

SERMON: WHEN REALITY SLAPS YOU IN THE FACE

Sunday, April 5, 2020 - Palm Sunday

LUKE 19:29-41

(29) And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, He sent two of his disciples, (30) Saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him. And bring him hither. (31) And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, because the Lord hath need of him. (32) And they that were sent went their way, and found even as He had said unto them. (33) And as they were loosing the colt, the owner thereof said unto them, Why loose the colt? (34) And they said, The Lord hath need of him. (35) And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. (36) And as they went, they spread their clothes in the way. (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. (39) And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. (40) And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out. (41) And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it.

Introduction

This was a day of great jubilation. Now many of the followers of Christ were finally getting what they had been waiting for. Jesus was now publically declaring that He was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. His entry into Jerusalem, on what we now call Palm Sunday, was a signal change in the manner in which He presented Himself. Heretofore, Jesus had been careful to avoid publicity about his messiahship; now He invited it. Heretofore, He laid down restrictions upon grateful hearts that they should tell no man what He had done for them. On the Mount of Transfiguration when Peter, James and John witnessed His glory, Jesus cautioned them to tell no man until the proper time. Now the time had come. Now He declares that if men withhold their praise, the very rocks would cry out. He would let the people call Him Messiah. The prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 was being fulfilled. The shouting of the crowd was infectious. As soon as someone began to chant "Hosanna," others would join in. The roadway echoed with shouts of praise. Jesus was already hailed as a great teacher and miracle worker. Now it was crystal clear-He was the Messiah. As with a holiday parade, children and parents alike joined in cries of praise.

When His line of sight allowed Him to look down on the city of Jerusalem, His countenance suddenly changed. Now everyone was happy; everyone except Jesus. Reality slapped Him in the face and He began to weep. What a contrast of emotions! As the people continued to shout hosannas, Jesus wept. Why did He weep? In a general sense, He wept because reality slapped Him in the face. Old Man time moves

slowly with his cruelty, but reality will come out of nowhere, sneak up on you and give you a bruising slap. Jesus wept when He looked at Jerusalem, because there were still people who would not be saved. He knew there were people who still did not understand His mission. He did not come to expel the Romans, but to give us eternal life. He saw the crooked money changers who exploited the widows. Jesus saw the future of Jerusalem, in which the temple would be destroyed by the Romans. Yes, in that city, as He rode the donkey, they were plotting to crucify Him on an old rugged cross. Crucifixion, the most heinous way to die, was before him.

Please allow me to make this a little more relevant. As a church we had just celebrated our sesquicentennial year. We were still basking in the celebrations. Then covid-19 came and slapped us in the face. Some people went on a cruise, the trip of a lifetime, and covid-19 slapped them in the face and they could not disembark. There are many examples. On a personal note, Sister Ward and I celebrated twenty-five years at this great church and soon after the celebration covid-19 came and slapped us in the face. Let me give you one more personal example-I know you have many. We were bragging about we had three college graduations to attend this spring; three grandchildren were graduating from college. Our concern was the timing. We did not want any to convene at the same time. Covid-19 came and slapped us in the face; all graduations are now cancelled. I readily admit our slaps do not compare to the slaps of others. The heart attack that came out of nowhere! The freak accident that occurred while you were driving responsibly.

Now a question: what do you do when reality slaps you in the face? Let's get some answers.

Exposition

1. Pray-Never Underestimate The Power Of Prayer
(Jesus Prayed In Gethsemane)
2. Stay True To Your Mission
(Jesus went on to Calvary)
3. Work For The Common Good
(Think about others as well as yourself)
4. Keep The Faith
(You are not defeated until you give up)
5. Remember This:
"When it's good, enjoy it,
When it's bad, endure it."
"Nothing last forever except everlasting life."

6. Remember This Also:

Trouble can change your situation, but it cannot change your destination. It will just slow you down a little.

Closing Thoughts

Let me close by reciting some wisdom from my father, William Bradford Ward, Sr. We had a softball which was knocked in the corn field and never found. Daddy would not buy us another softball, because he felt the loss of the ball was irresponsible. We then started using a rubber ball about the same size of a regulation softball. Now my daddy would walk in a group of young people abruptly, give some words of wisdom and then leave just as abruptly as he came. He came to us while we were playing catch with the rubber ball and he said firmly, "Give me that ball." Of course we wondered what was going on. When he was given the ball he said, "Watch me." Then he simply dropped the ball. After hitting the ground the ball bounced a little. It did not even reach the height of our waists. Then daddy took the ball again and threw it to the ground as hard as he could. The ball then bounced about ten or fifteen feet above our heads. Then he said, "See the difference. The harder I threw it down, the higher it bounced. If you want to succeed in life you have to be like this rubber ball. The harder life throws you down, the higher up you must bounce. Believe me, life is going to throw you down hard." Then he abruptly walked away.

This virus threw us down hard, but we will bounce up higher than ever.

Give God glory! Give God all the glory!

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