

DCF 190720 John 12:12- 26

The Triumphal Entry

John 12:12 *¹² The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, ¹³ took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out:*

"Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' The King of Israel!" ¹⁴ Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written:

¹⁵ "Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, Sitting on a donkey's colt."

This was the Sunday before the crucifixion. This was probably the most important week in the history of mankind. It was the tenth day of the Jewish month Nisan, on which the paschal lamb was set apart to be killed on the 14th day. **Ex 12:3,6** *³ Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. ⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish.... ⁶ Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.*

The symbolic importance of this week is huge. The Passover was a time when the people of God searched out any leaven in their life, which is anything that will foster corruption. This was a time to see the separation of spirit and flesh. In 1 Cor 5, Paul rebukes the church for a gross immorality that they had tolerated, I suppose to keep the peace. They had a phony sense of wellbeing. **1 Cor 5:6** *⁶ Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? ⁷ Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. ⁸ Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

What was the old leaven? Immoral relationships that had been there for years had not been set aside. So, Paul is saying – keep the feast, but not with the sins of the past. Things have to change when we come to Jesus. But these Corinthians were puffed up (v2), so they could not see the corruption of evil that they not only tolerated but they were glorying in it. **1 Cor 5:1** *It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife! ² And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.* They had a heart that did not search for the leaven.

So, the very presence of the ultimate Passover lamb, was a blatant exhortation to search out the flesh in their life and kill it. One might ask why did Jesus allow such praise? It was a fulfillment of the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9. *Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.* As such it reminded people that He is the king they have waited for. He is just and humble and salvation is found only in Him. After being a part of this amazing day, people would be reminded of the words of this prophecy, time and time again for years to come. I suspect some religious leaders would have deliberately avoided reading Zechariah in public, so

as to avoid the issue. Some quoted Psalm 118:26 in praise of their king. Luke 19:38 ***Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.***

The text in Zechariah uses the word translated as 'Shout'. It is the same word used in Job 38:7 ... ***and all the sons of God shouted for joy.*** It is also used in Psalm 95:2 ***let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.*** But John changes it to ***Fear not.*** As our relationship with God deepens, there is an increasing awareness that the fear of God and the joy that comes from His love are very closely tied together.

Jesus comes this time on the colt of a donkey – in peace. Peace comes when we set things in their correct order and place in our lives. When He returns, He comes on the white horse for warfare. ***Rev 19:11*** ¹¹ ***Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*** The world and some believers refuse to see both sides of the character of Jesus. Are we ready for this day?

John does not call these multitudes Jews, because he sees them as unprejudiced. The palm branches that were waved were symbolic of a conqueror. But their mindset was for a fleshly king. Unless our study of the Bible is intertwined with our walk with God, it is useless. ***Heb 4:2*** ... ***but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.*** The knowledge of God is relational, not academic.

The palm branches were used in the feast of tabernacles, and would have reminded them that this was a time of rejoicing. Lev 23:39 ³⁹ ***'Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD for seven days; on the first day there shall be a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest. 40 And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days.*** This was the origin of 'holiday' – the etymology is holy day. So, God instituted regular days which would be dedicated for His people to remember Him. We have corrupted this notion to totally exclude God from our plans and calendar.

John 12: 16 16 His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him.

The Word of God keeps on working in the hearts of people. It can never be silenced. 500 years after the prophet recorded these words and for the 2000 years since then, it is still alive. ***Is 55:10 "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And***

bread to the eater, ¹¹So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

How desperately important it is for us to devour the Word of God. The other gospel writers record that ***as He went, many spread their clothes on the road. Luke 19:36.*** Some insights in the Scriptures can take years to produce wisdom. But God is patient and your house on the rock is built, piece by piece. One of the best pieces of advice I was given in my late teens and young twenties, was to pray for an appetite for the Word of God. One very early part of God's building in my life was an old man, Con Power – probably about 50, at Claremont Gospel Hall, talking about the Word of God. Then there was Dad and Mum, who always began breakfast with the SU readings. Then there was Gran, who cried when the Cisco Kid was on because of the guns, but had her Bible open, when she sat in the lounge.

John 12:17 ¹⁷Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. ¹⁸For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign. ¹⁹The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, "You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!"

