

Reading: Luke 19:28-48

Theme: The Time Chosen

Today we will consider some of the events from the first Palm Sunday weekend – Palm Sunday itself this morning and tonight an event from the previous evening. The last week of Christ’s life, running from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday is of great importance and the gospel accounts make much of it. Dr Luke devotes 6 chapters out of 24 to it; Mark, (*from Peter’s account*) 6 out of 16; Matthew 8 out of 28 and John 10 out of 21! Hopefully we also see the importance of that week. John says a number of times in his gospel, especially as people tried to kill Jesus, that “*His time had not come*”. Yet there was a time and place fixed by God for the Son of God to die and be our sin bearer. (Rev13:8) and Jesus knew that time had come (John 13:1; 17:1). This morning we will look at the Time Chosen as found in Luke 19:28-48.

1. The Time.

The Lord Jesus, as the Good Shepherd, knew He had to die and lay down His life for His people, the sheep of His flock. This known time was at the Passover, where as the Lamb of God He would take away the sin of the world. The time had come to deliver and free His people from the bondage and slavery of sin. The Lord Jesus knew this, not only as Passover was approaching, but even before that. He knew the importance and significance of the Passover and at the beginning of its celebrations He entered Jerusalem.

The Jewish authorities had wanted to arrest and kill Jesus, but they were sensitive to events and agreed NOT to take Jesus at the Passover Feast as it could have caused a riot (Matt 26:5).

Jesus is our Passover Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7). OT regulations said the lamb for sacrifice was to be set aside on 10th day of the month, then killed and eaten on 14th – the Thursday. So, the 10th would have been the Sunday and all the Jews would have taken and set aside their lambs ready to celebrate the Passover, it was an exciting time.

In the midst of all this we have Jesus riding into Jerusalem; as if He said “*Look, I am set aside by the Lord as the Passover Lamb to be sacrificed for the sin of the world.*” By entering into Jerusalem in this public way, the Lord Jesus was not allowing events and the schemes of men to dictate when and what things would happen, but He, as God the Son, was in control of those events and timings. William Hendriksen says of Jesus’ coming into Jerusalem at that time that He “*forces the members of the Sanhedrin to change their timetable so that it will harmonize with His (and the Father’s) timetable.*” This entry into Jerusalem announced that the time was nearly there, the Divine timetable was active, that the Lord was in control and not men.

The Lord is still in control of the timing of events in our lives and I find that is such a comfort to remember, but then I forget to remember it! His timings are always perfect - even as puzzling events happen to us from out of the blue, our planning and preparation come to nothing, even the timing of answers to prayer for help, guidance and the like are in accordance with His timings and He does really and truly know best. Moving on we see:

2. The Entry.

Two disciples were sent to get a colt. We have a clue as to who one of them was, for we are told extra details in Mark 11:4 that the colt was “*outside in the street*” (NIV) or “*where 2 ways met*” (AV) – incidental eyewitness facts indicate Peter was one of the 2 sent and Mark recorded this detail from him.

This shows that the Lord Jesus had foreknowledge not only of eternal matters, but also every day, ordinary events – a colt tied up, where it was, the question that would be asked and the reply that would satisfy the owners with no guarantee of security or payment. The Lord Jesus still knows what-is-what in our lives day by day, even before that day or the events happen. He can allow and send us into situations that we know little of, may have an inkling of, or know nothing of – but He knows, knows what it holds, what He wants from it for us and we are to trust and obey Him as we go into such – at home, at work and in every aspect of our lives.

Here we see the Lord Jesus, God the Son in a real body, who even at that time sustained all of Creation, all in Creation was His and yet He sent to borrow a donkey colt; even telling His disciples to say that “*The Lord needs it*”! In His divine purposes the Lord often uses means and instruments. What if the Lord had a need of our lives, time and talents? Would we be reluctant to let Him use and have them! But why would He need us? Because He chose to do so! That is staggering, but is the way He so often works and uses men and women like us in and for His plans, purposes and glory. No guarantees will be given, or any kind of reward or credit – but if the Lord has need of us and what we have, I wonder if would we let Him have such?

The ones who owned the colt had no guarantee of the return of it, but still let it be used by the Lord Jesus. Sometimes we feel we would do anything, risk anything and give up anything for our Lord and Saviour; but then the Lord tests us on it – say our health, well-being, or the lives of our loved ones are touched and we can so readily complain, fear, despair and question “*Why?*” Yet the Lord can try us to see if what we have said is true and we will let them go as the Lord has need of us without them! Not the most encouraging things to hear, but are we prepared to give to the Lord in obedience as He requires of us? It may not be as severe as I’d portrayed, but are we, am I prepared to give over to the Lord what He wants us for?

