**April 5, 2020 Luke 19:41-48**

***Between the Hosanna’s and the Cross***

**Scripture:** Luke 19:41-48 NRSV

*(41)As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, (42)saying, "If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. (43)Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. (44)They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God." (45)Then he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling things there; (46)and he said, "It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer'; but you have made it a den of robbers." (47)Every day he was teaching in the temple. The chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people kept looking for a way to kill him; (48)but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were spellbound by what they heard.*

Luke 13:34–35,

*“(34) Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! (35) See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'" Luke 13:34-35 NRSV*

**Notes:**

1. Jesus’s entry to Jerusalem follows pattern of other ***triumphal*** entries.
   1. The entry of a ***hero***, would be met with shouts of praise.
   2. Jesus entered Jerusalem to the shouts of “***Hosanna***!”
2. There are distinct ***differences*** in Jesus’s triumphal entry.
   1. Jesus ***grieves*** for the people.
   2. Jesus longs to gather the people under his ***protective*** shelter.
   3. Jesus is ***weeps*** over ways the people do not understand.
   4. Jesus emphasizes his ***concern*** for the poor and outcast and their inclusion in the kingdom of God.
3. Jesus tries to get people to understand their opportunity to ***repent***.
   1. This text is a ***reminder*** of what Jesus came to do.
   2. Shouts of “***Hosanna***!” will soon turn to shouts of “***Crucify*** ***him***!”
4. God enters the world in unexpected ways, even during this ***pandemic***.
   1. Are we ***seeing*** but not understanding?
   2. Are we ***resisting*** the call of God to reach out to the world?
   3. ***Confront*** places where we have become complacent.
   4. Allow Christ to clean out the temples of our ***lives*** and ***hearts***.
   5. ***Seek*** after the kingdom of God and follow the Prince of peace.

**Transcript:**

Today is Palm Sunday, and when I think of Palm Sunday, I think of the daffodils that are blooming, I think of the grass becoming bright green again, and I think about the church. How I remember the years past and the festivity that came with this day. How I remember the songs of celebration; as I imagine Jesus entering the city of Jerusalem, and the people cheering him on as he enters on the back of a young donkey. I imagine a celebration of great victory, a celebration of being freed from tyranny.

Palm Sunday is typically a day of great rejoicing. It feels like a breath of fresh air and an experience of joy in an otherwise dark season. In the past, our church has had children parading, walking up and down the aisles of the sanctuary; waving palm branches and shouting, “Hosanna!”, handing extra palm branches off to the adults with an invitation to join the festivities. We have sung upbeat songs and celebrate, we celebrate what we refer to as the “triumphal entry”, the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.

But today we aren’t able to meet in our sanctuary. We are not able to gather in person as a group and share in the excitement of the coming Jesus. We are not able to march up and down the aisles of the church shouting “Hosanna” because we are under social distancing and self isolation.

It might feel strange that the text today is not the triumphal entry text at all; but is, rather, the text that directly follows it. Today is not just a day of great rejoicing; it is also a day of great mourning because, while we look at the triumph of a King entering a city to the shouts of praise, we also know what that journey into the city ultimately means. Jesus knew what that parade into the city ultimately meant.

We sit today within the tension of the shouts of joy, of a people who thought they understood what Jesus was coming to do but in so many ways were missing the mark. We sit today in the tension of knowing that a march into Jerusalem was not a march toward a political revolution, but a dark day of surrender out of deep love for people who didn’t understand. We sit in the tension among palm branches and shouts of “Hosanna!” to see the King of kings weep over the city as he moves closer and closer to the cross. We sit in the tension of knowing that the kingdom the people thought they wanted, that they thought they were getting, wasn’t the kingdom Jesus came to usher in.

We sit between “hosanna” and the cross, and we come upon a weeping Jesus. Open your Bible to Luke 19:41-48 and hear the Word of the Lord today.

(41)As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, (42)saying, "If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. (43)Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. (44)They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God." (45)Then he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling things there; (46)and he said, "It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer'; but you have made it a den of robbers." (47)Every day he was teaching in the temple. The chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people kept looking for a way to kill him; (48)but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were spellbound by what they heard. Luke 19:41-48 NRSV

Jesus’s entry into Jerusalem follows the pattern of the triumphal entries of the time. The Greek and Roman military conquerors would enter cities with similar triumphal entries. The conqueror would be escorted into the city by an army or citizens. People would walk before them getting the crowd stirred up; talking about their bravery, talking about their many captives, talking about the conquests themselves. These people’s job was to stir up he emotions of the crowd.

The entry of the hero, would be met with shouts of praise. There would often be items displayed that symbolically showed what kind of ruler they were; how noble and how brave, how tough and how strong, maybe even how compassionate they were. Then after the entry into the city, the conqueror would usually march to the temple and there, he would make a sacrifice illustrating their victory.

Jesus’s entrance into Jerusalem follows the very same model. He entered the city among citizens and his disciples, the disciples walked before him shouting out who Jesus was, laying their cloaks upon the ground before him, symbolically laying out the red carpet for the coming king. Jesus entered Jerusalem to the shouts of “Hosanna!” an Aramaic exclamation of praise, but originally an appeal for deliverance.

