

Luke 19:28-40

²⁸After he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰saying, “Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it.’” ³²So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. ³³As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?” ³⁴They said, “The Lord needs it.” ³⁵Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. ³⁶As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. ³⁷As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, ³⁸saying, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!” ³⁹Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, order your disciples to stop.” ⁴⁰He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.”

I’m going to share a little bit this morning, but mainly I want you to think of the gospel of Luke as your real preacher. Luke has a lot to say to us. He began his gospel announcing the coming of baby Jesus and the words “Peace....” Now in this scripture text, where Jesus comes riding in on a donkey, there are two understandings of this kingdom of Peace, Jesus’ and everybody else’s’. The people praise Jesus using the words from Psalm 118, “Blessed....” What both Jesus and the people want is peace, but their understandings of what that looks like and how they get there are very different.

What I want us to think about today is what should peace look like to us.

We find Jesus entering Jerusalem and people praising him. They throw down their ragged clothes, because these people are not rich, but yet they don’t mind ruining or at least getting what they do have dirty.

And they are doing it because they know that Jesus is an authority and they want to follow him. But they are confused, they think that he is a military leader of some kind. You do know the dilemma that these people are in don’t you....under

Roman occupation, they have to do whatever the powerful Rome tells them they have to do. And the people are tired of it.

Here is Jesus entering the city to the cheers of a crowd that he knows, “they are tired of being bullied”.

They give him a heroes welcome , reserved for rulers, conquerors and such. When War Generals conquered a people, there would be a procession like this with people shouting praises and greetings, while the honored would ride in on a stallion. Historian Plutarch wrote about how Antony was greeted this way. People would wave and place Palm branches down symbolize high expectations and praise for a general. Josephus writes about how Alexander the great was greeted like this when he entered Jerusalem, riding on a stallion on his way to the central temple to pay homage.

Jesus is aware of these peoples assumptions and you know it does make him weary. Because here is the reality, the world is stuck with evil rulers and oppressive regimes it always has been and always will be and Jesus was not and is not going to put an end to that by appearing and launching a military campaign.

Jesus is in a touchy situation here. The people believe one thing that he is a king....they are right....but not the kind of king that they think he is with militant ambitions and such.....so they praise him for bringing the peace that they want. They kind of get it but man oh man is the cross going to be a shock to them.

Just prior to entering the city Jesus said something really heavy. Notice our reading said, “After he said these things”, so what Jesus said before and how he is entering the city now are CLOSELY connected.

So what he said....Jesus told a parable.

If you want to look at it, its verses 19:11-27. People were standing around and saying the words “kingdom of God” a lot, and talking about the kingdom of God as if it meant God was going to liberate them from the oppressive Roman occupation. Jesus says, Now look, here is the real situation. He told them the parable of a ruler (cough cough sounds like King Herod cough cough) a nobleman who went off to get royal power for himself by talking to rulers in a distant country. While the ruler was gone, he entrusted his servants to take care of his possessions giving

some to each. While he was gone, all the people hated him and hoped he would get killed on the way and wouldn't come back. People in the audience must have been coughing (sounds like King Herod when he went off to those Roman authorities). Jesus goes on, the nobleman did come back with his royal powers and took the servants one by one.

All but one of the servants increased their profit for their nobleman. And you know what happened to the servant who did not increase. The servant said to the nobleman, "I knew you were a harsh man who takes anything you want, whether it's yours to take or not." The nobleman ordered the servant to be killed in front of him and have the stuff this man was entrusted with to be given to the most productive slave. The other servants protest. Don't the most productive have enough already. But the nobleman says, those who have the most will be given more; that's just the way it is.

And Jesus tells this parable to highlight the way that governments and rulers are. The people who were standing around listening to this parable, who then became the people who praised Jesus riding into Jerusalem on his donkey, had expectations of kingship that overthrows the authorities. Man oh man had they seen might and violence in the Roman army. They lived with the harshness of people like the noble Jesus described in the parable he has just told them. They expected God to smite with might. But Jesus says no, that's not going to happen. Jesus tells the parable to illustrate that the government of the world is harsh, like this.

Man what a ruler; but that kind of ruler is very typical. They have always been around. Sadaam Housein had people executed at will, Oliver Cromwell in Brittain, the current bloodhead in Africa, the genocides.

As Jesus rides in on the donkey, he knows that he is not going to spare them from the oppression of Roman rule.

Here is the kicker: the thing that hits you right in the gut: Jesus didn't even spare himself, but gave his life up a ransom for many. He gave himself up, freeing those people who praised him on the road that day, not from Roman rule, but from the notion that they have to live like the oppressive people, Lording power over each other, giving to those who can return the favor.

