

## Palm Sunday 2020

Today is Palm Sunday which takes place the Sunday before Easter. Christians all over the world are celebrating the triumphal entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem 2000 years ago which marked the beginning of the passion week.

At the end of today's encouraging message, we have a special challenge for you so be sure to stay with us.

In years past some Christ-followers would be waving palm branches as they walked through the streets of their villages, towns, and cities. They would be proclaiming Jesus as Lord publicly to everyone. Others would be handed palm branches as they leave their church buildings and put them on display at home for the week. This year is different though. With the current worldwide Coronavirus pandemic and the necessary precautions, this is not possible. We can proclaim our love for Jesus and His Lordship in our lives on social media. We can declare that Jesus is the Son of God and paved the way for us to return to God for eternity. We can share our worship for Jesus on social media like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for the world to see. You can simply share this video with your family and friends on social media, even.

Next week we will talk more in-depth about the purpose and meaning of Easter. Easter is the reason why people are Christians or Christ-followers.

Today, we want to talk about what happened the week before Easter and how it applies to us today. We refer to this week as the passion week or holy week.

We find Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem in the Gospels. Today, we will be reading it from Luke 19. Before we read the passage let us first set up the scene for what is going on in this point of Jesus' ministry.

At this point, Jesus is well into his ministry. He has been traveling around the region for about 3 years and has gained quite a reputation. He was known for his wisdom and ability for miracles. Jesus was unorthodox for his time. He came at a time in history where the Jews were praying for a Messiah, or savior, to deliver them from the Roman occupation they were experiencing.

The Jewish religious leaders had taken the law of Moses and added to it and made it a regimented, legalistic, unachievable religion. Jesus often spoke to these teachers of the law, or Pharisees, who esteemed themselves and placed themselves above other Jews.

Jesus spoke against this regimented law, time and time again. He came face to face with the religious leaders and Pharisees time and again and clearly pointed out where they were wrong and tried to point them to the truth.

Jesus said that to love your neighbor as yourself and to love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, and mind, was more important than any commandment these strict Jews had. Jesus turned modern ideology upside down and in doing so created many enemies. The Pharisees and traditionalists raised their noses at him and wanted to find a way to get rid of him.



Despite all this, Jesus still made friends and attracted followers or disciples. These were people who accepted his message of love, rather than legalism. Those who accepted his gesture of mercy and compassion rather than vengeance and justice.

So, here Jesus is, having divided a culture; Pharisees who loathed him, simple Jews who were unsure, Gentiles who were curious, and disciples who loved him.

Let's read our text today in Luke 19:28-40.

Luke 19:28-40

(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. (31) If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' say, '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 owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" (34) They replied, "The Lord needs it." (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. (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: (38) "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" (39) Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" (40) "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out." Jesus and his disciples were on their way to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem. He gave specific instructions to two of them. When they returned with the donkey people celebrated him by waving palm branches and singing his praises.

This was a glorious time for Jesus' followers. They had recognized who he was and were boldly proclaiming it to everyone as they entered Jerusalem. What a spectacle this must have been for the casual observer. Most had heard of the carpenter's son from Galilee, and now he enters Jerusalem leading up to Passover like a returning king.

We are sure it was bittersweet to Jesus. He would have been honored and loved by the acts of his followers but he also knew of what was to come. Jesus knew that his time on earth was coming to an end. He knew that the faces who looked at him in adoration would soon be weeping. Some of the faces that are watching now with curiosity would be yelling, "Crucify him!" in just a few days.

This triumphal entry marked the beginning of the end, or so it seemed.

In just a few short days, Jesus would be wrongly accused, tortured, and sentenced to die on a Roman cross to pay the penalty for all of mankind's sin.

2 Corinthians 5:21 says:

2 Corinthians 5:21

(21) God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.



The reason we celebrate Palm Sunday is that Jesus chose to come into Jerusalem riding on a donkey allowing people to worship him and show him their love despite knowing what was to come. Instead of looking to the inevitable and dwelling on things to come, Jesus was caught up in the moment loving people and allowing himself to be loved and worshipped. This is why many Bible translations have a heading above this passage in Luke labeled *The Triumphal Entry*.

Jesus was facing a task that only he could accomplish. If you continue reading you will read how Jesus agonized over what was to come. He didn't know the outcome of it all, but he did know that the Father, God, has called him for this and was going to see him through.

Maybe you can relate to this? Maybe you have a situation in your life that is swallowing you up and consuming you. For many of us, it is this Coronavirus or COVID-19 pandemic. Some of us are staying safe by staying home and not gathering with others. Then there are some like medical professionals, firefighters, police, grocery or market workers, or those who transport people or goods who are considered essential and must continue to go to work putting themselves in harm's way.

Maybe you need to stop and allow others to love on you. Just pause and let people minister to you. Jesus was surrounded by people who knew him and supported him. Though they did fall aside as the time drew closer for Jesus' trial, conviction, and death, they did return.

In the face of this global pandemic and other things you may be facing. You may have just received a cancer diagnosis, lost a loved one, or lost your job and cannot buy food for your family. Make the most of the moment and enjoy it because tomorrow will come. Listen to what Jesus had to say in Matthew 6:34:

Matthew 6:34

(34) Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Jesus could have chosen to worry and fret about his impending betrayal, trial, and death. But instead, he chose to love others and allow them to love him. Today we celebrate Palm Sunday because we celebrate Jesus. We encourage you to be still, rest in him, and celebrate his goodness.

Proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ today. Worship him, even if it is in your own home isolated from others. Share the love of Jesus with others. Share this video to encourage others. Trust that God does have a plan for you and is going to see you through.

That is our challenge for you this week. Share the good news of Jesus Christ with someone. Ask the Holy Spirit to point out who to share with and then be obedient to the call God has placed on your life. Also, share this video with others. It is a simple and great way to share the love of Jesus with others.

We believe that God has a plan for your life, your family, and your community.

Easter marks Jesus' defeat over Satan. Jesus conquered death, hell, and the grave, then after he died on the cross, he rose from the grave. Satan hates Easter and Satan hates Christians. Therefore, we want to claim our lives and our territories for Jesus. To do this, we want to challenge you to pray. We want to challenge you to intentionally petition the Lord for the salvation of your family members and friends.



We want to encourage you to pray for your ministry, your job, your school, and those in authority over you. Celebrate Palm Sunday and point people to Jesus.

Next week will be a special Easter message that you will not want to miss so be sure to connect back with us by liking our Facebook page, subscribing to our YouTube channel, or signing up to receive our emails.

