

**Sermon Study Guide Based on  
Pastor Glen Weber's Message of April 5, 2009  
"Save Us, Jesus"**

**[Today the Christian world celebrates the arrival of Jesus into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday) just a few days before he was crucified. The message will bring into focus what's going on in the heart of Jesus at this time and what he wanted to accomplish with his entry.]**

**[Topics: Palm Sunday; Hosanna; Save Us; Salvation; Worship; Peace; Jesus Christ]**

**Excerpt:** We call this Palm Sunday because John in his Gospel wrote that the people waved palm fronds as Jesus came into Jerusalem. But on that day in Jerusalem there were only two palms that mattered – and that were the two palms at the end of Jesus' arms. Later on that week, those two palms were going to experience a great deal of pain on our behalf.

"Save us, Jesus" is what the people cried out to Jesus even though they don't necessarily understand why Jesus came to the earth. Now Jesus had entered Jerusalem many times before and even entered Jerusalem several more times that week. After his triumphal entry, Jesus went back to Bethany to the home of Lazarus, Mary and Martha. And then the next day Jesus returned to Jerusalem to clean out the Temple.

This was a momentous occasion this time because of what it pictured and what God was doing through him that day. Now this is a prophetic entry as **Zech. 9** and **Ps. 118** indicates. Every Gospel covers this triumphal entry, but today we're going to read from **Luke 19**, because Luke writes about what's going on in the heart of Jesus and what he wanted to accomplish. And that's what's important to us.

**Luke 19:28, "After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29) As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, 30) '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.'"**

Now Jesus is going to enter into Jerusalem as the saving king, who was going to come and deliver Israel. Now any other king coming to Jerusalem is going to come riding on a horse that has been well trained and prances just so. Have you ever watched a parade where someone of importance comes riding a horse that walks with a special gait and has a fancy saddle and a fancy bridal?

Now you would have expected Jesus to enter into Jerusalem riding a well-trained top-notch horse. Instead he comes in on an unriden colt or donkey. Now if you know anything about an unriden donkey is like sitting on a stick of dynamite, because you never know what's going to happen. The point is – this is a humble animal compared to a horse. Jesus comes into Jerusalem to fulfill a particular prophecy.

**31) "If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it.'"**

William Barclay says that this was the "password" Jesus had worked out ahead of time with the owner. Now what's interesting is that the Jewish people expected the Messiah at any time. And one of the traditions they had was that when the Messiah comes, he could ask for whatever he wanted, you were expected to give it to him. So the disciples told the owner, "The Lord needs it."

**32) "Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. 33) As they were untying the colt, its owner asked them, 'Why are you untying the colt?' 34) They replied, 'The Lord needs it.'"**

So Jesus needed the colt to accomplish his purpose. Now the question we might ask of ourselves is – What does the Lord need from us to accomplish his purpose today? Remember a few weeks ago, we talked about the resources that God has made available to this congregation that could be used for his purpose.

**35) "They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. 36) As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road."** The people are giving honor to Jesus even before he enters Jerusalem.

**37) "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: "**

If you have ever been to Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives is east of Jerusalem. And the tradition is that the Messiah would come from the east, from the Mount of Olives. And tradition says that he will return to the Mount of Olives. Now from this vantage point on the Mount of Olives you can see across the valley and see Jerusalem.

So now Jesus is beginning to come down from the Mount of Olives into the valley before he ascends to the Temple Mount and the city of David. And there's a road that passes down through the bottom of the valley. 40 years ago when Pastor Glen was there in Jerusalem for an archeological dig, that road had a lot of donkey traffic on it as well as herds of sheep and goats. Now along this road were a whole crowd of Jesus' disciples who are praising and worshipping him, as they ushered him into Jerusalem.

**38) "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"** So they are praising God and blessing God because Christ is coming to Jerusalem. Now they have a completely different view in their mind. They think he's coming to kick out those rotten Romans. They thought he was going to take over and become the King of Israel right now. So they were excited. And so they are fulfilling the prophecies of Zachariah as they cry out these sayings in the streets.

But Jesus has a whole different plan. It's not that at all. Now in **Matthew 21:9** we read, **"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!'"**

And "Hosanna" means "save us; save us now." It was like a praise phrase at that time. And so the crowd is expecting Jesus to save them. Now **Mark 11: 9-10** writes, **"Those who went**

**ahead and those who followed shouted, 'Hosanna!' 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!' 10) 'Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!' 'Hosanna in the highest!'**

So the crowd is crying out to God to rescue them and throwing their cloaks on the road in front of Jesus and waving palm branches. As they give God glory, they are really hoping he's going to get rid of those Romans.

