



Palm Sunday
April 14, 2019
Luke 19:28-40

“Who is this King?”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! In the name of Jesus, dear friends in Christ, have you ever run into someone who looked familiar but you didn't quite recognize them? A few weeks ago I went to Wisconsin for my grandmother's funeral. It was really nice to see so many of my family and extended relatives. But one thing that I hadn't thought of was the fact that it's been so long that I may not recognize some of my extended family. So, there were some people who I talked to who obviously recognized who I was and I recognized them but couldn't quite remember their name and I wasn't standing by my folks who could of helped me out. So, what do you do? You keep talking and hoping that it will come to you as you talk to the person. Has that ever happened to you? Do you always immediately recognize people?

Well, here we are on Palm Sunday. One thing is clear: Jesus rides into Jerusalem as a King. But the question Jesus wants the people to ask themselves and the question Jesus wants us to ask ourselves is, “Who is this King?” What kind of a King is this? Do you recognize Him as the King that He is?

First of all, though, we need to answer why we need a king. Every civilization throughout history has discovered that to operate, to function in this world, you need a leader, you need someone in charge, there have been monarchs, kings, queens, prime ministers, presidents, someone has to be in charge, someone has to be king. But that same thing is true about our lives as well. Every person, every life, needs a “king.” You can have the right one or you can have the wrong one, but everyone has a king. Everyone has someone or something that they serve, that they obey, that they follow. Maybe it's your job, maybe its your money, maybe its your ambition in life, maybe its your hobby, maybe it's politics, everyone has a king. Well, here in our text, we have the right King, the real King, the ultimate King, the one whom your life will never be complete until you follow this King.

And what kind of King is he? Many people missed it. Many people didn't recognize him for the King that He is. But there are all kinds of indicators here as to what kind of King Jesus is. So, as we walk through this incredible account of Palm Sunday I would like to focus on 4 truths that we see about our King: He changes you, He confuses you, He confronts you, and He comes to you.

First, He changes you. As Jesus goes up to Jerusalem He approaches two villages, Bethphage and Bethany. And he sends two of his disciples into the village ahead of him and he tells them that they are going to find a colt tied there that no one has ever ridden. He even tells them that if someone asks what they are doing what they should say. And...it happens in every detail that Jesus said. Now, we're not told that Jesus had prearranged all of this – he could have, but more likely this is all Jesus' divine foreknowledge – He knows all about what's happening. But what about this colt which no one has ever ridden? Why make such a big deal about the fact that it's one that “**no one has ever ridden.**” Perhaps there are two points here. First, that this animal was devoted to a sacred use and not for ordinary use. In the OT when the ark of the covenant was being returned to Israel from Philistia, it was stipulated that the animals used to carry the ark were to be ones that had never been yoked before. So, Jesus, the King, rides on an animal dedicated exclusively for this purpose.

But perhaps there's a second point here as well. Why a donkey that “**no one has ever ridden**”? Would it be normal for a donkey that hasn't been ridden, hasn't been trained to let someone jump on it and ride it wherever he wants to go? And through a crowd that's chanting and screaming no less? I asked June Wendlandt about this because she knows quite a bit about horses. Normally a donkey isn't trained until they are at least 2 or 3 years old and they are generally quite cautious animals. Normally, an untrained donkey might not buck like a horse, but would lock down and refuse to go anywhere without serious persuasion. But different from a horse, which will flee when scared, a donkey will stay and fight, hence

we hear about stubborn donkeys. But isn't that interesting? Jesus gets on this donkey that has never been ridden before and this donkey carries him into Jerusalem with throngs of people shouting and praising.

"In the midst, then, of this excited crowd, an unbroken animal remains calm under the hands of the Messiah who controls nature (8:23-27; 14:22-32). Thus the event points to the peace of the consummated kingdom (cf. Isaiah 11:1-10)." (D. A. Carson, Matthew, p. 438). Isaiah 11 says, **"Then the wolf will live with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the goat, and the calf and the lion and the yearling together, and a little child will lead them. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."** So, what's going on here? Why are animals naturally fearful of people? It wasn't that way in the beginning, in Eden, remember? Adam named the animals. But now animals need to be broken, trained and tamed. Why? Because of sin. A pastor once said, *"Do you know when you get near animals why they bark at you and growl at you and scream at you and then run away? Because they know you have a quarrel with their Master"* (George Whitefield). They're afraid. But what does Jesus do? He gets up on this little colt, he doesn't break it, he heals it of its fear. This little colt is fearless in the face of this screaming crowd when Jesus is in its saddle. And that same is true for you and me, when Jesus is in your driver's seat, when Jesus is the center of your life, you can say, **"If God is for me, who can be against me?"** I'm free from fear, death, failure criticism, sickness, anything. Jesus is the King who changes you.

