

**Luke 19:28-44** After Jesus had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. <sup>29</sup>As he came near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples ahead, <sup>30</sup>saying, “Go to the village ahead of you. When you enter it, you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>31</sup>And if anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you will say this: ‘The Lord needs it.’” <sup>32</sup>Those who were sent ahead went and found things just as he had told them. <sup>33</sup>As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?” <sup>34</sup>They said, “The Lord needs it.” <sup>35</sup>Then they brought the colt to Jesus. They threw their robes on the colt and set Jesus on it. <sup>36</sup>As he went along, people spread their robes on the road. <sup>37</sup>As he was approaching the slope of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began to praise God joyfully, with a loud voice, for all the miracles they had seen, <sup>38</sup>saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” <sup>39</sup>Some of the Pharisees from the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!” <sup>40</sup>He replied, “I tell you, if these people would be silent, the stones would cry out.” <sup>41</sup>As he came near, he saw the city and wept over it. <sup>42</sup>He said, “If you, yes you, had only known on this day the things that would bring peace to you. But now, it is hidden from your eyes. <sup>43</sup>In fact, the days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you, surround you, and hem you in on every side. <sup>44</sup>Within your walls, they will dash you and your children to the ground. And within your walls they not leave one stone on top of another, because you did not recognize the time when God came to help you.”

What do you do when you know bad things are about to happen? When you’re sitting down for the test that you forgot to study for? When you go into the doctor, prepared to get news that you really don’t want to hear? When there’s an all-hands-on-deck meeting at work and you know that not all of the people who were employed in the morning will be at night?

Jesus knew that some very bad things were going to happen to him. But he didn’t try to run and hide from them. He is marching defiantly toward them. It’s not because he has a death wish. It’s because his love for us is that great. We learn a lot about Jesus on Palm Sunday. He knows everything, he is praised as the Savior, and he tells us to open our eyes.

When we walk through Luke chapters 22 and 23 today it’s going to seem like everything is going wrong. Satan appears to be winning. Jesus will even say, “**But this is your hour—when darkness rules.**” Darkness is ruling because God is allowing it. As a matter of fact, he is using it for his purposes so that he can win forgiveness and eternal life for the world.

As Jesus and his disciples are walking up to Jerusalem, he shows his power as true God. He gives us a glimpse that he knows exactly what is going on. He remembered clearly Zechariah’s prophecy that the Savior would ride into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. He made sure those words were fulfilled. He told his disciples where to find that donkey, what people will say, and how to respond.

In one of our Palm Sunday hymns we sing, “In lowly pomp ride on to die.” Pomp can’t be lowly. That’s a contradiction in terms. But that contradiction makes complete sense today. Jesus is riding into Jerusalem while everyone cheers—that’s pomp. But he is riding in on a donkey. He is coming so that he can be offered like a sacrifice on the cross. That’s lowly.

Remember what you see today for the rest of your life. The same Jesus who was in control of the situation during Holy Week remains in control of everything for us. Just like he used the evil of that week to bring about unimaginable good for the world, he uses everything—both good and bad—for the good of his people. We are safe in his power, wisdom, and love.

Most of the time, though, Jesus hid his glory as true God during his life on this earth. Otherwise, people wouldn’t have been able to be around him at all. No one could stand to listen to him much less crucify him. So in his mercy, Jesus appeared just like any other man. As a result, many people found it easy to dismiss him as just another crackpot, self-appointed prophet.

Palm Sunday is the only time during Jesus’ earthly ministry when he gets the praise and honor he deserves. There was no saddle for the donkey, so the disciples used their outer cloaks instead. There was no red carpet to roll out for him so they made one with the rest of their cloaks and palm branches. They had no hymnals but they all sang their praises to the God who would save them.

They said that he was coming in the name of the Lord. Remember what that means. It’s more than that title, it is everything we know about God. When Jesus was on the cross we see everything about God at once. We see how his holiness must punish sin with the only punishment that fits the crime—death and Hell. We also see his love must save sinners. He is willing to do anything to accomplish that, even sacrificing himself.

Today we join our voices with those first century believers in praising our Savior. The Apostle John makes it clear that they didn't all understand what was going on yet. By God's grace we know exactly what's going on. Don't just praise him with words or songs. Praise him by offering your entire life as a thank you to the Savior who poured out his blood for you too.

The end of this text is not usually included in the Palm Sunday Gospel reading but I'm glad it is here. Jesus weeps over Jerusalem—the city that killed the prophets that he sent, the city that kept looking for its own glory instead of God's glory, the city that would soon cry out for his blood. God had been working out all of Old Testament history for them, but they rejected it all.

The warning that Jesus gives here would be fulfilled roughly 35 years later. The Roman army would break through the walls of Jerusalem and systematically dismantle everything. Never again would the true God be worshiped on the Temple mount. Today in its place stands a Muslim mosque. That's not how God wanted things to end, but the people's hardness of heart made it reality.

Whenever God gives a warning, it is an example of his love. He is under no obligation to tell anyone when the hammer is going to fall. Every warning comes with an implied promise—if you turn away from your path, then none of this needs to happen. God is tremendously patient but please don't ever take his patience for granted. Passages like this were recorded so we don't repeat the same mistakes.

This is also why we want to review the Passion history today. We've heard the story so many times, but I pray that we never take it for granted. As I get older, I think I appreciate it more and more. Another year passes and I've committed another year's worth of sins, yet Jesus' sacrifice is more than sufficient to pay for them all. May his love for us inspire our love for him, for our fellow believers, and for the world.

When you see Jesus ride into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, when you see him arrested on Maundy Thursday, killed on Good Friday, and raised to life on Easter, I hope all of you say to yourselves, "Look at how much Jesus loves me! Look at everything he is doing for me! If he did all of that for me, he will take care of everything else too until he takes me safely home."