

***Luke 19:28-40. <sup>28</sup> After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. <sup>29</sup> As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, <sup>30</sup> "Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>31</sup> If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it.'" <sup>32</sup> Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. <sup>33</sup> As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" <sup>34</sup> They replied, "The Lord needs it." <sup>35</sup> They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. <sup>36</sup> As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road. <sup>37</sup> When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen. "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 in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" <sup>40</sup> "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."***

The Savior must be praised.

1. Something special was going on.
2. Something special will happen.

It was clear something special was going on. The gym was electric. The crowd was on its feet. Nervous energy filled the arena as the closing seconds ticked off the clock. The ball was inbounded. The play drawn up in the team huddle was executed to perfection. The shot went up. The ball sank through the net. The crowd went wild. They had to cheer. They had to shout. After it was all said and done even the other coach had to shake his head as he realized that this was something special.

Centuries before there ever was a basketball tournament that has turned into a national phenomenon referred to as March Madness. Centuries before crowds crammed into basketball arenas and people crowded around television sets and hoping for that one special moment, centuries before all this, Jesus rode into Jerusalem. He rode in humility. There was no television cameras, no packed arenas, but there was a buzz around this event. For one day there was a packed street. Children ran before him. Grown men cut down palm branches. Women shouted out his praise. People crowded together, threw their cloaks on the road and gave him a hero's welcome. It was clear that something special was going on. People had to sing his praises. People had to rejoice.

Jesus had drawn crowds before, but he had never really tried to draw attention to himself. In fact he had often done the opposite. He had healed people, he had

performed miraculous wonders and signs, but then he had often told those whom he had helped not to mention anything. He did not want people just looking for some miracle worker crowding around him and limit his ability to move freely and preach and teach the saving word of God. He went from town to town teaching and preaching. He did not seek crowds proclaiming his praise. But this time it was different. This time he allowed the crowds to sing his praise because something special was about to happen. The people had to rejoice.

All four gospels record Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem - this alone tells you that this was such an important event. Luke is however, the only one that mentions Jesus' short conversation with the Pharisees. As Jesus entered into the holiest of cities where many had gathered for the holiest of festivals the city was abuzz with energy. The mighty teacher, the prophet from Nazareth, that great miracle worker - Jesus was coming. The name of Jesus was on the lips of many. He spoke with great authority; he was kind to all; oh and the miracles - they had all heard about the miracles. He had surely come from God and now he was coming to the holy city. He was coming to Jerusalem. They had to praise him. They had to shout as loud as they could. They people put their hope in him. ***"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"***

The Pharisees who saw this were of course, not pleased. ***Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!"*** How could he let them call him king! How could this humble teacher allow such a scene! Already irritated by his influence the Pharisees felt provoked and vocalized their displeasure at this overblown scene. Put an end to this Jesus. "Teacher, rebuke your disciples."

***"I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."*** They had to shout. They had to praise him. This is the way the Father had drawn it up and the son was about to execute the plan perfectly. They had to praise him. This is what the prophet had foretold. ***9 Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey...*** Something special was happening. This wasn't just another journey to Jerusalem. This wasn't just another pilgrim traveling to the holy city for Passover. This was the promised Messiah. This was a king like no other. In the next few days Jesus would bring about God's plan of salvation. He would die as the perfect Lamb of God. He would die as the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of not only the Jewish people, but for the sins of the whole world. Zechariah makes mention of the eternal significance that this event would have for people of all nations. ***He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.***

Something special was happening. This is what the Old Testament believers were waiting for; this is what the New Testament church would be built upon. This is the message that would go out from Jerusalem, to Samaria, to the ends of the world. The Son of God came in humility to lay down his life as a ransom for sin. The cry of

Hosanna, “Lord save us” would be answered in the most important way. Through his death and resurrection Jesus would save people from the wrath of God and grant eternal life to people from every nation and generation who believed in him. Jesus was the only way to salvation. He was the only deliverance from judgment and hell. He was the only way to eternal glory and life in heaven.

