“Palms For A Humble King”

March 25, 2018

Luke 19:28-39

Please open your Bible with me to the twelfth chapter of John. Today the Christian Church worldwide celebrates the day the common people of the first century honored the LORD Jesus as their king.

Palms. Here’s a word from the OT about the righteous being compared to palm trees. Psalm 92:12 *“The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree…”* God compares His children to the palm.

According to a number of sources I read on palm trees, all of the following are true. First, the typical tree has a dead interior. That’s not true of the palm. The heart of the palm tree is alive. So, the life of the palm is on the inside. Therefore, a palm tree can withstand a lot of abuse and the quality of the fruit isn’t affected.

Second, many trees will break during a severe wind. But the palm is extremely resilient. Some say it is hurricane-proof. In a heavy wind it might bend very low to the ground. But after the wind dissipates, it stands back up.

Third, palms can survive a long period of dryness. The palms have a root unlike other trees. The palm root is the same size as its stem and its base. So, it’s very difficult to pull up a palm tree.

Fourth, every part of the palm is beneficial. “The trunk gives timber. The leaves can be used to make crates, furni-ture and baskets. The leaves can also be used as fuel. The fruit stalks are used to make rope and the fibers are used for cordage and packing materials as well as cooking utensils. The seeds can be ground up and fed to cattle. The palm fruit provides syrup, vinegar, bread, wine and honey; even perfume. And the fruit of the palm provides a diet of coconut and sugar to many people living in the Middle East.” [Found on www. <https://shortdailydevotions.com> “Psalm 92:12 Lessons from the Palm Tree” June 12, 2015].

And fifth, as it ages, the fruit of the palm grows sweeter. The typical tree still bears fruit as it grows older. But its fruit is not as sweet as a younger tree. And the palm usually doesn’t bear fruit until its mature which may take up to fifty years. [Found on www.IBLP.org (Institute in Life Principles)].

So, as you can see, there’s very good reason for God to compare the righteous to a flourishing palm tree.

Now, I’m guessing that, like me, you’ve sometimes wondered why it was that on that first Palm Sunday the crowds were cutting down palms and laying them down on roadway in front of Jesus as He entered the city.

Let’s begin with a story someone has told about Palm Sunday. Many times you’ll see Palm Sunday described as the “Triumphal Entry of Christ.” Here’s the story.

Many years ago a king had decided to lead his own army out into battle. His soldiers were under his direct command. This particular battle was to be the mother of all battles since it meant that the entire empire would now come under his control.

But as the trail led out through an ordinary meadow, the king’s eye caught the glimmer of something he’d never seen before. The sun was shining on a very, very bright object just outside the entrance to a small hillside cave.

And, being so affected by this shimmering, the king was completely mesmerized; so much so, that he directed his horse towards the entrance of that cave. His horsemen and soldiers followed his lead.

How many times he had ridden this path through this one field having never once spied either this cave or its shiny object. Stopping his horse, the king dismounted, called for a light and stooped down to enter the black hole of the cave.

Once inside he noticed two thin streaks of silvery ore winding further on and deeper into the cavern. Astounded by what he saw, he called for his soldiers to begin digging at the shiny ore. And as they dug, they too became enthralled with their find. Soon baskets of the silvery ore were being transported from the mine. The digging lasted through the afternoon and well into the time when campfires had to be made and a camp set up.

By the time the moon rose, the ground was covered with baskets and bags of ore and the king’s soldiers began to grow weary with the work. Supper was now ended and the tired king and his men began to nod off and then fall into a deep sleep, leaving very few soldiers to guard the camp.

That night, while the men slept, enemy soldiers arrived; the very soldiers to whom they had intended to do battle with; men whose job it was to repel any invasion. Within minutes the king and his army were slain in their sleep and the newly discovered ore was taken as spoils.

What began as the most important day in the life of both the king and his soldiers, ended in tragedy. You see, because they had been drawn to something less important than their planned mission, the entire army was defeated while they slept.

Can you imagine how you might feel if you’d missed the biggest day in your life because your attention had been drawn to something less important on that day? It’s possible that that is what took place on the first Palm Sunday in Jerusalem. The Jewish leaders, the Pharisees, the ones in authority in Israel, completely missed their day. The King of Heaven presenting Himself as their Promised King had arrived and the Jewish authorities never recognized Him.