There was a time when the disciples asked Jesus, “Who would be the greatest in his kingdom?” and Jesus says whoever is the least is the greatest. Do not Lord it over each other like the Gentiles.”

When Jesus came riding into town on his donkey, that is exactly the kind of kingdom he was lifting up. A kingdom where the citizens do not worry about their own interests. He lifts up a kingdom where we sacrifice many of the good things in our own lives so that others might live more freely. That is true peace. That is the peace found in the gospel.

Peace is a **tricky** concept to get. When we think about Peace, (and I’m borrowing some thoughts from Walter Bruggemann), one the first things that comes to mind is the “I’ve Got Peace Like a River”. Please nod your head if you know the song.

But, my goodness, when we consider that Peace and Crucifixion are intertwined with Jesus, the Peace like a River, definition seems so **SHALLOW**. *Shalom* that Hebrew word for peace that we are so familiar with is well expressed in the lives of isolated, “insulated individuals.” Real shalom comes to us as a community where no one is excluded and everyone’s interests are taken into consideration.

In the world, there are two kinds of people, two different perspectives on peace, the Haves and the Have-Nots. You can find out a lot about those in our world who are the have-nots by logging on to the hungersite.org. Who else are have-nots? There are those in the US who find it cheaper feed their children at McDonalds. It is actually cheaper to eat there than it is to eat healthy. In the Bible, the Hebrew people were have-nots when they were slaves in Egypt. The have-nots are the poor living under unjust laws. The Hebrew people were have-not when they were exiles in Babylon as Stephanie told it last week. “For the have-nots in the world, *shalom* means freedom, liberation. There must be radical change before things will be all right and going well for them, before they can enjoy welfare, safety, prosperity, friendship, health, and personal integrity. To the haves, on the other hand, *shalom* means "order, stability." For haves, shalom means “proper management of the existing welfare, safety, and prosperity, so they can continue to enjoy and celebrate what they have. To the have-nots of the world, *shalom* is salvation; to the haves, *shalom* is blessing.”

And that is the rub, real shalom=peace must seek salvation for the have nots. Real Shalom must take into account that everyone's humanity is tied together. The choices of the rich can hurt the poor. Real *shalom* = peace must see to the freedom and liberation of the have-nots and make sure that everyone benefits from order and stability.

The thing about true shalom=peace is that the process of its enactment hurts us all a little bit and costs us all something. Peace, the kind of peace that Jesus Christ brings to world, requires sacrifice on our parts in order for it to be felt. This is because we mainly associate peace with the fulfillment of our own particular comfort. We call peaceful whatever fulfills our needs and hopes and allays our fears. We see we are wrong to do that.

The kingdom of God does not approve of the harsh ways of governments, giving more security to those who have the most while leaving the least secure ever more exposed. But, it does not crush the harsh governments with violence. As our king, Jesus is a different kind of ruler from anyone else the world has ever seen, Jesus shows us the way of peace, and we follow.

EXTRAS FROM SERMON

Sermon # 1

I think most of you will recognize this scripture reading this morning. Jesus enters Jerusalem being treated like a king, riding in, and being praised.

When Alexander the Great came into Jerusalem as a great conquerer, the people.....

When Antony came.....

But, there is something special about the way that Jesus comes into Jerusalem. He comes in as a king, but a certain kind of king.

Read the scripture:

Our scripture reading started out with the words, "After Jesus said these things". I bet you wonder what Jesus said that would make it a logical next step for him to enter Jerusalem like a king.

Jesus told a parable, a tough parable. **If you want to look at it, its verses 19:11-27. People were standing around and saying the words "kingdom of God" a lot, and talking about the kingdom of God as if it meant God was going to liberate them from the oppressive Roman occupation. Jesus says, Now look, here is the real situation. He told them the parable of a ruler (cough cough sounds like King Herod cough cough) a nobleman who went off to get royal power for himself by talking to rulers in a distant country. While the ruler was gone, he entrusted his servants to take care of his possessions giving some to each. While he was gone, all the people hated him and hoped he would get killed on the way and wouldn't come back. People in the audience must have been coughing (sounds like King Herod when he went off to those Roman authorities). Jesus goes on, the nobleman did come back with his royal powers and took the servants one by one.**

All but one of the servants increased their profit for their nobleman. And you know what happened to the servant who did not increase. The servant said to the nobleman, "I knew you were a harsh man who takes anything you want, whether it's yours to take or not." The nobleman ordered the servant to be killed in front of him and have the stuff this man was entrusted with to be given to the most productive slave. The other servants protest. Don't the most productive have enough already. But the nobleman says, those who have the most will be given more; that's just the way it is.