Jesus arrival into Jerusalem announced that something special was indeed going to happen. Salvation was coming and it would come through Jesus. The Savior of the world was worthy of praise, and would receive such praise. In the past the Father had thundered his approval down from heaven, if he had to do it God would make the stones cry out for this deserved, it demanded, recognition. But instead of stones giving their praise God compelled a man to give up his donkey without question. He led crowds to give up their garments, wave palm branches, shout and sing the praise of Jesus. Yes, the Savior is worthy of praise.

At a time of the year when many in this nation are more concerned with brackets and basketball games we gather here to worship the one we know is the champion and king. When many are more concerned with the latest celebrity gossip or the newest technology, we pray that more would see the importance of what transpired in Jerusalem some 2000 years ago. When more than a few atheists and enemies of the Savior complain about the message of the season being forced upon the public, we pray that the church would overcome their criticism and that God would open even critical hearts. The Savior must be praised. What he came to do, what he accomplished, is much too important to be silenced. It is much too important to be covered over. It is much too important to be forgotten. He came to take away the sins of the whole world. He came to bring peace between God and man. He came to save us from eternal condemnation and give us a part of his eternal kingdom.

We pray that we too may take time to consider the importance of this week as well. In our familiarity with the story, we might glaze over the significance of this event; and we might feel unimpressed by the events that follow. There is a part of us that just says that this just another routine observance of Easter. Some might consider this just another day, s just another week.

Or in the busy buzz of the holiday we may become modern day Marthas concerned more about the preparations than the message. With all the planning for hosting family and friends we can become so concerned with meals and travel schedules that we don't take time to quietly consider what this all really means. With all the time spent rushing around from place to place we might not be that willing to lay down our time, or our energy, our possessions before the feet of this humble king.

Dear friends pay attention to what Palm Sunday reminds us. Something special is happening today. Hear the crowds calling Jesus name and remember that something special is about to happen. This is our chance to relive the glory the salvation that he has told us. This is our chance to sing Hosannas, loud Hosannas to our King! The Lord

Jesus has saved us. He willingly laid down his life. He has come in humility so that we may join him in the glory of heaven.

If you have ever been at an exciting event, if you have been there in person, that story never gets old, does it. You love to tell the story. Joy swells from within you when you talk about the glory days. Excitement is unavoidable when you talk about that time you rubbed shoulders with that famous person, or you witnessed history, or you got to be part of something special.

My friends you are part of something special. Jesus has called you into his kingdom. By grace alone through faith you receive the victory that your king brings. You are part of something special. Your sins were paid for during that first Holy Week. When Jesus returned to the Mount of Olives on Thursday he bore your sin in the garden. When he was restrained and arrested and led back down from the Mount Olives to Jerusalem under the cover of night Jesus lowered himself to such disgrace for you. When Jesus was put on trial, when he was beaten and mocked, it was for your sins he suffered. He was nailed to Calvary's cross in order to be forsaken by God so that you and I wouldn't be. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is he who paid this price for you and for me. Palm Sunday reminds us that something special was going on.

Palm Sunday also reminds us that something wonderful will happen again. Our Savior will come again, this time, in all of his glory. The next time he comes every knee will bow, every tongue will confess his name. Every year, every day, brings that event closer. Jesus will come again, not in humility upon a donkey but he will come down upon the clouds in glorious splendor and it will be so clear that something special is going to happen. There will be more than just a buzz, but the heavens and the earth will roar as Jesus will make everything new. He will come and gather his people to himself. And the king who died for us will take us to our place next to him so that we will reign with him forever.

It will be like John's vision of glory in the book of Revelation which paints a beautiful picture of you and I gathered with all believers and we will wave palm branches and sing and praise the Lamb of God. Thousands upon thousands will be dressed in the brightness of Christ's holiness and we will shout and sing his praise, because we just have to. He is the one who has saved us. He is the one who has brought us to glory. He is the one who alone is worthy of our praise.

Something amazing happened. In the days to follow we get to re-live and learn more about that awesome news. Rejoice the Son of God came in humility to save you. Today we are also reminded that when he comes again every tongue will confess that he is Lord. Rejoice! This is the king and judge who has already declared us not guilty and will bring us to the glory of heaven. The Savior must be praised. Hosanna to the Son of David, Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is he who came once in humility to save. Blessed is he who will come again to take us to share in his glory. Amen.