And don't we often want God to fix things right now in the physical world we live in? If we're not careful our love is expressed in the things we get from God, instead of honoring God for who he is. Now it's not wrong to ask for healing and other things as well. Too often, as humans, we have a selfish love – there's a hook in it. And when it comes to God, we often do the same thing. Instead of just honoring him, we want him to do things for us in return of our honoring.

God's primary focus isn't to get us out of our troubles, not to get rid of the Romans in our life, so to speak. But rather, God is primarily working on the spirit in our life and what he's doing in the new creation in us.

John writes in his Gospel that the crowd waved palm branches. Now that symbolized worship. When we lift up our hands as we sing praise songs to God, we are waving the palms of our hands in honor and worship of God. An empty outstretched palm signifies that we are not here to receive anything from God but just to honor and glorify him as our God.

Now back to **Luke 19:39**, "**Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Teacher, rebuke your disciples!'**" The Pharisees didn't want the crowd to worship Jesus. This is disrupting the system.

**40) "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."** Now in a sense we are those disciples today, who are ushering in and inviting Jesus to come to Pasadena, Eagle Rock, Highland Park, and Glendale and other communities we represent. And if we don't cry out, the rocks will.

So it's important that we worship God. It's important that we lift him up and we declare who he is and honor him. And so we come here not just to sing but to also cry out to God, lift our voices up to God and worship him, so the rocks don't have to. Our praise and worship of God for who he is and what he's done for us should be coming spontaneously out of our hearts.

**41) "As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it"** ... Jesus doesn't come as a conquering king but rather as he comes, his heart is bleeding. He's weeping for Jerusalem. Now Jerusalem is a representation of mankind. And today Jesus weeps what he sees going on in our culture as he sees the pain and heartache as the people are hurting themselves.

While people today are asking God to "save us," they are running around to all the wrong places trying to find that salvation, trying to find that peace by trying drugs and all kinds of illicit relationships. The crowd in Jerusalem that day was crying out for peace. Today people need peace more than ever. We are filled with depression and discouragement. And our kids are being drugged because they are hyperactive and they need peace. And so we see the pain that's going on.

**42) "and said, 'If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace – but now it is hidden from your eyes.'" Jesus is saying that the people thought he was going to come charging in on a white horse and attack those Romans and we Jews are going to be win and kick them out. And that's how we will have peace. But that's now what Jesus was going to do.**

Jesus knew what it was going to take that week for him to bring the kind of peace Jesus was going to bring and what that peace would cost. Jesus knew what he was facing. He knew how painful it was going to be. He had known from before the creation of the world what this week was going to be like. He wrote into the Old Testament the descriptions of how he would be beaten to where you wouldn't recognize him any more, to how they would put a crown of thorns on him, to how they would nail him to a cross.

The crowd, which consisted mostly of his followers, didn't understand Jesus. His purpose was hidden from their eyes. And then later in the week at dinner with his 12 disciples, Jesus was going to tell them that he was going to die and that all of them were going to betray and deny him in the process. Peter argued that he would never deny Jesus.

**43) "The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. 44) They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."**

Jesus is emphatically telling them that he's not coming to rescue them from their troubles and the Romans. He said, in fact, those Romans that you hate are going to ultimately destroy this city and not leave one stone atop another.

And you know that Jesus isn't here today to fix every single one of our physical problems. He's here to make our heart like his heart. He's here to change the new creation to make us different and to make us like him. Jesus is concerned if we represent him well. When people see us do they see grace, do they see love and do they see mercy? Or do they see antagonism and self-righteousness and so many other things that Christians act like?

And for the last 2000 years, troubles have come. People have been persecuted and beat up and have had their homes destroyed. If you go to Darfur today, or if you go to parts of China today, you will see that Jesus doesn't rescue them from every one of their problems. Just like God didn't rescue America from our financial troubles.

God allows problems to happen, because this is not yet his world. But he is working on hearts. He is working on who we are. And Jesus bleeds for us. He weeps for us that we would get it. He wants us to help others see it.

This past week, a young man was shot here in Eagle Rock. He's the 2<sup>nd</sup> child in that family that has been shot in the last 4 years. He was part of a gang family. He was trying to come out. He was attending PCC (Pasadena City College). He had a part-time job. He was trying his best to get out of the gang culture.

