

Timing is Everything

Luke 19: 28-44

3/16/08

Intro

Today we celebrate the day that Christ rode into Jerusalem riding on the foal of a donkey. He was being hailed as the Messiah by the crowds as they were waving palm branches in their hands. That is a sign of victory.

Jesus was hailed as the triumphant one. He had just raised Lazarus from the dead who had been in the grave four days. That miracle became instantly known throughout the region. The crowds then came to see who this man was who could raise a man from the dead.

“This is the day that the Lord has made” the scripture says, “Let us rejoice and be glad in it.” **That’s a choice. We can either rejoice and be glad in it or not.**

We need to understand what God is doing and will do, but we must also respond to it. The question of the day is, “Are you willing?”

Here are some important insights in responding to the Lord.

I. Don’t Hesitate

➤ Lot hesitated when the two angels told him to leave Sodom.

A. What an honor to be useful to God

- Jesus sent His disciples to go and get the donkey.
- What if they thought they had a better plan?

- **“The Lord has need of it,”** they were to say.
Does the Lord need anything?
- **Couldn’t the Lord have just created whatever He wanted instantly? He has decided to use us to accomplish His purposes.**

Illus – it is interesting that the donkey had never been ridden, thus never trained, but he comes willingly and is completely responsive to the Lord, though donkeys have a reputation for being stubborn and needing the help of a 2x4 to get their attention.

In the Old Testament, God even caused a donkey to speak, thus beginning a long and honored tradition of speaking through donkeys.

App – He gives us the opportunity to be blessed by being used of the Lord.

Ephesians 2:10, For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

- **What an honor to be used of the Lord to make a difference in someone’s life.**
- **Jesus gave us the example of the heart that’s humble in being used of the Lord.**

John 13:14-17, “If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet; for I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not

greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

B. God can use someone else

- God gives us the opportunity to be used, but what if we say no?
- ... He'll give the honor and blessing to someone else.
- We are the ones who lose out if we don't want to be used of the Lord.

Illus – When our adopted boys first came here, they didn't like our food and at first they refused to eat it.

Who was being hurt? Not us, that just left more for the others.

Illus – When Mordecai challenged Esther to be used of the Lord by appealing to the king of the Persian Empire at risk of her life, he challenged her by saying...

Esther 4:14, "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place... And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

App – Some of the Pharisees told Jesus to rebuke the disciples for shouting out Psalm 118, the psalm of the Messiah, "If these become silent, the stones will cry out," Jesus replied.

Psalm 118:19-28 The psalm of the Messiah.

- God asks us to speak to people in His behalf and we are the ones who are blessed if we say yes, but God will give the blessing to someone else if we say no.

II. God is Expecting a Response

- This was the appointed day when Jesus was coming to Jerusalem as the long awaited messiah.
- But there were many different responses for many different reasons.
- Some were just curious, others were seeking evidence against Him, and others were there to honor the coming of the Messiah.

A. God stands at the door and knocks

- **Jesus had come to Jerusalem at the appointed hour: God had sent His Word in advance, but where were they?**

Illus – They should have known that this was the day, the prophecies of Daniel 9 were clear.

- **If we are used of God to invite others to hear God's Word, we are faithful to what God asked us to do.**
- **But the response is theirs to choose.**

Illus – I’ve had several opportunities to tell people about God, but they don’t always respond.

Two Mormon missionaries came to a bible study I taught. I spoke at a Muslim mosque once. Neither group responded.

- But God’s Word accomplishes the purposes for which God sent it.

Isaiah 55:11, So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

- God gives the invitation, He stands at the door, but we must open the door of our hearts.

Revelation 3:20, Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

B. God grieves when we don’t respond

- When Jesus crested the Mount of Olives and saw Jerusalem before Him, He began to weep.
- He knows the pain that we are bringing to ourselves, He sees it in advance, and it grieves His heart to see it.

Matthew 23:37-38, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and

you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!”

Ezekiel 33:11, Say to them, “As I live!” declares the Lord God, “I take no pleasure in the destruction of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?”

- God’s plans for us that we be blessed; God wants us to choose life.

Jeremiah 29:11-12, “For I know the plans that I have for you,” declares the Lord “plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.”

C. God will not force His way into your heart

- Jesus came on a foal of a donkey. A sign of peace.
- He uses love rather than power. He could use power, but chooses to use love.

Romans 2:4, Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

Illus – He stands at the door and knocks. He has the power to blow the door off its hinges and intimidate us into submission, but then we wouldn’t choose willingly.

The question is this... will we come willingly?

- He wants us to choose Him; He wants us to come to Him because we love Him **as a response** to how much He has loved us.

I John 4:15-16, Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

Conclusion

There is another day yet to come, when there will be another great crowd with palm branches in their hands.

Revelation 7: 9-17