

April 9, 2006

“Blessed Is the King!”
Luke 19:28-48

FCF: Not knowing our King

PROPOSITION: (magnet) Because of the nature of His rule,
(anchor) we should join the cry, “Blessed is the King!”

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:

Our Narnia Book Club discussed The Voyage of the “Dawn Treader” this past week. I’d forgotten how much I enjoyed the story of this adventure on the high seas. There’s a scene early on depicting the reestablishment of a king’s long spurned rule. It has been 300 years since any king of Narnia has had any contact with the subjects of the Lone Islands. And Governor Gumpas has taken advantage of the situation by allowing slave trade to flourish. But King Caspian will have none of it and so he and his company undertake a bold plan to unseat the governor and set Lord Bern in his place.

Life for the people on the Lone Islands was all askew. They had lost sense of who their king was and how life in his kingdom was supposed to be. Could the same be said of us? Do we know who our King is and how life in His kingdom is supposed to be? To the extent we don’t, our lives will be all askew as well. We need the King.

SCRIPTURE READING: [Luke 19:28-48](#)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON INTRODUCTION:

Rulers in this age are not faring very well. When Slobodan Milosevic collapsed of a heart attack in his Dutch cell recently, he had spent five years in prison and was but a short 50 hours away from concluding testimony in his trial for crimes in the Bosnian War. Another dictator, Saddam Hussein, awaits much the same in Iraq where evidence is mounting of his links to terrorism, plans regarding WMD’s, and general brutality.

We don’t care much for people with too much authority. George Washington spurned imperious titles and a third term. Political theory and experience bore out sound theology and so the Founding Fathers envisioned the need for a system of “checks and balances.” For, as Lord Acton said, *“Absolute power corrupts absolutely.”*

All true except with one king – King Jesus. His rule is so good and so true that if He wasn’t, I’d say let’s all just go home and cash it in. But He is and so we’re staying.

Our text records what is called Jesus’ “Triumphal Entry” into Jerusalem. Matthew’s Gospel focuses on the larger gathering, “the crowd” – their shouts of His praise on Palm Sunday and their demands for His blood on Good Friday. Matthew is writing for a Jewish audience, trying to help them see that this Jesus is the long awaited Messiah and that their flawed expectations are what led to their rejection of Him. Luke, on the other hand, is writing with a more Gentile audience in mind and so his focus here is not on the crowd but the disciples within that crowd. And their response is worth noting. They were rejoicing and praising God. They shouted ([READ Luke 19:38](#)) – echoing the words of the angels the night Jesus was born. And why? ([READ Luke 19:37b](#)) Now think of who’s there – the whore who wept at His feet, the man possessed by the demons set free, Jairus and his daughter brought back from the dead, the woman healed of her flow of blood, the little boy who saw his lunch multiplied, Zacchaeus with whom He spent time. Think of what they’ve seen! Think of what they’ve heard! Now put yourself in their sandals and join with their shouts of joy. *“Blessed is the King!”*

I. HIS PRAISE UNSTOPPABLE

Blessed is the King for His praise is unstoppable! ([READ Luke 19:39-40](#))

A) *The Protest of the Pharisees*

There's an interesting dialogue going here that's worth our attention.

1. Annoyance

The Pharisees – the moralistic religious folks – are annoyed with Jesus. His teaching was irritating. He hung out with people who got under their skin. And, as bad as that was, now His followers are brazenly asserting that He's the Messiah. This has got to stop!

2. Anxiety

And so they're annoyed. Not just that, they're anxious. If this crowd gets too worked up, the Romans will intervene and that could get ugly. But because He seems to have such a following, there's nothing they can do. And so they ask Him to shut them up.

B) *The Response of Jesus*

But Jesus wouldn't do it (**READ Luke 19:40**).

1. Accepts it because of who He is

Up until now, He has tried to keep a low profile, urging His followers not to speak of what they know. But things have changed – “*I am who they say I am.*”

2. Encourages it because of who they are

He accepts their praises because of who He is. And He encourages it because of who they are. He is the King. They are His subjects. And they just can't help themselves.

In fact, the appropriateness of their praises is such that, if they were to be silent, “*the very stones would cry out.*” These stones being part of His creation, owing their existence to Him. These stones – possibly referring to the great stones of the Temple – owing their purpose for being to Him. He is Lord of Creation and Lord of their worship.

Illustration:

His praise is unstoppable. Julian the Apostate was the Roman emperor who followed after Constantine the Great. Julian was Constantine's nephew, was raised as a Christian but later renounced the faith and spent his energies trying to restore paganism to the Empire. Knowing the Bible's prophecies about ancient Babylon never being rebuilt, he decided to send his armies into Mesopotamia to prove it wrong. On June 26, 363, in the course of a battle against the Persians, Julian was struck down by a sword that ran him through. His dying words were these: “*Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean.*”

Application:

His praise is unstoppable. Now you don't have to believe that. You can stand back at a safe distance and scoff at all this if you want to. But know this. That doesn't change a thing in terms of who He is. Not believing this won't change a thing in terms of who He is. But it will have a lot to do with how things go when you meet Him.

Now if you're His, there should be a sense in which you just can't help yourself. There will be times when it just comes out of you. You can't stop it. Your prayers will break out into song. Your testimony will sound like you're speaking of someone you dearly love. Your singing in church will burst out into – dare I say it among a group of Presbyterians – clapping! You can't stop His praises! “*Blessed be the King!*”

II. HIS HEART BREAKABLE

Look at what we see here! Pay heed to what we see of our King! His praises are unstoppable. That's amazing. And His heart is breakable. That's astonishing (**READ Luke 19:41-44**). Jesus' words are such a glaring contrast to what's going on around Him. But they are a prophetic pronouncement – both in terms of what He says and how He says it. But why? Why is our King weeping? What was it that broke His heart so?

