

**Palm Sunday
March 20, 2016**

"See the Face of Jesus as He Rides into Jerusalem"

LUKE 19: 28-40

After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹ As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, ³⁰ "Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it.'" ³² Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. ³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" ³⁴ They replied, "The Lord needs it." ³⁵ They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. ³⁶ As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road. ³⁷ When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: ³⁸ "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" ³⁹ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" ⁴⁰ "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."

It says here that Jesus went on ahead from Jericho to Jerusalem. He walked the 14 miles from below sea level up into the Judean hills to Jerusalem gaining over 3000 feet in elevation. Jesus led the way and his disciples followed. There was determination in every step he took. There is determination written all over his face. He the Lamb of God who takes away sin. He is the Messiah. He is the Christ. He wants to get the job done of rescuing us and do it right.

You appreciate it when someone does a good job for you whether it is fixing your car, or repairing your plumbing or mending a broken bone. Nowhere is it more important to have a job done right than taking care of our problem with sin. Jesus knew there was nothing we could do to solve this problem of sin in our lives. That is why in love he is so determined to do the job right. Let's look more closely at the face of Jesus as he rides into Jerusalem. First let's see how determined he is to do everything right. Then let's see how determined he is to love people and help them.

See how determined Jesus is to do everything right

Do you want evidence that Jesus wants to do everything right, then look at his reason for riding a donkey into Jerusalem. Jesus certainly could have walked down the Mount of Olives, through the Kidron Valley and then up to Jerusalem. But he did not because the Old Testament had predicted in the prophet Zechariah that the king who would bring peace to people would ride on a donkey, not just an ordinary donkey, but a foal, a young donkey.

See the determination on the face of your Savior as he instructs his disciples with these

words: "Go to the village ahead of you and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' tell him, 'The Lord has need of it.'" He doesn't just ask them to find a donkey. He tells them specifically where the donkey will be tied and what kind of donkey it would be. It would be a young colt. The other gospel accounts tell us that the mother donkey was also there with the colt.

So what happens? Two of Jesus' disciples go to the next village and there was the colt. When they untied it, the owner asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" They simply told him, "The Lord needs it." The man let them have the colt and brought it to Jesus.

Do you see how everything is happening according to plan? The timing of this is perfect to fulfill the prophecy in Zechariah that the Messiah would come to his people riding on a donkey not just an ordinary donkey, but one that was a young colt. Jesus told his disciples they would find a young colt that had never been ridden before. That could be a logistical problem. Donkeys may be easier to train for riding than horses, but they still need training. This was no problem for Jesus. He was determined to be in total control of the situation just to fulfill this prophecy and do everything right. The disciples place their clothes on the donkey and it does not try to run away. They place Jesus on the young donkey and it does not try to buck Jesus off. Even when the crowd starts cheering, Jesus still rides on determined to carry out what was asked of him.

Truly it is amazing how Jesus fulfilled every prophecy about him in the Old Testament. This past week I was talking to my sister who is one year younger than I am. She lives in Watertown, South Dakota. I mentioned to her that I preached on Isaiah 53 for our midweek Lenten sermons. She said how can you not believe the Bible is true when you see these specific prophecies of Jesus' suffering and death long before they happened? We think of how in Psalm 22 through the words of David, Jesus speaks about his crucifixion a thousand years before it happened. He says in that psalm, "My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth." Jesus fulfilled that prophecy by waiting until shortly before he died to ask for something to drink with the words, "I am thirsty." Or also in Psalm 22 it the Messiah says, "They have pierced my hands and my feet." Jesus allowed the soldiers to hold his hands and feet to the cross and pound in nails. He did this to fulfill the words that were spoken about him long before they happened.

Why is this so important? Why is it so important that Jesus rode into Jerusalem a young colt instead of a seasoned donkey used to transporting people? Because Jesus wants to do everything perfect, not just keeping the prophecies but also living the perfect life you and I could never live, and dying the perfect death to make the perfect sacrifice for us.

