Jesus to use force to overthrow the Roman government.

These people only wanted a king to meet their physical needs.

They did not understand Jesus’ purpose for coming to earth was to save their souls.

We see that in verses 41- 44.

This morning we all need to ask ourselves what are our expectations of Jesus.

Do we want Jesus to change our circumstances **OR** do we want Jesus to change our heart?

In verse 45 we read about Jesus cleansing the Temple.

And Matthew 21 tells us; ***“Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves.”*** (Matthew 21:12)

The sacredness of The Temple had been turned into a commercial venue.

Theoretically, people could bring their own animals to be sacrificed.

However, those animals had to be approved by the priests.

The priest had a vested interest in rejecting the animals the people brought to the temple.

The high priests, Annas and Caiaphas, profited from animals sold in the temple.

Money-changers had also set up shop in the temple.

The money changers provided a needed service since Jewish coins could only be paid used to pay the temple tax.

Roman coins had to be exchanged into Jewish coins. But these money-changers were known to charge exorbitant exchange rates for their services.

All of these activities combined to turn the temple of God into a noisy smelly stockyard.

The temple was symbolic of God’s presence.

The worshipful atmosphere that was appropriate for the temple was missing.

Instead of being a place of sacred reverence and adoration the temple had become a place of corrupt commerce and extortion.

The sound of praise and prayers had been replaced by the bleating of sheep, the cooing of doves, and the loud haggling of merchants and their customers.

Jesus was angry because Jesus was zealous for the pure worship of God.

And so Jesus drove out the merchants and said to them, ***“It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a den of robbers”*** (Luke 19:46).

There are actually two Old Testament quotations here.

The first quotation ***“my house shall be a house of prayer”*** is from Isaiah 56:7 where God promises to bring foreigners to Himself in salvation.

Jesus also quoted from Jeremiah 7:11 when He referred to the temple as ***“a den of robbers”***.

You see religion for these people and the people in Jeremiah's day had deteriorated into a ritual.

Their relationship with The Lord was not changing the way they lived.

They committed all sorts of sins during the week and they mistakenly thought that God would accept their worship and God would forgive their sin if they went into The Temple.

Friends, this is a serious warning for us today.

We are not exempt from God's judgment just because we come to church.

Sin separates us from God.

Repentance means we are truly sorry for our sins; so sorry that we do not want to offend God by repeating that sin. True repentance always is accompanied by a change in our actions and in a change in our attitude. We must change our wicked ways in order for God to forgive us the sins we have committed.

While Jesus cleansing the temple on Palm Sunday was an actual historical occurrence, 1st Corinthians 6:19 tells us ***"Your body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God. You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body."***

When you became a Christian God placed The Holy Spirit in you.

As a Christian you were bought with the precious blood of Jesus.

Your body belongs to Jesus and you do not have the right to do what you want to with your body.

I realize this is totally contrary to today's culture but this is what God's word says.

God wants to live in His people's hearts not some building made of wood and stones.

We are free to choose however we are never free from God's presence!

We are free to choose but we are not free from the consequences of choosing sin.

We miss out on God's spiritual blessings when we are so engrossed in our jobs or our pleasure that we have little time left for studying our Bibles and praying.

We suffer when we allow worldly cares to drown out our praise to God.

We don't mean for this to happen.

What may start out as a temporary condition often ends up as a way of life.

When this happens we need to cleanse our individual temple or Jesus will be forced to clean it for us.

Since our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit we all need to ask ourselves; *“Am I trading when I ought to be worshipping?”*

“Am I going through the motions of worship while I am actually bargaining with God?”

“Am I trading The Lord’s ways for worldly comfort and pleasure?”

“Are you trading empty ritual and religious jargon for prayer and true fellowship with Jesus Christ?”

Remember Jesus was filled with anger and Jesus took drastic measures to cleanse a physical Temple.

Imagine the anger Jesus feels when your heart is filled with sin, filled with earthly desires, and /or when your mind is cluttered with selfish pleasures.

Our text for today challenges each one of us to examine our heart and see if we need to cleanse God’s Holy Temple.

Psalm 139:23-24 says, ***“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”***

We all need to ask *ourselves* *“is there any activity in my life that is keeping me from having a close personal relationship with Jesus?”*

If so we need to cleanse our individual temple before Jesus is forced to clean it for us.

The response that Jesus expects from us is true repentance.

True worshipers do not seek entertainment. True worshipers do not want to worship God in their own way.

True worshipers will always worship The Lord in spirit and in truth.

Jesus’ cleansing of the temple is really a warning to all of us.

Each one of us should examine our own worship of God.

We are only fooling ourselves when we think that God will accept our worship when we are disobeying His commandments.

The warning in Jeremiah is clear. Going through the motions in a worship service will not bring us forgiveness and fellowship with God.

True worship flows out of a personal relationship with God. Salvation only comes by faith in Jesus Christ and when we repent of our sins.

The account of Palm Sunday challenges us to examine our attitudes and our response to see if we really have submitted every area of our lives to Jesus’ authority.

God’s Word to us this morning calls for each of us to ask ourselves,

“Do I unquestionably and unhesitatingly go and do what Jesus asks me to do?”

“Do I voluntarily and sacrificially give The Lord what is valuable to me?”

“Am I constantly submitting my life to Jesus by getting rid of the sin in my life?”

“Is my house a house of prayer and worship?”

“Do words of praise and thanksgiving to God freely and constantly flow from my mouth?”

When we repent Jesus will cleanse us, guide us, heal us, comfort us, bless us, and use us.

Jesus came in peace on that first Palm Sunday and Jesus offered His kingdom to all who would voluntarily submit to His Lordship.

But The Bible is clear when Jesus returns again Jesus will destroy all evil with force and ***“every knee will bow in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God The Father.”***

All of our scripture lessons for today challenge each one of us to repent of our sins and to pray that Jesus will cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

AMEN