The disciples brought the colt to Jesus as commanded – trust and obey went together even then. There was no saddle, so their cloaks were put on it and they freely did this. Charles Spurgeon said “***Many are willing to fetch other men’s asses, but slow to lend their own clothes!***” It is easy to say others should be doing, giving, caring, running this meeting, going to this or that place or person and yet we can so easily excuse ourselves of such because... Our reasons, genuine reasons can be many, but we may not stop and think that these ones have similar, the same or even greater concerns and pressures on them, but we still expect them to do what we would not consider doing. What would the church here be like if we were all like you or me? The disciples gave of their own things to serve and further the work of Jesus and to see Him glorified. It is always best to first look at our own lives before volunteering others!

In v36 we see the ancient oriental way of expressing homage to a person – it is the red carpet of the day as they spread their cloaks on the road. The people then began to praise Him and from the other gospel accounts we learn that the ones in Jerusalem heard Jesus was coming into the city and they streamed out to meet Him. What a crowd gathered – His disciples, those from Bethany who had seen Lazarus’ resurrection and the people and pilgrims from Jerusalem. There was an excitement, a buzz, a contagious enthusiasm which spilled over into high praise and adoration as seen in v38.

What an exciting event and no doubt many expected Jesus to be the leader of the freedom movement to rid them of the Romans and to establish the kingdom of Israel again. Sadly, they were selfish, only looking for a convenient political Messiah and not the Messiah God provided! They were blinkered, did not check out what God’s word said about the Messiah and went after their idealised Messiah and did not see the true Messiah God sent.

If they had minds, hearts and eyes to see, they would have seen being fulfilled (*as the other gospels draw our attention to*) Zechariah 9:9 “*Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*” There He was – the lowly, humble King who had a greater kingdom to establish than one for the earthly kingdom of Israel.

Some didn't like the enthusiasm of the crowds and grumbled. In response Jesus said v40 – it was so right and appropriate to praise the King. Do we grumble if others praise and make much of this Jesus and we don't feel they should, because we are out of sorts or feeling low or just think it is a bit over the top? Perhaps we cannot understand why anyone would get excited about religion or why this Jesus is so important to anyone? Perhaps it is because you too have low or wrong views of this great king and all you see is a man, who may be a great teacher, but that is all to you. Like the crowds at Jerusalem you give Him some honour, but not as the King of kings, Lord of lords or the Saviour, so you do not praise Him as He rightly deserves. Yet you can learn from God's word who He is and who He can be to you. Then you will see how great He is and He is worth all the praise you can give Him.

Yet as Jesus came near Jerusalem, **He wept over it** – all its glory, all its privileges, all the honour it had had through the centuries, with all the praise to Him still ringing in His years and He bursts into tears as He saw her destruction in His all-seeing and knowing view - for they did not know or recognise the things that belonged to their peace (v42 AV *“If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!”*) or the time of their God coming to them (v44).

Sadly, many people have had great privileges and have heard of Jesus and all He has done, but they are still ignorant of the things that belong to their peace and ignore the Lord Jesus that He is God the Son and the great work of salvation He has achieved for whosoever will believe on Him. Parents grieve

over the spiritual state of their children; children over their parents; a brother or sister over their siblings; grandparents over their grandchildren and vice versa; we can grieve over friends, neighbours and work colleagues that are not yet believers, or will not believe. Yet our grief is nothing to how the Son of God feels and grieves over such ones who ignore, neglect and reject Him and all His great work to secure free salvation for whosoever will believe on Him as He knows what they will miss out on and what they will lose.

Then the Lord Jesus went to the temple and cleansed it of things that should not be there – corrupt practises where holiness should be. Sometimes the Lord Jesus deals with His people individually or as a church in this way to cleanse them so His holiness and purity is seen in them. It can be a traumatic experience for God’s people when that happens and we, like these ones, can resent it, but He does it for God’s glory and for the benefit of His people.

The Lord Jesus does not cast off or finish with the temple and the people there, but He, even in the last week of His life, continued to teach them of God and His ways every day. Yet there among His congregation were those who hated Him, would have Him killed and so never be bothered by Him again. I teach God’s word here, while I am not aware of anyone’s hatred to me, I realise there may be those who have a secret hatred and resentment against the Lord Jesus and you could wish He was not about to restrict your life, plans, fun and desires. You, like the Jews, are planning to be rid of Him and His influence in your life as soon as you possibly can.

Yet like the Jews you will find He inconveniently will not lie down and go away!

The triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem brought man's schemes and plans into line with the God's predetermined counsel and timetable - ***The Time Chosen***. We should seek to know God's will and timetable for our lives and in our praying ask Him to bring our desires to recognise and delight in His will and ways for us. Don't try and get rid of Jesus' influence and claims on your life – He has not set out to spoil your life, but to save your soul and give you LIFE – eternal life and a life which you have no idea what He can achieve in and through you, so that you will one day truly thank Him for His leading and timing in it. He is worth trusting for time and eternity.