Why is it that things we do wrong in the past keep popping up in our lives to remind us how far we have fallen short of God's glory and his perfection? In my conversation with my sister we recalled that we were not always as nice to my grandmother Schroeder as we should have been. In her later years she lived with us for about six months. When you think about how you lived your life this past and some of the sinful thoughts that have come into your mind, you realize even if you try to be a better person this coming week you cannot even make up for one thing you have done wrong.

Look at the face of Jesus as the disciples lift him up and place him on the donkey to ride into Jerusalem. See how determined he is not just to fulfill this prophecy but to do everything perfect. Look at how he is determined to take everything you have done wrong upon himself and suffer the cursed of hell itself so you can have peace with your God now in this life and for all eternity. When his work is completed Jesus will say, "It is finished!" To prove Jesus did everything perfectly the Father will raise him to life again.

See how determined Jesus is to love people

There is something else we see on the face of Jesus as he comes down the slope of the Mount of Olives and into Jerusalem. We see intense love for the people who came out on this Sunday morning to give him their praises.

Notice what the people did as Jesus made his way along the Mount of Olives. They spread their cloaks on the road in front of Jesus. These are the cloaks that kept them warm at night as they traveled to Jerusalem and stayed there for the Passover. They spread these cloaks as a way to show their love and respect for Jesus along with branches from trees and palm branches. Then they sang the songs they were used to singing in the temple for worship. "When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for the miracles they had seen: 'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.'"

All the gospel accounts indicate that there was a large crowd of people who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem. That should not surprise us considering it is close to the Passover celebration and the streets of Jerusalem are already filling up with people. When the word gets passed around that Jesus is ready to enter the city, crowds of people begin to form, just as they followed Jesus in large numbers when he preached along the sea of Galilee.

How fitting that they should use the words of Psalm 118 to welcome Jesus into the city. Psalm 118 begins with familiar words "O give thanks unto the Lord for he his good, his mercy endures forever." It has the words, "This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it." And also, "I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the Lord has done." And, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone." And the words " O Lord save us" from which we get the word "Hosanna" are also in this psalm. These people were praising Jesus because of the miracles they had seen. Sadly most of them wanted Jesus to save them from their problems in life, but not their problem of sin.

The Pharisees did not like hearing all these people singing praises to Jesus. They refused to even think about the miracles that Jesus performed. Some of them wanted Jesus to tell them to stop singing and shouting. Jesus told them if they kept silent the stones would cry out.

We just can't say enough good about Jesus as he rides into Jerusalem. If we keep silent, then the stones will have to ring out because of who he is and what he is determined to do. Look at the face of Jesus. See how determined he is to go forward and perform the miracle of all miracles that directly affects your life and mine today. The prophet Zechariah predicted Jesus would bring peace. He rides into Jerusalem on a donkey to

humble himself and become obedient to death, even death on the cross to bring a peace this world cannot give. He rides so that one week later he can appear to his disciples and say, "Peace be to you" and then show them the nail marks in his hands. I know that if I were the only person in the world that rebelled against Almighty God, Jesus would have ridden into Jerusalem and given himself up just for me. That's just who he is. His name is Jesus which means Savior. We cry out to him, "Hosanna" "Lord save us."

Jesus continues down the Mount of Olives and when he see the beautiful city of Jerusalem with its walls and temple on the temple mount, Jesus weeps. He breaks down and cries as he says, "If you, even you had only known on this day what would bring you peace- but now it is hidden from your eyes." See the tears streaming down the face of Jesus. Hear in his quivering voice how much he loved these people and wanted them to believe in him for the right reason. That's what Jesus wants today. We shed our tears for those who don't know and appreciate what he has done for them. We long to have them sing "Hosanna" "Lord save us" for all the right reasons. We want them joining us beneath the cross of Jesus as we hear him cry, "It is finished." We long to have them join us in front of the open tomb as we say to each other, "Christ is risen!" "He is risen indeed!" Look at the face of Jesus one more time. See how determined he is to do everything right. See how much he loves you. Amen.