

“Hosanna to the son of david. Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord.” The thronging crowds lined the street, like a parade, to welcome their King and savior!

Imagine for a moment what it was like back then. It is now 5 days before the Passover feast. People come in from the outside to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. They come to worship God, to bring their sacrifices to the temple. There’s already the normal excitement and anticipation of a city awaiting their Passover festival but this time going to be even more exciting. News spread that Jesus was coming into Jerusalem.

Jesus coming to Jerusalem!? The very same Jesus who raised Lazarus from the dead, the one who fed 5000 men and had 12 baskets of bread to spare, the very Jesus who healed 10 lepers. This is the man coming into Jerusalem. People’s heart and minds were stirred. Multitudes lined the road leading up to Jerusalem to welcome him. Some threw their clothes and some cut palm branches to spread on the road. The palm branches are used in olden times to welcome a returning king or war hero. In Roman customs, they used palm branches to welcome military or athlete champions.

But look! Just like Solomon came riding on a mule as king, so Jesus came riding into Jerusalem on a donkey as king. He isn’t walking in as he usually does. People were overjoyed. Finally, Jesus was making his move. He liked to keep his miracles quiet. He didn’t seem to want any political power. But this time, it’s different. He is riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. Surely a sign! The crowds the multitude were going before Jesus, shouting “hosanna to the son of david. Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord.” Hosanna means save ... deliver us... Perhaps some people were thinking- Jesus, this man who can raise people from the dead is going to lead them to victory, perhaps to free them from the Roman rule, and let Israel be free again. Perhaps Jesus has come as their political savior!

But friends, within a week of the crowds crying “Hosanna,” we have another crowd that kept shouting “Crucify him! Crucify him! Crucify him!” Within a week of riding into Jerusalem, in peace, in triumphant procession as their king, Jesus was nailed to a cross, with a crown of thorns on his head, beaten to a pulp, dead.

1. This leads me to my first point. Did Jesus make a mistake? Was it a bad move riding into Jerusalem as king? Perhaps, he should have snuck into Jerusalem on the quiet. The answer is a resounding NO! Jesus was in complete control. He knew what he was doing.

Earlier, before going up to Jerusalem, Jesus had told his disciples to get him a donkey. Jesus instructed 2 of his disciples to go to the village ahead and find a donkey tied there just as they enter the village. He told them to untie the donkey no one had ridden before. And if anyone asked, tell them the Lord needs it.

Imagine yourself as one of the disciples. He wants us to get him the donkey. He normally walks everywhere. O well lets go get the donkey. Hey look, there it is just like he said. How did Jesus know it was there? How did he know it was never ridden before? Let's untie it... Oops here come the owners. They not going to be happy.

Imagine the owners, coming out wondering what they are doing. The city is full to the brim with people. There are strangers and perhaps unsavory characters. Then they see these 2 guys untying their donkey. So they went out to talk to them, maybe to shoo them away. Donkeys are likely not cheap and probably used for their livelihood. But hang on.... They are the 2 disciples of this Jesus. The Lord needs it, they said! Jesus needs it. All right then. He can have it. It must be hard to let strangers have their animal. With such a huge crowd out there, the owners don't know if the donkey will be returned, yet they let Jesus have it.

Jesus is in control. He knew where the donkey was. He knew no one had ridden it before. He knew just what his disciples should say if the owners ask. He knew the owners would let him have it. Jesus is in full control, even in the events leading up his death. What's more. At great personal cost, the owners trusted in Jesus. They let Jesus have his way.

Do you guys trust your GPS or google maps. Once, my family and I were going on to some cave somewhere for camping. It was literally a painful holiday. Anyway, on the way there, we followed google maps which finds the fastest way right? Instead we went left and right, up hill and down dale, into dusty roads and country side that seemed in the middle of nowhere. You know what, we should have just taken the highway and turned left. I am the kind of guy who likes to keep trying. I am not fan of asking for directions unless it's asking help at the service station. If you know someone who been there before who knows the lay of land, they can tell you easily which way to take. The easy way. The easy yoke way. Less suffering. Right?

Well Jesus is in control. He knows the lay of the land. Will you be like the disciples who listened to his directions and did as he instructed? Are we like the owners of the donkey who gave of such a prized possession? Are we in control or is our Lord in control? When he comes knocking asking us do things or give up things for him, are we willing, are we ready? Or do we go our own off beaten road ending up in the middle of nowhere? Trust the lord. He been down this human road before. Even when he was in his dark hour, he was in control, a master of his destiny. He knows which road for us take. All we need to do is follow him.

The second theme of this passage is responding in praise for what Jesus did.

The crowds shout out "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord." This verse comes from zech 9:9 "See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Jesus comes into Jerusalem in peace. He is not there to upset and cause political upheaval. He comes in lowly condition. In humility. He doesn't come as a conqueror warrior on a white horse. The donkey doesn't even have a proper saddle. Just some clothes thrown on it for him to sit on. A gentle, lowly Messiah. Who are his companions? They are not warriors with great shields and swords like King David's mighty men. They are just a bedraggled lot... some fisherman, tax collector and some nationalistic zealots.