He entered on a donkey, which symbolized his humble and peaceful rule. The cloaks on the road and the palm branches also point to this idea. After the entry, he went directly into the temple. The people who were longing for a military and political leader in the Messiah would have most likely taken the similarities as a sign that Jesus was finally going to rise up as the leader they expected. They thought he was coming to overthrow the Roman government and claim the throne. They thought he was coming as a military force. However, there are distinct and important differences in Jesus’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

The first significant variance is Jesus weeping over the city and preaching an oracle over it. While this doesn’t follow the Greek and Roman conqueror model, it does follow the model set forth by the prophets. Jesus’s oracle is a lament. Jesus grieves over the city and the ways they see what is happening but don’t understand. Jesus continually was trying to get the people to follow him, but they continued to not understand. Their misunderstanding even extends to his triumphal entry. They are still looking for the kingdom of God to be a political movement, of military strength instead of a humble, peaceful kingdom. This lament connects with Jesus’s earlier lament in 13:34–35, “(34) Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! (35) See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'" Luke 13:34-35 NRSV

Jesus longs to gather the people under his protective shelter. The overall model of today’s lament is reminiscent of the prophet Jeremiah, the weeping prophet. Jeremiah lamented throughout the book of Jeremiah about the impending destruction of Jerusalem if the people did not change their ways. Jeremiah continued to cry out to the people to repent, and told them repeatedly that exile and destruction would come if they didn’t heed the warnings.

The book of Lamentations in the Bible, is also by Jeremiah, and was written after Jerusalem was destroyed and the temple desecrated. The people didn’t heed the many warnings. Earlier in this sermon series, we talked about Daniel also weeping and repenting on behalf of the people who were in exile because, what Jeremiah warned, had come to pass. The reference to people being dashed against rocks is another prophetic allusion. The same imagery is used in Psalm 137:9, Nahum 3:10, and Hosea 13:16. These references, though, are toward other empires: Babylon, Nineveh, and Samaria. Now Jesus is declaring that these things will happen to Jerusalem. Other prophets also warned Jerusalem about what would happen without repentance. This is a common theme among the Old Testament prophets. Some believe Jesus is directly referencing the future destruction of the temple in AD 70. Jesus is weeping over the ways the people do not understand, He is weeping because they failing to follow him as the Messiah, despite all that they have seen.

The second significant departure is that, he does not offer a sacrifice when entering the temple. Instead he drives people out. Matthew and Mark also reference Jesus saying “my house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of robbers.” Jesus is again referencing Jeremiah. While there are differences between the Gospels, there is a theme of Jesus cleansing the temple throughout. The people selling were taking advantage of the poor something the prophets and Jesus were directly critical of. This illustrates the depth to which they see but don’t understand. They are making it difficult for people to sacrifice to the Lord.

As Jesus cleanses the temple, there also seems to be a statement that all people are welcome. He is reemphasizing his concern for the poor and outcast reemphasizing their inclusion in the kingdom of God. But what seems odd to me is that after what seems like a violent eviction to those selling in the temple, Jesus then calmly sits down in the temple to teach. Jesus is again trying to get people to understand the ways they have strayed from understanding, and he is still giving them an opportunity to repent.

This seems like an odd text for Palm Sunday, but it is a reminder for us as we enter into Holy Week to be reminded of what Jesus ultimately came to do. How often do you want Jesus to enter into our world as a military or political leader? At times you may view God as being on your side of a conflict, instead of seeking what God actually wants for you. This was one of the downfalls of the people in Jerusalem. They were so busy looking for a God who resembled their agenda that they missed the humble servant who came to seek and save the lost. They missed Christ—in their midst. Like the people in Jerusalem, you can become disillusioned, especially when God shows up in ways you don’t expect. You do know don’t you, that the shouts of “Hosanna!” will soon turn to shouts of “Crucify him!” From the time Jesus was born, the Messiah showed up in ways the people didn’t expect.

God continues to enter into the world in unexpected ways. He enters into our world in the most difficult of times. He enters into our world in the most exciting of times, and He enters our world in the times when everything seems so normal and boring. God is entering into our world right now in the midst of this pandemic. He is making opportunities for us to be the Church; opening doors for us to share the Gospel message of Jesus to those who do not know; opening doors for us to create relationships with people who are alone and scared; enabling us to teach others what it means to have a trusting relationship with Jesus.

How often are we seeing but not understanding? Jesus weeps over the city because they continue to repeat the mistakes of their ancestors: oppressing the poor, being exclusive in the ways they worship, seeking violence instead of peace, and failing to repent of their sin. Are we continuing this cycle in our lives? Are we resisting the call of God to reach out to a world that is hurt and searching for Him. We often continue this cycle with the same resistance to repent. We often continue this cycle with the same resistance to submit to His will. Lent forces us to confront the places we have become complacent and complicit in sin.

Ultimately Jesus came to bring peace in our lives; in our homes; and in the world. Jesus was met with resistance. Are we also resisting the peace of Jesus? How do we repent of the places we see but don’t understand? How do we move to a place where we can fully accept that Jesus didn’t enter as a military/political king, but as the great Prince of peace?

In the midst of our “hosannas” and songs of praise, we don’t want to forget the humble King Jesus, who came with humility instead of military power. Jesus came with a message of peace, grace, and love for us and for the world. He came to turn over the tables of those who excluded, and he wept over those who continued to not understand him. He had difficult, prophetic words for those who continued to repeat the mistakes of their ancestors and refused to repent.

We do want to learn, and not repeat these same mistakes. We must allow Christ to clean out the temples of our lives, allow Christ to clean out the temples of our hearts as well, as we seek to follow after this new way, this new kingdom; a kingdom so different from the kingdoms of the world; a kingdom of peace and love. So, as we sit in this tension between praise and sacrifice, between the Hosannas and the cross, may we learn to seek after the kingdom of God and follow after the Prince of peace.