

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

They are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye mistakes can be found. So he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabile.org.

Date: Palm Sunday - March 28, 2010

Title: “Why the King Must Come” - “The Gathering Storm”

Text: Mark 11:1-11 (Parallel Passages - Matthew 21:1-12; Luke 19:29-41)

Theme: In Palm Sunday, King Jesus is offering Himself to the people as the descendent of David and the fulfillment of promises made. Everyone is called to choose between accepting Him as Lord and Savior or rejecting Him and continuing to “save” themselves.

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Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.

Reflecting on His Work and the Storyline of the Bible

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Introduction:

In order for there to be a Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday, there must be Palm Sunday. From the larger overview of Bible’s Storyline we will narrow in and mark the one week beginning with Palm Sunday. What makes this event so significant? I believe by remembering Mark’s flow of thought we will see the growing significance of Palm Sunday.

On August 9, 2009 I spoke from Mark 10:46-52 on the restoring of Bartimaeus’ sight. The question we were confronted with was simple, “What do you think of Jesus?” This paragraph is the last event in Mark’s narrative before Palm Sunday and the beginning of Passion Week.

Holy Week (Latin: *Hebdomas Sancta* or *Hebdomas Maior*, "Greater Week"; Greek: Μεγάλη Εβδομάδα) in Christianity is the last week of Lent and the week before Easter. It includes the religious holidays of Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday (Holy Thursday) and Good Friday, and lasts from Palm Sunday (or in the Eastern, Lazarus Saturday) until but not including Easter Sunday, as Easter Sunday is the first day of the new season of The Great Fifty Days. It commemorates the last week of the earthly life of Jesus Christ culminating in his crucifixion on Good Friday and his resurrection on Easter Sunday.¹

Up until the very end of His public ministry, Jesus does the work to which He was called. Everything about Him openly declares Him to be God’s Hero. From Mark 1 through Mark 10 “Jesus healed many who had various diseases.” The only means of silencing Him will be to put Him to death. Other than this direct assault, there is no stopping Him.

The electricity in the air had to be all consuming. The pull of His person and work compelled a response. No one could possibly remain neutral. All would come and all would conclude. Listen to how this thought escalates in the context of its historical framework.

“According to recent scholarship [by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan in their book *The Last Week*], on this day Pontius Pilate also rode into Jerusalem. With a vast host of chariots, cavalry, foot soldiers, clanking armor, and gleaming weapons, Pilate had his own parade almost two thousand years ago.

And he did so for two reasons. For one, Pilate did not live in Jerusalem. While Jerusalem was the capital of Israel and the center of Jewish religious and cultural life,

their Roman oppressors chose to live elsewhere, about sixty miles to the west on the coast of the Mediterranean.

But, and here comes the second reason, during significant Jewish festivals, like the Passover which often stirred up so much ethnic pride that it would lead to rebellion, if not rioting, the Governor would ride in from the coast to remind everyone who was in charge. Under Pilate the Hebrew people were insignificant, powerless gnats in the vast hierarchy that was the Roman Empire. The people had beaten into them, with seemingly innocuous parades and undoubtedly much more insidious means, that they were losers and their lives, their stories, their opinions, were worth nothing. Rome is right and Rome is might and all you need to do is sit down and shut up. The people, just when they were about to celebrate that fateful night when they were released from bondage in Egypt so many generations before, the people were reminded that they lived in bondage yet again.”²

This is the high drama of a gauntlet laid. In his famous book *Mere Christianity*, Lewis makes this statement, “A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic - on the level with a man who says he is a poached egg - or he would be the devil of hell. You must take your choice. Either this was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us.”

Again we meet the multitude, this swelling fickle mass of humanity. Here they follow Him for what He can give. Later they will cry out for His blood.

THE BIG PICTURE:

Jesus’ Ministry in Judea and Perea (ch. 10)

- Teaching concerning Divorce (10:1-12)
- Teaching Concerning Saving Faith (10:13-31)
 - Children (10:13-16)
 - The Rich Young Man (10:17-31)
- A Request of Two Brothers (10:32-45)
- Restoration of Bartimaeus’s Sight (10:46-52)

Passion Week and Resurrection Sunday (Chapters 11-16)

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|---|----------------------|
| Triumphal Entry | Mark 11:1-11 |
| The Lesson of the Fig Tree | Mark 11:12-14, 20-26 |
| ○ Ministry Preparation and Prayer | |
| The Lesson of the Cleansing | Mark 11:15-19 |
| ○ Drawing Lines/Picking Sides | |
| The Question of Authority | Mark 11:27-33 |
| ○ Who gave you the “right” to cleanse the Temple? | |

The events that surround this event are significant in understanding the importance of this moment.

