

STRINESTOWN SON

Volume 3 April 5 2020

FROM THE DESK OF PASTOR JODY

The Strinestown SON

Devotional and Message Notes

First Responders are definitely on the front line of the COVID-19 situation...Police officers, Fire Fighters, EMT's, Nurses, Doctors, the list goes on. They respond to the emergencies for those who have been injured or who are sick among us. The news has shown us that there are people putting their lives at risk for the needs of others every day. This made me think about how we as Christians should be responding. Jesus put himself in the most vulnerable place of all, at the mercy of the father as a sacrifice for our sin, once and for all. And yet Jesus depended on something that sustained him...he PRAYED. He prayed in all situations, always before he faced a difficult encounter.

Our examples as Christians is that prayer is our FIRST RESPONSE not our last resort! We are First Responders in this spiritual war, interceding for others and ourselves as we face a scary world right now. When we do this, fear will leave us for we are connected to the ONE who is ruler over all, Jesus the risen and living LORD, our MESSIAH. Our physical separation gives us the opportunity to depend on prayer and the power and connection of the Holy Spirit. There are things we can do as the Body of Christ in this difficult time.

1. Pray! We are first responders on the front line of the spiritual battle. Because we have a direct connection with the all-powerful king of the universe, we are empowered by his Spirit. We do not live in fear! No. Matter. What. "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people." (Eph. 6:18)
2. Stay connected! Call, text, email...whatever works for you; stay connected with your family, friends, neighbors and our church family. I've learned a lot about technology over the last few weeks! It helps! "Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears." (Ps. 34:3-4)
3. Share! Send a note of thanks and a short prayer to first responders, health care workers, mail and other delivery people, grocery and other workers. We can be the peace of Jesus to others who may be struggling with

Announcements:

**ALL PUBLIC
SERVICES ARE
CANCELED FOR
THE MONTH OF
APRIL**

**See Instructions and the
outline for our Holy
Thursday Communion
Service (Telephone
conference call!)**

**Easter Sunday plans are
in the works since we
will not be able to meet
for worship due to the
stay-at-home order.**

fear and anxiety. In the midst of the daily news reports we have the opportunity to share the love, grace and mercy of our Savior knowing that he brings peace to any and all situations. Sometimes Jesus calms the storms and at other times he calms us in the middle of those storms! What a witness we can be! “After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.” (Acts 4:31)

4. Spring is on its way! Enjoy the outdoors as much as possible! “How many are your works, Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.” (Ps. 104:24)

If you need someone to pick up groceries, prescriptions, etc. please call me (Pastor Jody) 717.332.4804 or Tina S. 717.495.0663.

God is in control and he will NEVER leave us or forsake us!

Message from Pastor Jody:

“It’s All About Relationship”

On the back of a humble donkey, Christ looks beyond the shouts of “Hosanna in the highest.” He is traveling a slow journey to the cross – and he will pay the price of turning the table on the money changers, upsetting the status quo, and living authentically before God. Will he travel that road alone?

Call to Worship:

This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us REJOICE and be GLAD in it!
HOSANNA!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD!
God’s Steadfast love endures forever!
The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
the Lord has done this,
and it is marvelous in our eyes.
The Lord has done it this very day;
let us rejoice today and be glad.
With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession
Jesus is the gate of the Lord.
The righteous enter through him.

This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us REJOICE and be GLAD in it!
HOSANNA!

Our relationship with the KING!

Luke 19:28-40

Do you like parades? Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day display balloons, floats marching bands, and other performers that move along major streets in cities such as New York, Philadelphia and Pasadena, CA. Ticker tape parades are held to celebrate a great victory, in sports or for a national hero. Parades often include royal leaders or heads of state. Large crowds gather and there is lots of fanfare as people try to get a look at the spectacle. If we can’t travel to see the parade, it comes to us on TV or online. There’s a sense of wanting to see what’s happening and be part of the celebration in some way. Of course we can’t even imagine that taking place in our current situation we are in our time of public distancing, but hopefully we will be able to once again enjoy public gatherings.