Would you locate the 12th verse of this 12th chapter of John and follow with me? John 12:12 *“On the next day much people that were come to the feast [Passover], when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, (13)**Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna [“Save now”]: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

*(14)* *And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, (15) Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. (16) These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.*

*(17) The people therefore that were with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. (18) For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. (19) The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him.”*

“Typically the world’s kings entered their capital city decked out in silver armor, riding pure white warhorses; signifying their power.  But here we see the Son of God riding into Jerusalem the same way he arrived in Bethlehem on the night he was born. Jesus rides on the back of a donkey, demonstrating humility and demonstrating peace. Remarkably, the donkey was borrowed, just like Jesus’ first bed; a donkey’s feeding trough.” [Found on <http://www.filanderson.com> “A Humble King” by Fil Anderson].

It’s Palm Sunday today. And my heart is filled with the One Who arrived so unostentatiously. You may have many things to do today and this week. So, I’d like to bring some things to your remembrance. Remember with me So, I’ve titled today’s sermon “Palms for a Humble King.” Shall we pray?

Here in John 12, it’s Palm Sunday 33 A.D. What do you think it was like that day? Five days after this day, the LORD would be rejected, arrested, tried, condemned, and then crucified.

On this first Palm Sunday, folks, Jesus would, in exact detail, fulfill a specific Old Testament Messianic prediction. On this day the LORD offered Himself as their King just like had been predicted by the Prophets. And on this, their day, the Jews would completely miss out. The authorities overseeing the nation had no eyes to see or to know Who it was that was riding a donkey through the city streets.

They were blind to the truth in their own Scriptures. Turn back with me, if you would, to the Old Testament prophet Zechariah. It will be the second to the last book in the OT. And find the ninth chapter and the ninth verse.

Zechariah 9:9 *“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.”*

Folks, I imagine the angels in heaven watching closely as the day unfolded in Jerusalem. Why?

This prophet, Zechariah, five hundred years earlier had been sent by the LORD to preach to the Jews who were in captivity in Persia. Persia today is known as Iran since the name change in 1935.

Zechariah, like many of the OT Prophets foretells the coming of the Jewish Messiah. And he tells then exactly what kind of king they should expect. And what kind of king was that? Zechariah 9:9 *“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem:* ***behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass****.”*

And who was this prophesied King? Who was Zechariah predicting would arrive in Jerusalem? I want you to see exactly what the Prophet Zechariah wrote. And, I have no doubt that the Jews, especially the scribes and Pharisees, could have read and studied this exact prophecy. And had they done that, they could have and should have known just Who it was that was riding into their city on a donkey.

Turn the page with me to Zechariah 14:9. Here’s what Zechariah says. Zechariah 14:9 *“And* ***the Lord shall be king over all the earth****: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one. (16) And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of* ***all the nations*** *which came against Jerusalem* ***shall*** *even go up from year to year to* ***worship the King, the Lord of hosts****, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.*

*(17) And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to* ***worship the King, the Lord of hosts****, even upon them shall be no rain.”*

Even to this very moment, you and I, along with every Jewish person who reads the Old Testament can see two simple things. One, we can see exactly what Zechariah predicted in his book. And two, we can see exactly what John tells us in John 12. Yet, the Jews on that first Palm Sunday had no eyes for either their Bible or their King.

First, then, Palm Sunday is a fulfilling of a Messianic prediction given five hundred years before His birth. Zechariah’s prediction is that the LORD of hosts Himself would come as their king and that He would be a King over the entire earth.

Second, Palm Sunday points to the kind of king He would be; a Humble King.

Most of us, even to this very moment in the history of the world, have a backwards view of the kind of man a king should be. Our idea is mighty conqueror, man of tremendous authority and power; someone who is to be feared and respected, someone who even brings a sense of terror in our hearts [see <https://bible.org> “Rejoice: Your King is Coming” by Pastor Steven J. Cole]; a very powerful and awesome figure; a war hero. And yes, those words do describe a king. But, did you notice that this viewpoint is the exact reason why the Jews on that day never really saw Jesus?