Sequence:

10:46 "And they came to Jericho"

11:1 "Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives"

11:11 "And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple"

11:12 "On the following day, when they came from Bethany"

11:15 "And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple"

11:20 "As they passed by in the morning"

11:27 "And they came again to Jerusalem"

The Problem:

Although many heard Jesus, not all believed Jesus. Regardless as to why we have heard, God wants us to accept who He is, what He has done and who His people now are because of it.

The Storyline:

In the arrival of Jesus, the promise is being fulfilled. This is the end of the beginning.

The Storyline:

During our Lenten Observation we've looked at the larger context for Passion Week. Passion Week is *The Gospel*. It is the work to which the Son of God came to accomplish in obedience to His Father's will.

The Problem:

We simply forget the Story.

Questions:

1. What are the time markers that enable us to note the sequence of events found throughout the following chapters?
2. What is the larger context enabling the point of this text?
3. What significance is there in the white colt?
4. What does the preparation for the event communicate?
5. What is the significance behind what the crowd proclaimed?
6. Why were the religious leaders so upset with Jesus?
7. Does Jesus have the right to do what He did in cursing the fig tree and cleansing the temple?
8. What do His tears speak to (Luke 19:41)?
9. Why did Jesus cleanse the temple?
10. Who do you believe Jesus to be?
11. Have you accepted Him as Lord and Savior?

The Holy Spirit is calling to us from this passage to consider three ideas.

To Know: The Holy Spirit desires for us to know Jesus as the only sufficient sacrifice for sin.

To Choose: The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose to accept His provision and to reject our own.

To Feel: The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the joy of resting in His finished work.

Outline:

I. The Context – The presentation of the Christ (Mark 1:1-10:52)

The entire Markan narrative is preparing us for this moment. Jesus Christ is God and we will make a decision to either accept Him for who He is and what He does or we will reject Him and deny who He claims to be and what He openly did.

Only one of those decisions will result in life eternal. The other simply confirms what is already true. You are a rebel and part of the unholy insurrection against the King of kings and Lord of lords.

II. The Preparation – The securing of the colt (Mark 11:1-7)

Scripture is never written in a vacuum. Each of the elements is masterfully placed so that the greatest impact will play out.

“Though no one knows what these two disciples were thinking, I am fairly confident that they had imagined for themselves a grander and nobler role on this day than being on donkey detail. Mark does not name these disciples, but maybe they were James and John, who only hours before had proposed to Jesus, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." But it hardly matters which two they were. All of the disciples had been jockeying for advantage, angling for glory, arguing about who was the greatest. So it is deliciously ironic that on this very public and glorious day of Jesus' ministry, a day when he will be welcomed into Jerusalem with joyous hosannas, they find themselves engaged in a most unromantic form of ministry, mucking around a stable, looking suspiciously like horse thieves, and trying to wrestle an untamed and no doubt balky animal toward the olive groves. For this they left their fishing nets?"³

At every stage of His journey Jesus is in complete control. Nothing is happening outside of what the Father wills. *The Story* continues to unfold.

“The RSV has translated away a Markan play on words. The Greek actually says "*Its Master* has need of it" where *Master* could refer to either Jesus or the owner of the creature.”⁴

III. The Event – The entering of the King (Mark 11:8-10)

I desire to repeat the contrasting thought of Pilate entering the city alongside, but opposite of Jesus.

“Now Jerusalem is not a large city. And what the authors of the Bible take for granted and fail to mention is that while Jesus is parading in on a colt through one of the back gates, on the other side of the city Pilate is parading in on a war horse accompanied by a squadron or two of

battle hardened Roman soldiers. (See Borg & Crossan, *The Last Week*, pages 1-30.) You can bet that he too is being acclaimed by a crowd. There'd be hell to pay if he wasn't.

The Bible doesn't tell us about that parade or what they shouted, but you can bet it wasn't, "Blessed is the coming of the Kingdom of our ancestor David." That would be treason. And treason was punishable by? You guessed it, by torture followed by execution on a cross.

