



Palm Sunday 2022 – April 9-11, 2022

Preacher: Pastor Scott Oelhafen

Sermon Theme: Keep Cheering for King Jesus

1. Jesus isn't what the world wants. 2. Jesus is exactly what the world needs

Sermon Text: 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!" [b] "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."

In the name of Jesus who is the King of kings and LORD of lords, dear Christian friends,

So when did the cheering stop? When did the cheering stop for Jesus?

Some years ago, a biography was written by an American historian entitled: "When the Cheering Stopped." It was a biography of President Woodrow Wilson and the events leading up to and following World War One. When the war was over, there was great optimism across our own country and the world. People actually believed that World War One, known as the Great War, was actually the "War to End All Wars."

On his first visit to France after the war ended, President Wilson was greeted by cheering crowds. He was more popular than any French hero because he received much of the credit for the Allies' victory. And his popularity wasn't just in France but across Europe. In a Vienna hospital, a Red Cross worker had the heartbreaking task of telling the children there were no Christmas presents because of the war and the hard economic times. The children didn't believe her. They said that President Wilson was coming and they knew everything would be all right.

That cheering, the cheering for Wilson, lasted a little over a year after WWI ended. Then, the cheering stopped. It turned out leaders in Europe were more interested in their own agendas than in maintaining world peace. Back at home, President Wilson ran into his own political opposition. Under the strain of it all, his own health began to fail. In the very next election, he and his party were defeated. And so President Wilson, the

man heralded as a new world Messiah, came to the end of his life a broken and defeated man.

It's a sad story, but one that Americans are quite familiar with. We like to cheer for our own heroes but for how long? For example, do you know who won this year's NCAA Basketball Championship? That's right, it was the Kansas Jayhawks. But, three years from now, will anyone care? Do you know who won the Academy Award for Best Actress? You got it: Jessica Chastain. But, years from now, will you actually remember? So soon we forget. Tragically, every year, less honor is given to our military veterans and less respect paid to monuments of our national heroes. Eventually, the cheering does stop. In a much greater sense, that's what happened to Jesus.

On that first Palm Sunday, Jesus rode victoriously into Jerusalem and was greeted with enthusiastic cheers and loud hosannas. As the Son of God, Jesus deserved those cheers. But, by Friday of that week, we call Good Friday, those cheers turned to jeers. So what happened? In Luke's Gospel, in chapter 19, we'll find out why. It's actually quite simple. As we review the events of Holy Week, we'll better understand that Jesus isn't exactly what the world wants. Instead, Jesus is exactly what this world needs. So don't follow the crowd. Don't abandon Jesus for your own agenda or for the next big spiritual thing. Instead, may the Holy Spirit keep us close to Christ and let's **Keep Cheering for King Jesus.**

Notice, I said "King" Jesus. Certainly, on Palm Sunday, Jesus rode into Jerusalem and he looked like a King. But, He didn't come as an earthly king to rule by force in a kingdom that can be located on a globe. Instead, Jesus came as a heavenly king and a humble king who rules with grace in the hearts of every Christian. So Keep Cheering for King Jesus, even though He isn't exactly what the world wants.

The concept of a king is a hard one for Americans to grasp. After all, don't we exist as a country because we wanted to get away from a king? Yet, even in England, the concept of a king or monarchy has ironically fallen on hard times. In a PBS documentary, an English commoner was asked about the monarchy's future. He said that the Queen, who is more like a figurehead, had outlived her usefulness and cost taxpayers too much money. And yet, he explained why she remained at Buckingham Palace. He said: "she puts on a bloody good show."

Here in America, we tend to choose our own leaders the same way. We also want them to look good. Most political pundits say that President Abraham Lincoln wasn't good looking enough to have succeeded in politics in our social media age. We may not know exactly what Jesus looked like through photos or videos. But, Isaiah did give us specific information about the Messiah's appearance. Isaiah 53 says: ***He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.***
³ He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with

pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. Jesus was no male model from a GQ magazine. He didn't look the part of a leader nor did he put on a good show.

What the world wants is a king who can produce, one who can ensure an easy life and a good time for all. And there were expectations like that in the hearts of the Jews, especially after they saw Jesus feed more than 5000 men with a boy's small lunch. The next day, the people wanted to make Him king by force. But, that wasn't never part of His plan.

So, Jesus is not the kind of king the world wants. He doesn't offer a good show. He doesn't look the part. He doesn't give an easy life. Look at the way He entered Jerusalem. Jesus didn't make a grand entrance on a royal chariot or an Air Force One. Luke tells us He intentionally rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. He did this to fulfill the Zechariah's prophesy. On Palm Sunday, the crowd found something appealing about Jesus. But, they quickly changed their minds because the donkey, a humble beast of burden, didn't fit the bill.

Sometimes we get caught up in that flawed thinking. Sometimes we have expectations of Jesus that are far different from reality. Sure we call him our LORD, our King when it's time for church to begin or when it's the day of trouble. But, is He always our King? How about when church is over or when life doesn't go the way we want? So often we expect our King Jesus to give us Downy fresh shirts, porterhouse steaks, an A on every report card, and a clean bill of health whenever we visit the doctor. But, when Jesus doesn't give us everything we want, it's easy to dismiss Him. It's easy to push Jesus away by ignoring our prayer life and our priorities in worship. We don't like thinking of our personal sins that separate us from God eternally and we don't like thinking we need a personal Savior. We forget that our sin, whether in open or secret is really open rebellion against our King. That's the spiritual message our world doesn't want to hear. Instead, Jesus is exactly what this world needs. He is a king like no other, a king who has come to battle sin and hell in our place.

A true King knows what He is doing. That's why Luke records how Jesus knew ahead of time there'd be a donkey for Him to ride, even though the disciples didn't know. Luke records how King Jesus confidently headed into Jerusalem for the last time. As our King, He rode bearing more than just the pressure of expectations. He rode with the weight of the sins of the world, our sins, strapped to His shoulders. He fought the war of sin alone and in our place ... would win.

So how did the people respond on that first Palm Sunday? Luke tells us: ***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!"[b] "Peace in heaven***

and glory in the highest!” Talk about the royal treatment. The people spread their cloaks on the muddy road. They waved their palms. The people sang songs fit for a king. So why did the cheering stop?

The cheering stopped because during Holy Week, Jesus talked more and more about a cross. He talked about sacrifice – of actually giving His own life as a ransom for many. Jesus was not a king who would free them from the Romans. He had come to free them from their sins and win eternal peace between God and man with His precious blood as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The people didn’t get it. They couldn’t understand how Jesus could be a King and still sacrifice Himself. They didn’t think He meant it. Look at it this way: little Jimmy was in a pee-wee baseball game when got up to the plate with runners in scoring position. He looked over to His coach who gave him the sign to sacrifice bunt. Jimmy proceeded to take three big swings and strike out. The coach ran up to him and said: “Didn’t you see me give you the signal to sacrifice?” “Yea,” the boy replied. “But, I didn’t think you meant it.”

Isn’t that what we so often say to God? “Yes, LORD, I heard all that talk about Jesus’ sacrifice. But, I didn’t think You meant me. I’m really not that bad enough to need someone to sacrifice himself for me.” Yet, the cross of Christ emphatically says that God did mean it. The Scriptures tell us: there is no one righteous, not even one. That all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And that is why we come together and cheer for our King Jesus on this first day of Holy Week. Give Him the thanks and the praise He deserves. He is our king. Believe Him. As our king, Jesus is not just looking for fair-weather fans. He’s looking for faithful followers. He’s looking for you. So follow Jesus with me, my friends in good times and bad. He’s worth it. Amen.