The disciples can't help themselves. They have to praise God. Ascribe glory to him. Jesus is not just any king. He is The king. He is not just some political savior. He is The messiah. Now, some of the Pharisees tried to stop the disciples. Not only is Jesus coming on a donkey like some king or champion into Jerusalem at a busy festival time. But his disciples are openly declaring Jesus is King and even giving glory to God. The Romans must have been watching what's going on. The Pharisees are scared that Romans might think this is a brewing rebellion and come and destroy their temple and nation! So the Pharisees said to Jesus "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" Tell them off!

But what does Jesus say... he said even if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out. Even creation knows how big a deal this is. So the people cannot keep quiet.

Have you ever been to a recital ... you know one of those things that your friend's kids or child is playing and you got to show up. I once went to my daughter's concert where different kids under the teacher do a recital of pieces they studied during the year. I heard another girl's recital. She was a young girl about 11. But there she stood. Playing her heart out and did she play well. She played a stunning tune, a tune played so well that belied her young age. When she finished, what could we do but to applaud? We couldn't help it. It was deserved.

You see it's the same when we come to the story of Jesus coming into Jerusalem. The crowd recognized his miracles, his teaching, his authority, his kingship, his saving messiahship, and some even his lordship. They could not but help but to bless Jesus and give the applause to heaven.

Jesus is the king, the messiah who frees his people and brings peace. Jesus won not a political or physical battle of the here and now but won for us something much, much more important. Something of eternal value. Our very souls.

When we recognize what Jesus had done. How he came in such a lowly, humble way to save us. Yet firmly and resolutely to take our place on the cross instead of us. He took us from our broken lives and brought us into the loving embrace of God and given us a peace for now and for eternity. How can we not turn to our savior and bless, worship, praise and glorify him?

My third point is that Jesus mourned for those who rejected him.

Now let's return to the story. Jesus was riding up into the Jerusalem in a parade. People thought: Here's our king sent by God who is going to save us. Here's Jesus our champion.

Imagine if you won the gold medal in 100 meters in the Olympics, and you are standing in an open roof car, driven down Burdett street from our church all the way down to Westfield. The crowds are going wild and jubilantly celebrating your victory. Our local boy or girl winning it. You are like the king or queen of Waitara. You saved Australia by winning their only gold medal in the Olympics! What would you do be doing as you go down the road? You'll be waving back won't you? You might choke back a tear or two? But you be happy , joyful , right?

But what do some people on the road to Jerusalem see? They begin to see something unexpected in Jesus. Jesus looks up at Jerusalem and starts sobbing. The word in the Greek is "klaio." The word for tears here is stronger than what is read in the NIV which says "wept." The commentary refers to it as full sobbing or wailing. If you been to a funeral where someone beloved has been lost, and they are sobbing, mourning. That's the sense being conveyed here. Jesus is mourning over Jerusalem.

Jesus mourned over Jerusalem because just like he predicted where and how to get the donkey, he also predicted what was going to happen to Jerusalem. Jesus came to bring peace. To save them from destruction. But best of all, Jesus will save them from their sins and put them right with God once more. But because many reject him, they missed their chance and only judgment awaits.

Jesus predicted here in this passage: 1. Their enemies will build a siege against Jerusalem 2. They will smash both the people and their children inside the walls. 3. They will not leave one stone on another. Well what happened? About 30 odd years after Jesus died, the Jews revolted and the Romans lay siege to Jerusalem. People started dying from hunger and disease. The Romans razed the temple. Many Jews were killed or sold as slaves. Josephus, the historian put the numbers of Jews killed during the siege at one million and one hundred thousand!

That's why Jesus was weeping and mourning over Jerusalem. He knew they would reject him and miss their chance at peace. Being human, they would try to save themselves and fail utterly in the end. Only Jesus has the answers. Only he can give real peace.

I heard a true story from president of OMF in the past. He used to be a doctor and he told us of a story of this young Chinese guy he met. Possibly in Hong Kong. The poor guy had cancer in his leg and the doctors had told him that he needed an amputation. However, he didn't want to do it. Perhaps people were tell him to try natural treatments like boiling some herbs and traditional remedies. Perhaps he was fearful of losing a limb. Whatever it was, he did not proceed to surgery. Unfortunately, as with untreated cancers it took his life. He did not accept the opportunity to cut out the cancer. He did not take it when he had the chance.

This is a lesson for all of us. Sometimes, we think we going to go on forever. Last year, my father died. You know even when he was sick, I never really thought he would die. He seemed better after his heart surgery. You can't even imagine someone close dying. My dad after he fell sick , returned to his Christian

faith from his younger days in a real way. He took the opportunity afforded to him. He took it seriously. When you are confronted with your own mortality, you take this salvation, this offer of Jesus seriously.

Today, if you are not so sure where you stand before God. Know this, Jesus died for you. Jesus went to the cross not just for the Jews in Jerusalem or Israel but to everyone. It's a simple thing to make sure your salvation. Turn from your sins and trust Jesus. That's all you need. Don't miss your chance. Don't be like the ones Jesus mourned for but instead let us praise him, worship him for this wonderful thing he has done for us.

For those who trust him, enjoy his peace. Let's leave our lives of constant striving, of trying to do everything yourself. Instead wanting to control everything, give your control of your life to Jesus who is in control of the past, present and future.

Finally, we give heartfelt thanks to God for sending Jesus and give our lives to him to use as he pleases. Indeed, we say ""Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"