What kind of king arrived in Jerusalem that first Palm Sunday? The answer is “the exact same kind of king preached by Zechariah, the Jewish prophet of the sixth century A.D.”

Zechariah 9:9 *“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee:* ***he is just, and having salvation; lowly,*** *and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.”*

Let me say a word here about you and me. When you read your Bible, are you open-hearted enough to simply receive what it says? Do you believe it? Do you take it literally? Is it your final authority on any subject from history to science to law to psychology? Because if it isn’t, then you might just miss Jesus, just like the Jewish authorities did on that first Palm Sunday.

Folks, the Bible isn’t a quote “religious” book as opposed to a scientific or historical book. It’s a Book of Truth. And everything you find in it is there for you to believe and receive as from the heart of the LORD Himself. Your Bible is your bread and even more necessary than your daily bread.

Here’s a word from the King Himself to you about His Word. Matthew 4:4 *“But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”*

So, when you read John chapter nine and discover that the Jews had no eyes for Who it was entering the city that day, think about your own eyes, and especially the eyes of your heart. Can you see Jesus for Who He is?

So, notwithstanding the high honor and authority accorded to a legitimate king, Jesus has qualities in His character that reflect a man with a genuine spirit of humility. His was and is a humble nature.

When Jesus stepped out of heaven, when He entered into this world, He came as a baby. His mother was a poor and ordinary citizen of Israel. Jesus, the King, never lived in a palace; even one as large as the one you or I live in.

Philippians 2:6 *“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: (7) But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: (8) And being found in fashion as a man,* ***he humbled himself****, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”*

Luke 22:27 “…I am among you as he that serveth.”

And here’s another word from Jesus Himself. Matthew 11:28 *“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (30) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”*

Pastor Andrew Murray once put it this way. *“His humility was simply the surrender of Himself to God, to allow Him to do in Him what He pleased, whatever men around might say of Him, or do to Him. It is in this state of mind, in this spirit and disposition, that the redemption of Christ has its virtue and efficacy. It is to bring us to this disposition that we are made partakers of Christ.”* [Found on www.biblestudytools.com “Humility In The Life Of Jesus”].

Have you ever met a humble person?

What might come to your mind if you met one? “Not arrogant or conceited,” “concerned with you and not with how great he is,” “powerful because he is so genuine,” “selfless” and “someone you would want to be around.”

Everybody who’s heard about Jesus has an opinion about Him; both then and now. And, I’m sure Jesus knew exactly how the Jews of His day saw Him. You see, they’d already formed their opinion of Him; and nothing, not even the fulfillment of their own Scriptures before their very eyes would change it. You see, the Pharisees had a significantly higher opinion of themselves than they did of Jesus.

And what was their opinion of the LORD?

John 7:31 *“And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done? (32) The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and* ***the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him****.”*

John 8:1 *“Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. (2) And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. (3)* ***And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery****; and when they had set her in the midst,*

*(4) they say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. (5) Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? (6)* ***This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him****.”*

John 8:13 *“The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself;* ***thy record [testimony] is not true****.”*

John 9:16 *“Therefore said some of the Pharisees,* ***This man is not of God****, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day.”*

John 11:47 *“Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, what do we? For this man doeth many miracles. (57) Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him.”*

And on the same day Jesus raised the man Lazarus from the dead, we read this. John 12:10 *“But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; …”*

First, Palm Sunday is a fulfilling of a Messianic prediction given to them five hundred earlier.

Second, Palm Sunday points us to a Humble King.

Third, Palm Sunday shows us that Jesus Christ the Source of all joy and happiness. One of God’s purposes for our lives is to fill us with His joy. If there is one things every single one of us here today wants, it’s joy and happiness. God has put within you that desire. Think about your own desire for happiness. It’s natural to want to be happy. And it’s one of the fruits God, the Holy Spirit wishes to produce in you.