His pastor sent an e-mail to other pastors, asking for a prayer vigil at his family's home even though not everything was correctly going on there. And a person across the street told the

pastor that the family has been a gang family for years and warned the pastors not to show up on their street with a prayer vigil. And so the neighborhood threatened the pastors and demanded that they stay away. So that's the kind of world we live in. That's the reality of what we face today.

**44) "They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."**

You see, Jesus was coming to bring peace, but it was a different kind of peace than they were expecting. It was a peace of the heart, a peace of a soul, a peace of changing our life. So we can live in peace in the midst of turmoil. So we can be the people of peace and offer peace to others by praying for them and encouraging them even in the middle of difficult times. We can let our light shine in the middle of trauma.

That's when the Christians were the strongest during difficult times like the Black Plague of the Middle Ages. When everyone was dying, they jump in to help others. That's because Christians have a peace that goes beyond circumstances.

We talked earlier today about earthquake preparedness drills, because a large earthquake could happen. And so it would be wise for us to be prepared not just to protect ourselves but also we would be able to help others. So we're able to be a part of Christ's solution in the middle of trauma. That's why Jesus brought peace.

Then in verse 45, we read that Jesus does enter into the Temple and cleans out the moneychangers and making the point that the priesthood was keeping people from God. Because the moneychangers were taking advantage of the people, it was hard for the people to get to God. To buy a lamb at the Temple was 8 to 10 times more expensive than to buy it outside Jerusalem. But they guaranteed that this lamb was spotless or spot free.

God wants it easy to come to him. He doesn't want to make it difficult for people. In the Bible study this morning in Romans we learned that we are all not worthy because we all have sinned. But Jesus brings us all in because it's not about us, it's about him. Jesus makes it possible for us to succeed and have a relationship with God, even in the middle of difficulties.

So as we come here on Palm Sunday, we are here to give glory to God. We are here to lift our palms and thank him for who he is and what he's done. We're here to bless God for the real peace that he's sent. Some day he'll bring peace to the whole world. But in the meantime he's bringing peace to people. And if enough people get peace, that will help a lot.

In the meantime we give him glory. We lift our hands to him, we worship him, we lift him up. And we say to him – you are the one who did it and we get it. We recognize what you did for us 2000 years ago. And we honor you for that. And we will honor you Thursday night for that. We'll be here next Sunday to honor his resurrection. We'll be here to say, "Yes, we understand what you have done for mankind. And how important that is. And we will rejoice in that Jesus won. That he finished it for us." And we get to enter in and receive that.

So we cry out, "Save us, Jesus." But we know he has. But do we expect him to do it our way or his way? We can pray our prayers asking God to do this and to do that. We can give him a whole list of things we'd like him to do. But ultimately we have to say, "God it's about your

will. So would you do what you know is best. Will you make it work the way you know is the most effective way?" And then leave it to him.

In closing, let's read **Psalm 118**, which is one of the prophecies about Jesus coming to Jerusalem on this particular day. **19) "Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter and give thanks to the LORD. 20) This is the gate of the LORD through which the righteous may enter. 21) I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation.**

**22) The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; 23) the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. 24) This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. 25) O LORD, save us; O LORD, grant us success.**

**26) Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you. 27) The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine upon us. With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar.**

**28) You are my God, and I will give you thanks; you are my God, and I will exalt you. 29) Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever."**

Please notice the focus is on worshipping him, lifting him up, giving glory to him. And in the process, he saves us; he brings us salvation. And then he asks us to go out and share that with others and offer it to others. As we do that, we give glory to him.

So as you go out this week, pray for people around you, talk to them, be encouraging to them, and let the peace of God shine out to them.

**Key Scripture: Luke 19:28-44.**

**General Group Question:** What was the crowd wanting Jesus to do as they shouted "Hosanna" and "**Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!**" as he entered Jerusalem? Was this the reason Jesus came? Briefly explain why or why not.

**Additional questions for the entire group or in groups of two or three of the same gender (15-20 minutes). If appropriate, please pray for each other's needs afterwards.**

1. Why did Jesus choose to ride into Jerusalem on a donkey instead of a horse?
2. How was Jesus going to save the people of Jerusalem and Judea?
3. How does Jesus save us today? Does he take away all our physical problems and trials? Why or why not?
4. Why were the Pharisees so upset with the crowd?
5. How did Jesus react when he saw the panorama of Jerusalem? Why?
6. What is Jesus trying to accomplish in us and through us today?
7. In what ways can you show your gratitude for all that Jesus done for you?

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