A) *The Rejection of the People*

The rejection of the people. The rejection of His people.

1. All they had seen

After all they had heard – through the prophets, in their synagogues, through John the Baptist, in Jesus’ own ministry. After all they had witnessed – the blind seeing, the lame walking, the lepers cleansed, the deaf hearing, the dead raised, the poor receiving the good news. After all they had heard, after all they seen, they spurned Him.

2. All they would experience

And in spurning Him, in not knowing “*the time of (their) visitation,*” they would go through horrendous judgment – the siege and destruction of Jerusalem just 40 years later.

B) *The Response of Jesus*

And how does Jesus respond? With spiteful glee and calloused heart?

1. What He does

He speaks the words they needed to hear. And “*He wept over it.*” Now understand – this is not merely a misting of the eyes. The wording here speaks to a heaving of the chest.

2. Why He does it

What Jesus sees here is breaking His heart and causes just tremendous grief. This was Jerusalem! He longed that they might repent but He knew their hearts were hard. And it was the hardness of their hearts that then broke His own.

Do not for a minute think that this King is cold, withdrawn, and aloof.

Illustration:

In Oklahoma City, at the memorial on the Murrah Building site, 168 empty chairs sit as silent reminders of those who perished in a terrorism attack. Across the street is a statue at St. Joseph's Catholic Church. It is of Jesus. He stands with His back to the busy street and the place where the federal building once stood. Yet He faces a brick wall in which there are 168 empty spaces – one space for each person who died. With bowed head Jesus faces that symbol of loss, covers his face with one hand, and weeps.

Application:

Jesus is not the cosmic Abuser. He is intensely moved by things here. And moving towards them. He is the weeping King who has come. Seeing our pain, He comes alongside to comfort in the burdens of our past – things that were said, regrets we carry. He comes alongside in the struggles of right now – temptations we face and the weaknesses we endure. And even more, seeing our sin and misery, He has entered this world and taken it upon Himself that we might be healed and freed – partially but truly now, fully and finally when He returns. His heart is breakable. “*Blessed is the King!*”

III. HIS PASSION UNQUENCHABLE

“*Blessed is the King!*” For His praise is unstoppable, His heart is breakable, and His passion unquenchable (READ Luke 19:45-46). What was going on here?

A) *The Activity at the Temple*

The activity at the Temple could best be described as corrupt and callous.

1. Corruption

Corrupt in the obsession with profit. Some were engaging in currency exchange. Others were selling animals for the sacrificial rites. All necessary but at cutthroat rates with a false sense of security about their dealings – like a den where robbers would hide.

2. Callousness

Compounding the crime of corruption was their callousness. All this was taking place in an area of the Temple called the “Court of the Gentiles” – the one place non-Jews were able to go for prayer and meditation on the Temple grounds. And the merchants – under the oversight of the religious authorities – had turned it into a shopping bazaar.

B) The Response of Jesus

1. What He did

And Jesus’ response? He “cleansed” the Temple. He overturned tables. He drove out the merchants and their animals and rebuked them and all those behind them.

2. Why He did it

And why? Because of His heart for the lost. Because “*the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.*” So much so we read in Luke 9 of how He had “*set His face to go to Jerusalem,*” knowing why He had come and what would happen.

Illustration:

He told us so. Look with me at the “Parables of the Lost” in Luke 15 (**READ Luke 15:1-10**). These stories of the lost sheep and the lost coin then set the stage for the lost sons. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. And He is zealous for His mission.

Application:

His passion is unquenchable. One could say that He is still purifying His Temple. He is still charging into our lives, throwing over tables, driving out the money changers, recalibrating the compass, renewing us within, purging dross, pruning the dead branches.

He is still seeking and saving the lost. And He is calling us to partner with Him in this seeking. But do we share this sense of mission, of need, of calling? Think with me of the opportunities right now during the week ahead. Easter is perfect. Yes, it’s been hijacked by eggs, bunnies, and bonnets, but so what? Let’s take what we’ve got and build on it. Who can you talk to this week? Ask them, “*So, what do you think of all this? Did you celebrate Easter growing up? How about now? Are you doing anything next Sunday? Would you like to?*” See? That isn’t so hard! “*Blessed is the King!*” His passion for us and for all those around us is unquenchable! “*Blessed is the King!*”

CONCLUSION:

Now, I know what you’re thinking. “*But you don’t know my life. You don’t know the stuff going on. Sometimes I don’t see our King. Sometimes it looks like He’s left the throne or been deposed.*” I’m with you. And you have my permission to blow off anybody who isn’t. Sometimes it’s hard to see. Sometimes it’s like the story of the “Prince and the Pauper” where the prince takes off his robes, goes out into the streets with the people, and no one can tell who he is. But listen – he’s still the prince.

Look, I know sometimes it’s hard to see. And sometimes we wonder if it’s just us – that we’re the ones who’re asleep and everyone else is waiting for us to wake up. I’ve visited folks in the psych ward of hospitals. You spend enough time there as the only sane person and you start wondering if it’s just you. But it isn’t just you. This is real.

This is real. We are living between the times – between the times of His first and second coming. What we read here of His first “triumphal entry” won’t hold a candle to the second. He is the King and His praise *is* unstoppable, His heart *is* breakable, and His passion *is* unquenchable. This King has come once, has never really left us, and is coming again. Don’t you forget that. Don’t you forget that. “*Blessed is the King!*”

PROPOSITION: (magnet) Because of the nature of His rule,

(anchor) we should join the cry, “Blessed is the King!”