Do you think anyone at Pilate's parade heard about Jesus' parade? Heard what the crowd had shouted? Let's see what unfolds in the week ahead."⁵

Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan suggest there was not only a procession from the Mount of Olives on the east that day, but also a Roman procession entering from the west, which would have had as a focal point the Roman governor named Pontius Pilate. The juxtaposition of these two processions would have set up quite a contrast. One came as an expression of empire and military occupation whose goal was to make sure oppressed people did not find deliverance. It approached the city using horses, brandishing weapons, proclaiming the power of empire. The other procession was quite a contrast, using a donkey and laying down cloaks and branches along the road. The one who was coming in the name of the Lord quietly, but profoundly, proclaimed the peaceful reign of God. Borg, Marcus and Crossan, John Dominic, *The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus' Final Days in Jerusalem*, HarperOne, 2007.⁶

Chrysostom notes, "Now that the Lord had given sufficient proof of His virtue, and the cross was at hand, even at the door, He did those things which were about to excite them against Him with **a greater openness**; therefore although He had so often gone up to Jerusalem, He never however had done so in such **a conspicuous manner as now**."⁷

It is as if Jesus makes one last attempt at enabling faith. He makes the offer plain. He openly offers Himself. There are three elements we do well to note.

A. He came

His coming is in fulfillment of the promise and picture.

"Although the evangelist does not call attention to it, it is clear that Jesus' entry into Jerusalem amid this acclaim accords with the prophetic oracle of Zechariah 9:9: "Rejoice, daughter of Zion! Shout for joy, daughter of Jerusalem! Your king comes to you with authority and victorious, a self-deprecating man, one who rides on a donkey, on the foal of a female donkey." While this oracle points to the legitimate authority of Jesus, it also emphasizes the antithesis of the grand airs one expects of royalty: this man puts on no airs, rides no white horse, wears no shining armor; rather, even if he is a king with God-given authority, he enters the city as one less likely to be a user of violence than to be a victim of it. This "triumphal" entry, as it is usually termed, is in fact paradoxical and thus consistent with Mark's characterization of Jesus as one who disdains regal majesty while acting with unquestioned authority, one who prefers to describe himself publicly as a servant rather than as a monarch. Even so, the public acclaim

here is for a Messiah, a deliverer: the shouts of adulators echo the coronation psalm (Ps. 118:25-26)."⁸

We must not fail to feel the significant and strong statement of a competing kingship. Rome is out; Jesus is in. Friend, there is rebellion and war in the air.

Although some have objected that the Romans would probably not have permitted a man the crowd acknowledged King to enter the city to cheering crowds, Price (2003, p 292) argues that what is really going on is a bit of Markan irony. The crowd is simply giving out the Hosanna! as part of the usual Passover wish that the Davidic messiah would come and restore the Davidic monarchy. And sure enough, in front of them, is the Davidic messiah -- but the crowd doesn't know. To them, Jesus is just one of tens of thousands of entrants to the city for the Passover festival, who happens like thousands of others, to be arriving on a donkey.

Regardless of how one reads the entry, the salient fact is that the Romans had a low tolerance for even the slightest whiff of sedition, and would have dealt with it ruthlessly. As Brent Kinman (1994) concedes while attempting to defend the historicity of the incident, even among scholars who accept the historicity of the story, the reality of Roman touchiness on the subject of sedition creates apprehension. Kinman goes on to argue that since Pilate's coming up to Jerusalem must have been an extravagant affair, Jesus' entry must have paled beside it. While this approach is the distilled essence of speculation, Kinman does bring up one common point, that the Gospel portrayals need not be read as having the crowd in its entirety acknowledge Jesus the savior. Against this is Gundry's observation of the sheer length of Jesus dramatic entrance, as well as the details of the crowd laying things at his feet the whole way. In any case, as we have seen, this passage is created off of the Old Testament.⁹

"The use of palm branches in Maccabees (i.e. 1 Maccabees 13:49-52 -- Capture of the Pagan Fort in Jerusalem; 2 Maccabees 10:1-8 -- The Rededication of the Temple [Hanukkah]) was related to military victories. Is that what the people were expecting from Jesus? When they shout "Hosanna" = "Save us" (not part of the shout in Luke); do they consider that "salvation" to be like that of the Maccabees -- driving out the occupying forces from Jerusalem? If so, then Jesus failed miserably to live up to their expectations."¹⁰