And Jesus tells this parable to highlight the way that governments and rulers are. The people who were standing around listening to this parable, who then became the people who praised Jesus riding into Jerusalem on his donkey, had expectations of kingship that overthrows the authorities. Man oh

man had they seen might and violence in the Roman army. They lived with the harshness of people like the noble Jesus described in the parable he has just told them. They expected God to smite with might. But Jesus says no, that's not going to happen. Jesus tells the parable to illustrate that the government of the world is harsh, like this.

The kingdom of God does not approve of the harsh ways of governments, giving more security to those who have the most while leaving the least secure ever more exposed. But, it does not crush the harsh governments with violence.

Rather the kingdom of God is like Jesus riding into town on a donkey, rather than a stallion.

Jesus is not greeted by the noblemen of Jerusalem, but by the lowliest of society, just the people who follow him around.

The people don't lay down Palm branches at all in the gospel of Luke. Instead they lay down their own clothes; not particularly nice clothes, but whatever they wear on their own bodies. I see generosity in this response. There were a lot of people living in the world at that time who would like to follow Jesus into some kind of epic battle to gain their freedom.

The people wanted peace; peace that gave them enough food to eat for the next day; peace that delivered them from rulers like the nobleman/Herod from Jesus' parable.

The multitude of disciples in verse 38, praise Jesus saying, "Blessed is the king, who comes in the name of the Lord, Peace in heaven."

Perhaps what we inevitably have to see is that Peace comes through sacrifice.

While Jesus is being hailed as a hero, do you really think he could enjoy the moment? He has his mind on the cross, the kingdom of God sacrifice that Jesus Christ made for us.

Peace, the kind of peace that Jesus Christ brings to world, requires sacrifice on our parts in order for it to be felt. This is because we mainly associate peace with the fulfillment of our own particular comfort. We call peaceful whatever fulfills our needs and hopes and allays our fears. But, in the world, there are two kinds of people, the Haves and the Have-Nots.

To the have-nots, the slaves in Egypt, or the poor of the land when the kings ruled, or the exiles in Babylon, *shalom* means "freedom, liberation." There must be radical change before things will be all right and going well for them, before they can enjoy welfare, safety, prosperity, friendship, health, and personal integrity. To the haves, on the other hand, *shalom* means "order, stability." There must be proper management of the existing welfare, safety, prosperity and soon, so they can continue to enjoy and celebrate what they have. To the have-nots, *shalom* is salvation; to the haves, *shalom* is blessing. And *shalom* = peace must embrace both.

The thing about peace is that process of it's enactment hurts us all a little bit and costs us all something.

As our king, a different kind of ruler from anything else the world has ever seen, Jesus shows us the way of peace, and we follow.

These two scripture texts may seem like odd ones to read together. First we have Joshua, the general, ready to take over for Moses, who has just past away. Israel is preparing to take the land promised to them from the time God promised it to Abraham. And the people are ready to follow Joshua. You can imagine shouts of joy for Joshua from the people

Our second reading was the reading of Jesus entering his hometown to the shouts of people, treated like a king.

Joshua – God saves

Jesus – Joshua- God saves

You can find the story of Palm Sunday in all four gospels. In 3 of them you find the palm branches.

When War Generals conquered a people, there would be a procession like this with people shouting praises and greetings, while the honored would ride in on a stallion. Historian Plutarch wrote about how Antony was greeted this way. People would wave and place Palm branches down symbolize high expectations and praise for a general. Josephus writes about how Alexander the great was greeted like this when he entered Jerusalem.

However Luke wants us to notice something different about Jesus' arrival.

Lukes account has Jesus displaying foreknowledge of what is about to happen. He asks his disciples to go and get a donkey. He tells them where to go to get it and what to say when they get.

Lukes account has Jesus riding in on a donkey to show his humility.

In Lukes account, the people do not take Palms from the earth, but the shirts off their bodies and lay them on the ground. They give something that costs them. Luke wants us to know that our recognition of Jesus as King of Kings will cost us.

The disciples affirm Jesus' identity when they get the donkey, "The Lord" needs it. Our affirmation of Jesus as the "The Lord" has implications for our lives. We praise Jesus, as do the people, as if Jesus is a conquering king, while knowing Jesus' kingdom is unlike any government on earth.

Peace – what does it mean? (Bruegemann)

You know Jesus had to be divided in his attention, because he knows what is next after the people praise him, they crucify him.

Jesus/Joshua saves and our response requires effort.