And it’s even one of God’s commands that we let Him fill us with His joy. Philippians 4:4 *“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.”*

I Thessalonians 5:16 *“Rejoice evermore.”*

One of the wonderful aspects of belonging to Christ is this. The LORD’s presence brings joy to the surrendered heart. Romans 14:17 *“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”*

You see, it’s a huge part of the Christian life. God saved us for a lot of great things. One of them is that we might experience *“joy in the Holy Ghost.”*

Now, did you notice that that first Palm Sunday was a day of tremendous joy? Look at the prophet Zechariah again. Zechariah 9:9 *“****Rejoice greatly****, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.”*

Luke 19:37 *“And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives,* ***the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice*** *for all the mighty works that they had seen; (38) Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.”*

So, why Palm Sunday? Because Jesus wanted to offer Himself to the Jews as the King. But, along with His offer to become their King, He wants us to know that joy and rejoicing are among the many gifts He has provided for us.

Some of you may know that the largest class attendance at Yale is one with about a thousand students in it. It’s Psych 157 or “Psychology and the Good Life.” It’s a course on happiness. And it’s Yale’s most popular class ever with 1,200 students in it right now. Now, granted, she’s an evolutionist; but why is Professor Laurie Santos teaching a class on happiness and the good life? Because The Yale College Council in 2013 found something very interesting. More than one half of the undergraduates at Yale that year needed mental health care from the university.

Folks, like all of the emotional and psychological needs of a person’s heart, they are found, not in a search for these things as much as it is found in a search for the LORD Himself.

Haven’t you often wondered where joy really comes from? Here’s a verse you are definitely familiar with. Romans 15:13 *“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.”* It’s found in “believing.”

Christ died on Calvary. He then, rose from the dead, so that we might be completely forgiven of every sin. And then, once forgiven, we discover that the good life, happiness, joy, peace, strength, satisfaction is found in the Person of Jesus Himself.

You see, it’s His own joy that gives a person strength to live. Here’s Nehemiah 8:10 *“The joy of the LORD is your strength.”*

So, what will you do with a sermon on Palm Sunday? First, decide today that you will believe what God says in His Word. Your Bible is the One Book filled with truth for your life.

Second, the Savior is filled with the spirit of humility. Get to know Him. Get close to Him; and that same spirit will be transferred to you.

Then third, see Christ for Who He is, the Author and Sustainer of joy.

What, then, can you take into your life because you celebrate Palm Sunday today?

1. That God’s Word is Perfect and completely reliable.

The One Book that transforms a life like no other is the Book you hold in your hand.

1. If you’d be like Christ, then, ask Him to make His

humility real in your experience. Jesus is the Humble King.

1. Surrender your entire life to the LORD because, when

you do so, His Spirit will produce true joy in your heart.

Now, you may be here and haven’t yet come to Christ. My question to you is “Why not? What is holding you back from the LORD Jesus Christ?”

*“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.”*

Today is the day of palms. But it’s also the day of salvation. At Calvary *your* sins became *His* sins. He took all of them on Himself and paid the penalty for every one of them.

So today, here’s what you can do about your sins. You can say these words to the LORD.

•         “I Repent” = I change my mind about God, Christ, my sin, and God’s free gift of salvation.

•         “I Believe” = I simply trust the Lord Jesus Christ alone as the One Who paid the entire penalty for my sins. And in believing, I make Him Lord over my entire life.

Today, will you receive Him, the Lord Jesus Christ, as your Savior? If not, why not? Please turn with me in your Hymnal to # \_\_\_\_ “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”

Here’s the Sinner’s Prayer:

*“Father, I realize I am a sinner. I believe that Jesus died in my place on the cross. I repent of my sins. I want to be completely forgiven today. I am trusting you right now to save me.*

Last, I found this prayer of Thomas a Kempis I thought would be a help to you as it is to me. MY PRAYER *“O Lord, Thou knowest what is best for me, let this or that be done, as Thou pleasest. Give what Thou wilt, and how much Thou wilt, and when Thou wilt. Deal with me as Thou thinkest good, and as best pleaseth Thee, and is most for Thy Honor. Set me where Thou wilt, and deal with me in all things just as Thou wilt. I am in Thy hand: turn me round, and turn me back again, as Thou shalt please. Behold, I am Thy servant, prepared for all things; for I desire not to live unto myself, but unto Thee; and O that I could do it worthily and perfectly!”* – “The Imitation of Christ” by Thomas a Kempis.