

Right to the Heart

Matthew 21:1-11

4/ 04/ 04

Intro

This is the day we celebrate Jesus riding into Jerusalem on the foal of a donkey in fulfillment of the prophecies in Zechariah that we have just been studying.

We call it the “**Triumphant Entry**” because on this day, He comes into Jerusalem with the crowds shouting, “Hosanna, Hosanna! To the Son of David;” words that declare Him to be the long awaited Messiah.

It’s important to note that the Jews are still waiting for their Messiah, but there can be none that fulfills the scriptures. Daniel the prophet gave the exact number of years from “the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince.” No Messiah can fulfill that prophecy except the one who already fulfilled it.

It is on this day that Jesus makes His move, He goes “**right to the heart;**” to the heart of Jerusalem in a bold move that puts him on a **collision course with Jews and Romans;** and right to our hearts as well.

These, then, are insights and lessons from the Triumphant Entry of Jesus.

I. A Crowd of Different Hearts

A. Some are curious

- The people had heard of Jesus, His fame was spreading throughout Israel as the one who heals the blind and casts out demons.
- He had just brought Lazarus back to life after he had been dead for four days.

John 12:17-18, “So the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, continued to testify about Him. For this reason also the people went and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign.”

- There are many today who have heard about Jesus, they have not yet committed their lives to Him, but they are open to hear and see more.

B. Some are offended

- Others had heard the same report of the wonderful things that Jesus did, but were offended at His power, his influence, and the possibility that He could have come from God.

John 11:47-48, “Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, ‘What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.’”

- Some of these men were also in the crowd.

Luke 19:39, Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples."

- Today, there are also many who are offended at Jesus, concerned about what they would have to give up if the reports of Him are true.

C. Some are devoted

- Many in the crowd were convinced in their hearts that Jesus was the powerful One who was promised of God.
- They were devoted to Him with all their hearts.
- In the church, there are many who are interested but not yet given their hearts, others who are believers, but not yet fully devoted.
- God desires that we would all give Him our hearts, fully devoted.

II. God Expects a Response

A. They laid down their coats

Vs 8

- This is a sign of honor

Illus - when chivalry was still alive in this country, men used to place their coats for women. Then came pavement ...

- They were also waving palm branches and placing them in his path.

Illus – Today, some will throw flowers in front of a procession of someone who has won respect.

B. Some were silent

- Many in the crowd were shouting, “Hosanna!”
- **The Pharisees wanted this shouting to stop.**
- Jesus said that if they didn’t the stones themselves would cry out.
- **Then Jesus stopped and began to weep...**
- **Because of their silence – This was the wrong reaction.**

Illus – At a debate in college, I was silent when I should have spoken.

Luke 13:34-35, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it Behold, your house is left to you desolate;”

Luke 19: 41-44 – Why Jesus wept:

Ezek 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?'

III. Jesus Goes Right to the Heart

A. He immediately cleansed the temple

- Jesus was on a collision course with the prevailing authorities.
- **He had humiliated them in open debate,**
- **He had confronted the hypocrisies,**
- **He had exposed the selfish motives,**
- **Jesus was confronting their world.**

B. He isn't safe

- **They didn't want to get rid of Jesus because He was safe, but because He was dangerous.**

Illus – Chronicles of Narnia – “Of course He isn't safe, He a Lion I say, but He is good.”

- Jesus brings peace, yes, but first He brings a conflict.

C. Power vs love

- **But Jesus came riding on the foal of a donkey.**
- A triumphant King, yes, but on a donkey.

Illus – When Alexander came into Jerusalem, Josephus says that he was riding a donkey.

- **He will not force His way into your heart, because He uses love rather than power.**

- **But there will be a time when He will come in power.**

Revelation 19:11-18 He rides on a white horse for battle

Conclusion

This was a day of triumph, of victory, and the greatest honor we can give is when we give our hearts fully devoted.

James Stewart of Scotland wrote...

It is a glorious phrase, “He led captivity captive.” The very triumph of His foes, it means, He used for their defeat. He compelled their dark achievements to be subservient to His ends, not theirs.

They nailed Him to a cross, not guessing that he would make it a throne. They flung Him outside the gates to die, not knowing that in that very moment they were lifting up the gates of the universe, to let the King of Glory come in. They thought to root out His doctrines, not understating that they were implanting imperishably in the hearts of men the very name they intended to destroy.

They thought they had God with His back to the wall, pinned and helpless and defeated; they did not know that it was God Himself who had tracked them down. He did not conquer in *spite* of the dark mystery of evil. He conquered through it.P