But we also see that he's confusing. Here's Jesus, it's Passover time, crowds are descending upon Jerusalem and Jesus is going up to Jerusalem and for the last two mile stretch he's not going to walk in like everyone else, he's going to ride in. Everyone walked into Jerusalem, but kings and dignitaries were the ones who rode in. Now, you can imagine the disciples here, their getting excited, it's finally happening, after all the miracles they've seen, now we're going to take the nation back, now we're going to see some action. He's riding into Jerusalem as a king at Passover time. So maybe they are thinking, "Yes! This is going to be awesome." And what does Jesus pick to ride into Jerusalem? Not a stallion...a little, young donkey. What? "Jesus, you need an image consultant. You're not going to win an election like this! You're going to look silly!" But here's the point: Jesus is a King, He's THE King, He is all powerful, He has come to fight a battle, but it's not a political battle to throw out the Romans, He's come to fight in the midst of weakness, vulnerability, apparent defeat, He's come as a King to save us from our sins and death through His own death for us. Strength and weakness combined. He confuses.

He also confronts you. We see that the Pharisees here are upset, **"Teacher, rebuke your disciples."** Why are they so upset? Jesus is forcing their hand. It's this triumphal entry that pushes them over the top. Just a few verses after this hear about how they are making plans to kill him. Why? Jesus has forced their hand over his identity. People are acclaiming him as king, no longer could they hope that his 15 minutes of fame are over, no longer could they be indifferent, no longer could they hope this will all just blow over. What if the Romans got wind of this? They'd come in here and demolish us! So, what is Jesus saying here? He's saying, "Crown me or kill me." He doesn't sneak into the city or come in by the side door, he rides in. "I'm coming in to be king or I'm coming in to be killed" there is no other option, there's nothing in the middle. You can't just like me, you can't just admire me, I won't be just another compartment to your life -either I'm the absolute center of your life, the absolute king of your life, the absolute authority over your life or else completely reject me. He won't be a part of your life unless he is absolutely the King.

Now think about what that means. You can't just have a little Jesus, I'll come to church every so often, I'll read the Bible when I have time, Church, Jesus, it just fits into this compartment of my life along with my job, hobbies, and other interests. No! Jesus is saying, "Crown me or kill me." Either I'm everything to you, I'm the reason you make all your decisions, the epicenter of your life around which your entire existence revolves, I'm the King of your life, or utterly reject me. He can't be just somewhere in between.

And this boils sin down to its essence, doesn't it? The essence of sin is that we want to be kings of our own lives. We put ourselves where only God should be, we want to be kings. But what is Jesus doing here? Here is the essence of salvation,

this week we're going to see it again, sin is us putting ourselves where God alone deserves to be, salvation is God putting himself where only we should be, He comes to suffer, to die, to take our punishment on Himself so we're forgiven eternally.

Finally, He's comes to you. Did you hear what they said? **"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!"** Did you see what tense it is? It's present. He comes. He came into that city that first Jerusalem in order save and He did, He won salvation fully once and for all. But He is still a coming King. He is still the coming King who comes to you to personally rule in your heart and in your life. He's still coming, don't miss it! He comes in His Word, it looks like just ink on a page, like a bunch of words that are so often difficult to understand, but Words of life that change your heart, that's your King coming to you! He comes in a splash of water and the word when you're baptized. He comes to you to and lays claim on you, He tells you, "You're mine! You're part of my family! You have a new life!" Don't miss it! He comes to you in bread and wine with the spoken word and says, "Here, eat and drink and be comforted and be forgiven." That's your God, that's your Savior, He comes with salvation, He comes riding into Jerusalem for you!

Your King comes to you. See Him. Recognize Him. Rejoice in what this King, like no other, has come to do for you! Amen.