This is similar to what we see taking place in this important event in Jesus' earthly life. We have come to a familiar place in the life of the church; Palm Sunday. This is the day we rejoice in Jesus' triumphal or royal entry into Jerusalem. From the time Jesus was born, he had a mission; to restore our relationship with God. Luke's gospel sets the scene for us as we begin Holy Week that will lead to the crucifixion on Good Friday and the glorious resurrection on Easter Sunday. Palm Sunday is just a small celebration in comparison with what will happen in just a week's time! It is a time to think about what our relationship is with Jesus, is he our KING?

1. **The relationship of a Peaceful KING.**

Jesus was very intentional about his actions. Throughout the stories in the gospels, we see that He is clear about his mission and what he had to do. So often his disciples and others would come to him with emergencies and how did he respond? Think about his reactions, to the woman at the well, the man born blind, the questions of the disciples and religious leaders. He reacted calmly, slowly and intentionally. Even the clearing of the temple was done with intention (It takes time to make a whip! John 2:15). Jesus does the same thing as he prepares to make his final journey to the cross; entering Jerusalem.

Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King

Luke 19:28 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.'"

Jesus calmly made arrangements to ride into a place during the holy season of Passover, where he knew he would be in danger. The religious leaders who could not accept his message were already planning to kill him. He was well aware of what he was doing and calmly made plans to enter in the most peaceful way he could...on a donkey. This was in sharp contrast to Roman military leaders who would enter a conquered city on a war horse with a grand parade of chariots and a lot of fanfare. Jesus' intent from the beginning was to bring peace, peace between fallen humankind and an all-powerful and loving God.

- How do we react to the idea that Jesus came in Peace and not a conqueror that the world expects? (He is called the Prince of Peace!)
- In what ways is he bringing peaceful authority into your life?
- How might he be intentionally working on our behalf as a church?
- How can we think of him as a peaceful KING in the midst of this worldwide crisis we are in right now?

Jesus' ride into Jerusalem was far from our ticker tape parade for a conquering hero! Some may have thought that's what it was going to be, the political conqueror had come – the Jews would finally be free from Roman rule! But the very choice of riding a donkey points to a much different meaning...Peace with God; not human glory. Little did any of them know (except Jesus) what lay ahead.

2. **The disciples' relationship with the KING.**

Jesus' followers included many more than the twelve that are named in the gospels. Again, we don't know if they were following because they thought he was their deliverer from Roman bondage or not. But they do follow His instructions...

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."

The Scripture doesn't identify who was sent, only that some of Jesus' disciples did as they were told. In an act of obedience, they find the colt and get ready to take it back to Jesus as he prepares to enter Jerusalem. What does this say about their relationship with Jesus as the KING? It seems as though they obediently followed his command without question. They trust him and willingly follow through. He had given them instructions of what to do and how to answer if someone questioned what they were doing.

- When has the Lord given you instructions to do something for him? How did you react?
- What does that say about your relationship with him as KING of all creation? Of your life?
- How do we react when we are questioned about doing something God has called us to?
- Is our relationship with Jesus based on trust and knowing him personally so that we can say we are acting according to his direction?

Although the disciples seem to understand what Jesus had asked them to do and were obedient, did they really know WHY Jesus was doing this? Were they still assuming he was their political deliverer who would free them (the Jews) from Roman control? Do we do the same thing; miss the true peace that Jesus brings because we are looking for him to what we want? What does that say about our relationship as disciples to Jesus as the KING? The story continues as Jesus continues on his journey...

3. **The world's relationship to the KING**

Luke's account goes on to describe the scene...the ticker tape parade...the disciples were celebrating all of the great things they had seen...

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!"

"Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

The crowd is elated! Their king has come – indeed he has! Just as the prophets had said, Messiah had come. The WHOLE crowd was praising Jesus as their KING! Imagine the energy, the excitement. This rabbi who had done so many miraculous things was about to ride into the holiest of their cities, Jerusalem, to celebrate the Passover, the festival celebrating the Exodus from Egypt with Moses.

This was a bold move on Jesus' part...definitely an "in your face" kind of moment. By riding into Jerusalem, Jesus was making it very clear who he claimed to be, THE long awaited Messiah! The crowd is excited to see their Hero! It was a ticker tape parade with palm branches!

The world would have no doubt who Jesus is...He is their KING! The KING of the Jews. Yet the praises would soon fade into a jeering crowd shouting "CRUCIFY HIM!" Public opinion would shift dramatically.

- It's easy for us to be somewhat critical of these folks. How could you be shouting praises for your KING and in just a few days be either shouting for his crucifixion or hiding for fear of being killed for your association with him.
- What does this say about their relationship to their King?
- Do we do the same thing? Do we shout praises when we see miraculous signs and wonders only to turn away when life gets rough?
- Or like many in our world, do we forget all about him when life is good only to return to him in dark times out of desperation as our last resort?

•What is our relationship with Jesus as the KING over ALL in the midst of the scary situation we are living in right now?

I am so thankful that God does not hold our sins against us and answers us in our trouble, no matter what!

4. **The opponents' relationship with the KING.**

The final verses of the passage once again show the disbelief of the religious rulers of the day. As the prophets spoke in years past, the Messiah would be the stone the builders rejected. And once again Jesus addresses their denial and disbelief that he was truly the Son of God sent to redeem the world...

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."

At this point, his true identity as the KING of all creation is very clear. This overwhelming rejoicing cannot be contained! There was nothing that could hold back the praises for Jesus, the KING of the Jews, KING of all creation!

- This takes us back to the creation story in Genesis. God created the world good and humans in his likeness. Jesus was present at the and is creator, sustainer and redeemer of all creation!

- It's as if he once again saying I am who I say I AM! Yet those who do not have a relationship with him can't comprehend it.

- The question then becomes, do we truly see Jesus as KING of all creation? What is our relationship with him?

- Do we believe he is our savior? If yes, great! But (you knew that was coming!) are we willing to be obedient to him as our KING? Will we submit to him and allow him to reign in ALL areas of our lives?

When we celebrate our KING there will be those who tell us to be quiet. But how can we do that? When we have experienced the grace, love and freedom we have found in Jesus we can't contain it! We are "living stones" as the apostle Peter (1 Pet. 2:5) puts it. Living stones that cry out the greatness of the one and only KING of all creation!

Conclusion

The scene from Palm Sunday is a glorious celebration! A big holiday, Passover was coming and the KING has arrived.

Jesus came in peace not in power even though ALL power was his,

As the disciples were obedient to their KING, we too seek to be obedient to his instructions.

Our world will want to see what the excitement is all about as we rejoice in ALL that he has done for and with us!

There will be those who try to silence our praises, but the shouts of HOSANNA! cannot be contained!

We are living in difficult and uncertain times, unlike anything most of us have ever experienced. The Hosannas of Palm Sunday remind us that we serve a RISEN KING! His love, grace and peace will never end. As his disciples we do not live in fear and because we do not fear the future we can share that peaceful assurance with those around us, always pointing to Jesus!

Prayer:

Son of David, come Blessed One; we are humbled by your example.

You entered Jerusalem in lowly estate;

Riding on a donkey.

You emptied yourself and came as a servant to all,

forsaking the power to command.

to us now and be our KING,

that we too may sing our hosannas! AMEN.

God Loves you, God sees you, he will NEVER leave you or forsake you!

Stay safe and stay well! AMEN!

(Don't forget, we will be celebrating Holy Communion on Thursday April 6, 2020 at 7PM.

See the instructions to call in and join the service!)