"The context of Zechariah's oracle in ch. 9 is one of "defeat and destruction for the foreign nations and return and restoration for Israel" [Harper's Bible Commentary]. Given this context of Zechariah's humble king riding into town and the use of palm branches when the Maccabean forces defeated the foreign nations and rededicated the temple, I would assume that similar expectations were in the minds of the crowd on the first "palm" Sunday."¹¹

N.T. Wright correctly notes how,

"You don't spread cloaks on the road - especially in the dusty, stony Middle East! - for a friend, or even a respected senior member of your family. You do it for royalty. And you

don't cut branches off trees, or foliage from the fields, to wave in the streets just because you feel somewhat elated; you do it because you are welcoming a king."¹²

What will you do in the face of a competing power?

B. He cried

"When He approached Jerusalem, **He saw the city and wept over it**" (Luke 19:41).

Jesus as fully God and fully man weeps over the city of Jerusalem. He weeps for their loss and pain. He weeps with tenderness and compassion. Why did He weep and why does He weep still?

C. He cleansed

¹⁰ "When He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, 'Who is this?' ¹¹ And the crowds were saying, 'This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee.' ¹² And **Jesus entered the temple and drove out all those who were buying and selling in the temple**, and overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who were selling doves" (Matt. 21:10-12).

Jesus, as King of kings and Lord of lords, has every right and authority to cleanse His Father's house. He is here to restore what is lost.

IV. The Response - The decision of the crowd

A. Some recognized Him for who He is

³⁷ "As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, **the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice** for all the miracles which they had seen, ³⁸ shouting: 'BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!'" (Luke 19:37, 38).

¹⁷ "So the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, **continued to testify about Him**. ¹⁸ For this reason also the people went and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign" (John 12:17, 18).

B. Others rejected Him for who He claimed to be

"Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, '**Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.**' ⁴⁰ But Jesus answered, 'I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!'" (Luke 19:39, 40).

"So the Pharisees said to one another, '**You see that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him.**'" (John 12:19).

“The acted-out parable of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem is a further public disclosure of his messiahship, yet it is a disclosure for those with eyes to see. Few, other than the disciples (and even then we are not sure they read the signs), see the significance of the event, yet the event is recorded to draw the reader to faith. The reader is asked to respond in faith to Jesus the messiah, the king who rides toward his coronation, acclaimed by the pilgrim crowd. Even nature bends to his lordship for he rides on an unbroken colt.”¹³

For us to do honor to the Story, it is imperative that we see the tension and allow it to exist. Not only will the seed of the woman crush the head of the serpent, but the serpent's seed will bruise His heal. There are continued and contrasting forces at work within the Story. There are two sides and everyone is on one side by birth and must choose the other for life. This is the same decision we are confronted with today. Will you accept Jesus for who He is and does or will you reject Him?

Shepherding the Sheep: (What's the NEXT STEP?)

1. Do you know who Jesus is?
2. Have you accepted Him as Savior and Lord?
3. Will you?
4. For those of us who have, let us remember that He is King of kings and Lord of lords and no existing authority can overthrow His kingdom. When you consider how flustered you become when looking at our current government, let us not forget that all of this is simply a part of His One Story. God wrote the Story and it unfolds according to His plan. Take heart, Jesus Christ is still the King of kings and Lord of lords.

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Week

² <http://benrobertson.blogspot.com/2008/03/sermon-9-march-2008-palm-sunday.html>

Borg, Marcus and Crossan, John Dominic, *The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus' Final Days in Jerusalem*, HarperOne, 2007.

³ <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=3389>

⁴ <http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark11.html#11.p.1.11>

⁵ <http://www.holytextures.com/2009/03/mark-11-1-11-year-b-palm-sunday.html>

⁶ <http://jointhefeast.blogspot.com/2009/03/april-5-2009-mark-111-11-kirby-lawrence.html>

⁷ <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/aquinas/catena2.iii.xi.html>

⁸ <http://artsci.wustl.edu/~cwconrad/Mark/mk11notes.html#anchor1700256>

⁹ <http://www.michaelturton.com/Mark/GMark11.html#11.p.1.11>

¹⁰ <http://www.crossmarks.com/brian/palmsun.htm>

¹¹ <http://www.crossmarks.com/brian/palmsun.htm>

¹² N.T. Wright, *Mark for Everyone*, 147.

¹³ <http://www.lectionarystudies.com/studyg/palmsundaybag.html>