

Luke 19:28-40

28 After he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29 When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, 30 saying, "Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. 31 If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it.'" 32 So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. 33 As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" 34 They said, "The Lord needs it." 35 Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. 36 As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. 37 As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, 38 saying, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!" 39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." 40 He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

Palm Sunday marks a very special occasion. Jesus had his mind set on going to Jerusalem. The disciples were set against it because their perspective was one of fear and danger due to the plot to kill Jesus. However, Jesus had a much different perspective. Jesus was on a divine mission to save the world and bring us salvation. There was not a trace of fear, no agony, and no anxiety. Jesus is cool and calm and focused on his divine mission.

Today's Scripture is one that we all know well. After Jesus taught the parable of the ten talents about the relationship between the master and his slave, He trusts the business to their care. By contemporary standards it would be a businessman and the employees. Their job is to do the work of the owner in his absence. Well, the first thing that the employee needs to do is to understand the wishes of the owner. The second thing is to figure out how to give the owner what he wants. The third thing is to determine the action that needs to be performed in order to achieve the goals. In the realm of reality, Jesus is teaching basically that there are three degrees of success. The one that outperforms the others, exceeds expectations, and is rewarded accordingly. The one that does an average job gets to keep his job but does not impress the owner. The one that is a failure is the one that did not perform up to the standards of the owner, he gets penalized consequently.

I want you to keep in mind the time frame of when this lesson occurs. The timing of the lesson is very important. It happens right before Palm Sunday. Jesus teaches this to his disciples right before he goes to Jerusalem. So, what Jesus is doing is he is preparing to hand over his ministry to his followers. Jesus is teaching discipleship. He is teaching his disciples where they are to be in the divine / human relationship. We are instructed to look after the business of the True King. We are to conduct business in honor of the king, in the name of the king, and by the standards of the True King.

Jerusalem is the headquarters of the religion. The problem that Jesus is faced with is not a problem of good vs. evil; the problem is with the people of God. They claim to be

righteous but have actually pulled further and further away from the will of God. What they are teaching, believe in, and reinforce is human doctrine. They should know better but they do not because they have been taught this pseudo-theology and this misguided indoctrination gets embedded into their ideology. Jesus cannot ignore this problem. Jesus must fix the broken relationship between God and humanity. The broken relationship is a matter of the covenant which is repeatedly reinforced in the Old Testament between God and the people of God. It is all about relationship. This is because God loves us. It is because God loves us that God desires a relationship with humanity. God provides for and protects the people and all the people have to do honor God's wishes.

Jesus comes to Jerusalem as a reformer, to reform the broken religious institution, and bring us back to God. Jesus' life is one of repentance, faith, and the Kingdom of God. Luke six is a chapter that sets the foundation of the ministry of Jesus. The Sermon on Plain Mount is the essence of Jesus' life. Now as he enters into Jerusalem all of his lessons come together: repentance, faith, and the Kingdom of God, are exactly what the people need. God gives the people what the people need. It is presence. God gives us Jesus. God gives us a ministry of presence. Palm Sunday is the party. It is a celebration of the True King that comes to be with us. It is a special party, a welcoming party, celebrating when Jesus comes to visit us.

The most important thing for anyone when they are grieving, or having a party, is your presence. It is not what you have to say or do, the main thing is that you came, to be there for them and support them. I drove my motorcycle around a curve and downshifted to second gear but missed it and the bike went into natural. This means that I did not slow down enough to make the turn. I slid into the curve and got knocked out. When I woke up on the scene, my uncle James was there kneeling beside me. He couldn't fix me. There was nothing he can do for me. But man! I sure was glad to see him there. Birthday parties, weddings, funerals, you don't remember all the details but you do remember who was there. I had surgery some twenty-five years ago and I still remember very clearly the elder that visited me. When you are present it means more than anything else. Where is God in the pain and suffering of the world? God is present in the relationship. God loves us so much that God gave us Jesus so that God can be with us. The greatest gift you can give is yourself, your love and your presence, and that is what God has done for us.