

Pastor David's notes for 3/27-28/2010

Palm Sunday Weekend

Moving Toward The Cross

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away." This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

"Say to the Daughter of Zion,
'See, your king comes to you,
gentle and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"

The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!"

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

Matthew 21:1-11

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"Moving Toward the Cross"

As Jesus entered Jerusalem for the final time, knowing that each of His steps would bring Him closer to the cross, He approached His history and eternity making moment of sacrifice with the full knowledge that He was coming:

1. in the name of the Lord

2. in gentleness as God's King pressing for peace

3. in compassion for the sick and broken

4. in real expectation for change

next weekend: Easter - "Following From the Empty Tomb"



CONNECTION QUESTIONS

for personal study & individual reflection,
and small group discussion & comment

“Moving Toward The Cross” - Matthew 20:17-21:21

1. Luke 9:51 anticipates the completion of Jesus’ life and mission by telling us, “as the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.” To approach something resolutely means that you move toward it purposefully, with unwavering determination. The events accompanying Jesus final entry into Jerusalem did not take Him by surprise, nor was He simply reacting to circumstances. Jesus purposefully moved toward the fulfillment of His saving mission and sacrifice on the cross in a way that communicated the full intent of God’s plan. Each of His actions and words revealed a meaning for more than just that moment. When life so often takes us by surprise, what is required to be unwavering and resolute in moving forward with purpose? When have you been resolute in your pursuit of some end or goal?

2. Jesus fulfilled the Messianic prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 which says that Zion’s King will come to Jerusalem bringing salvation, “gentle and riding on a donkey” (Mt 21:5). How would you interpret what a King was saying by the decision to enter His city on the foal of a donkey? Does Jesus make that decision purposefully, or was that the only transportation available to Him (Mt 21:1-3)?

3. Children began to shout, “Hosanna to the Son of David”, when Jesus drove out the moneychangers and healed the lame and the blind in the Temple courts (Mt 21:12-16). “Hosanna” is an ancient Hebrew prayer that means “save us”. Maybe it was only the children in this scene who had the openness to recognize salvation as Jesus intended to bring it. Most wanted God to bring them salvation in a way that did not involve the cross. Can you identify with those who cry out for God’s salvation? What is your expectation about how God should fulfill this prayer?

4. Jesus was rebuked for His actions coming into Jerusalem by the chief priests and teachers of the Law (Mt 21:15-16). They wanted Him to reject any claim on Messianic authority and mission. Jesus’ response was to basically say, “if you won’t recognize the truth, God will have children declare it to you”. Why does it sometimes take embracing the humility and openness of a child to really recognize what is true (Mt 18:3)? What were these religious leaders missing with all their knowledge and experience?

5. Jesus may have come to Jerusalem at the beginning of Passover week in gentleness, but He was firm and unwavering in His purpose to see things change (Mt 21:12-13, 18-21). His zeal for the Father’s house, both in the symbol of the Temple and in the reality of peoples’ lives, carried with it the expectation of good fruit. The cross is ultimately the place of reckoning for the fruitlessness, emptiness and failure of what we have done with God’s gifts. It is at the cross of Jesus that we come to see both the true nature of what we have done, and what God has done for us. What are your thoughts this week as you contemplate the crucifixion of Jesus and its relevance for your life?
