

April 5, 2020

Title: **I AM THE KING**

Scripture: Matthew 21:1-11 John 12:12-19

Narrative: “There is a Russian fable about a master and a servant who went on a journey to a city. Before the two men could reach their destination they were caught in a blinding blizzard. They lost their direction and were unable to reach the city before nightfall.

The next morning concerned friends went searching for the two men. They finally found the master, frozen to death, face down in the snow. When they lifted him, they found the servant -- cold but alive. He survived and told how the master had voluntarily placed himself on top of the servant so the servant could live.” (Lucado, 22-3)

Like the master in the story, Christ knew that He must die so others (you and I) would live. **Palm Sunday’s parade is about Jesus’ Destiny, Devotion, and Deliverance, and our Response.**

Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem didn’t begin in Jericho. It didn’t begin in Galilee. It didn’t even begin in Bethlehem. The journey to the cross began long beforehand. As the echo of the crunching of the fruit was still sounding in the Garden of Eden, Jesus was already leaving for another garden – the Garden of Gethsemane and then to Golgotha’s Cross.” (Lucado, 15) His humble arrival was evidence of His submission to God. Jesus said in Mark 10:45, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

We further explain Jesus’ thought reading in John:

John 12:20-21 (NIV)

²⁰Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” ²²Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵Those

who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

Seeing Jesus means that we respond with purpose to our Destiny, Devotion, and celebrate our Deliverance. We worship His Holy name recognizing that Jesus represents the love that God has for us, a love that would send Him to the cross to die for us; yet **we can be changed**. When we fall to the ground and lose our life. we will live. As we realize that God gave His only Son to die for us **we are transformed**. When we see and believe this glorious truth, we **understand that the outcome of our praise and worship to Him** become shouts of “Hosanna to Jesus.” When we bow down and surrender our whole beings to God, we will **follow and obey His will, and to honor and praise Him for all He has done**. To really see Jesus is to **receive a life of abundance**. (John 10:10)

The people in the crowd that day were shouting something that was far more significant than they understood. They saw Him but did not understand the WHO or WHAT He wanted from them.

“Hosanna,” they shouted. “Hosanna.” This Hebrew word means “he who saves.” They were welcoming their King.

But Jesus was not a king who would reign over Israel. No, this King was far more important, far more powerful than any king on earth.

Although they didn’t realize it, they were honoring the King of heaven. They were honoring the King of kings and Lord of lords. They were honoring **The King** who would triumph over death. They were singing praises to **The Lamb of God**, who would take away the sins of the world.

Today, we should be doing the same thing.

Imagine yourself there with the people in Jerusalem 2000 years ago. A great crowd gathered that day. They had come to celebrate the Feast of the Passover. I can imagine it was like what we see in Times Square on New Year’s Eve.

Josephus, the notable Jewish historian, estimated that over two million

people were involved in the great Passover Feast. It is known that 256,500 lambs were slain at Passover and that each lamb represented at least ten worshippers. Teeming thousands from all over the world were flooding into the city to observe the Passover. The mass of people and the necessary housing and food arrangements that needed to be made was unimaginable.

An excitable, carnival-like atmosphere prevailed over such a crush of humanity. There were lots of people jamming Jerusalem streets, getting ready to celebrate. But as they prepared to observe one of the most important feasts that the Jewish people celebrated all year, word came that Jesus was making His way into the city. Jesus is the miracle worker, Jesus is the one who calmed the storms and raised Lazarus from the dead, Jesus who made a feast for 5000 people was coming to town. "Look how the people go after Him the Pharisees said with disdain to one another"

The gathered crowd surrounded Jesus as He rode into the city on "the foal of a donkey." The people began to wave palm branches, throw their coats on the road, and shout their welcome to Jesus. They (all) immediately recognized what was happening. (Zechariah 9:9. 500 years before this day) "*See your King comes to you righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on the foal of a donkey*"

Do we see (understand) our faces in that crowd TODAY? Do we understand (see) as Christians our response to our **destiny, devotion, and deliverance as defined by Jesus?**

IN CLOSING, Palm Sunday points Jesus to the ultimate destination of His trip from Galilee to the city where He had predicted that He would be crucified- Jerusalem.

One wonders how many of those people who enthusiastically cried, "Hosanna!" on Palm Sunday were shouting "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" a few days later. Some people must have been disappointed, even resentful, that Christ didn't overthrow the Romans and set up an earthly kingdom. After all, hadn't He Himself created a golden opportunity to rally support as He rode into Jerusalem? In contrast to His earlier actions, He didn't try to dampen this jubilant demonstration. Yet He didn't capitalize on the fervor of the crowd and issue a call to arms. No wonder those who longed only for release from foreign domination were

disillusioned! The Messiah had not fulfilled their expectations. For this reason, the Triumphal Entry was also a tragic entry.

What Jesus' contemporaries failed to recognize was that before He could assert His outward sovereignty, **He had to rule the inner citadel of the hearts of men and women. The greatest need of every person (you and me) is not freedom from Caesar's legions but release from the chains of our own sin. Jesus would rule in power and glory one day, but first He had to pay sin's penalty on the cross. The key to understanding God's kingdom is not revolution but repentance, a turning away from following the world, and its system and following Jesus.**

Down through the centuries the issue has not changed. If we follow Christ solely because we think He'll shield us from life's hardships, heal all our sicknesses and guarantee prosperity, *we're headed for disillusionment. But if we renounce sin, take up our cross, and place our trust in Him we will never be disappointed.*

Destiny, Devotion, and Deliverance. It is still the question that all of us need to answer today. If you would like to send a clear message to God about your willingness to follow Him, I invite you now to proclaim Him as the Lord of your Life.

Jesus will forgive all our sins and lead us to make our triumphal entry into the heavenly Jerusalem. Who does your life say Jesus is? Amen