It is so common to be wrong we cannot despise these Pharisees. The people who had seen Jesus call Lazarus, bore witness. And so many wanted a king to rescue them from the Romans. Life in those times had poverty and slavery. The people of God had surrendered to compromise. They had been blinded by flesh and missed the spirit. Just like Australia.

Can you imagine the complete turmoil that would hit Perth if Jesus came today? The gods of sport would be furious. Nightclubs and hospitality would be hit. The abortion clinic would close. Education would change. The priorities of how we save and spend our money would be changed. People would kneel and weep and shout for joy in His presence. Repentance and worship would be unfettered. Healings would come. The media would be exposed and have to tell the whole truth.

But one of the really hard to understand changes would be in the churches. Compromise would be exposed. Political correctness would be shamed. Division would need repentance. Loving God with all our heart, taking precedence over the idols of our land, would explode.

When John is shown the "***Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of harlots and of the abominations of the Earth***" in Rev 17:6, he says: ***when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement. And the angel said to me 'why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman*** The number of ways, and sneakiness, of how we have compromised to be politically correct, even in our churches, is hidden from us, so that even for John, it is amazing.

The people went after Jesus because He had done signs. They had missed the evidence of the Spirit. The 4 steps to salvation are: 1 – Believe that God is real. 2 – Apologize for your sins. 3 – Believe that Jesus is the Son of God and He has paid for your sins. 4 – Commit your life to Jesus.

They had not got to step 3. They wanted a fleshly king, to save the nation from the Romans.

John 12: 20 *Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. 21 Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." 22 Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.*

Are you ready to lead people to Jesus? Philip tells Andy and together they introduce these Greeks to Jesus. We must be ready. To be ready, we must pray for opportunities and an alertness to see them. We must talk to each other, to get ideas from each other. We must walk with God so that our experience is always fresh. **Heb 3:13** *13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end,*¹⁵ *while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."* Part of that deceitfulness, is thinking that the experiences of the past with God are good enough. **Lev 3:22** *The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.* Despite his battersings, Jeremiah knew the love of God daily.

John 12:23 *23 But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. 24 Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. 25 He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.*

When we are in constant warfare, we will always see our own shortcomings. The miracle of life is that it comes from death. The seed has to die and decompose. The essence of this miracle is that the result is even more seeds. That is life. So too as believers we need to work at destroying the flesh in our walk with God. This is a relentless and constant battle. Paul explodes in frustration at the end of Romans 7.

Rom 7:24 *24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*²⁵ *I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.* For us this battering comes with many failures and the need to rise up again and again in battle. **Eph 6:13** *... and having done all still stand.* But this battle is more than just winning – it also serves to perfect us, as it did Jesus.

Heb 2:9 *9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. 10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,*¹² *saying:*

"I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You." ¹³ And again: "I will put My trust in Him." And again: "Here am I and the children whom God has given Me."

¹⁴ Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

¹⁶ For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

¹⁸ For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

In Luke 18:13 the word *hilaskomai*, here translated as propitiation, is translated as **be merciful**, in the prayer of the unrighteous tax collector. **God be merciful to me, a sinner.** To propitiate means to satisfy the demands of.. The sacrificial death of Jesus paid the penalty of sin for us and satisfied the righteous wrath of God.

So, what does Jesus say in John 12? **²⁵ He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.** **²⁶ If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.**

This same struggle that we have in the flesh, is one Jesus understood from experience. So that He is a merciful and faithful High Priest for us. This 'propitiation' refers to the debt we owe God for our repeated disobedience and foolishness. Jesus has paid the debt for us. But it is even more than that. Out of repeated gratitude, we serve Him. For all eternity I have been delivered from the death of hell, by my **merciful and faithful High Priest**. So, I want to serve Him. But it is even more than that still. It does not stop there. Jesus says **If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.**

John 12:24 **²⁴ Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.** **²⁵ He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.** **²⁶ If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.**

So, as we see the disgusting sins in our life, satan will try to batter us with that insight. But Jesus says when we hate our fleshly life in the world, we keep it for eternity. Not only that, but as we serve Him, we also have His company in all we do. And even more than that, our heavenly Father honors us. We deserve no honor at all, but He honors us. This is mind blowing.

Amen.

Homework

- 1 I refer to 1 Cor 5 in the sermon. What leaven have we tolerated in the western church to ‘keep the peace’?
- 2 Why does John change the quote in Zech 9:9 from ‘Shout’ to ‘Fear not’ in John 12:15?