

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

These notes are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye, mistakes can possibly be found. Therefore, he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: April 14, 2019

Sermon Title: Who Would Have Thought It Would End Up Like This?

Sermon Series: Matthew

Text: Matthew 21:1-11

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Text: Matt. 21:1-11

Theme: There is the persistent theme of the upside down kingdom. Everything one might have expected and wanted is turned upside down. What you don't expect to happen does.

In our passage, everything is saying God is winning, but the reality or experience is telling you something very different. No one is thinking this is how it would end up. The Garden of Eden, the Tabernacle, the Temple, the Church all speak of heaven and earth coming together and now in Jesus we have the fullest expression of this amalgamation. Passion Week is a visually stimulating display of this powerful idea.

Let us begin by noting that we cannot afford to isolate Palm Sunday from what has preceded and what is about to unfold. Passion Week and Palm Sunday are like setting off a pack of firecrackers in a metal can in the middle of the church auditorium. All of this is part of one line, one trajectory.

We move from Palm Sunday, to the temple, to the upper room, to the crucifixion, the burial, the resurrection, and finally Pentecost. That "fish" is swimming in one stream.

VISUAL

1. FIRECRACKERS - start the service with firecrackers. The pack represents the week. Each firecracker is one day in the week. By lighting the fuse a series of events are set in motion that will not be stopped until the last cracker blows. On Palm Sunday a whole pack of firecrackers are going off and it will not end until the last one fires.
2. An illusion / A hologram
3. Structurally - Wearing a jersey of an opposing team - it is who you identify with and receive the jeers of your peers.
4. Application - Nasty tasting jelly beans - you are thinking one thing and something else happens!

Introduction:

Every movement and step is an intentional fulfillment of what has been promised. Yet there is no way that any Jew is thinking MESSIAH, SEED PROMISE, BLOOD PICTURE, REGINING, CONQUERING, BETRAYAL, DENIAL, INJUSTICE, MURDER, DEATH And THEN RESURRECTION. What? Structurally, historically, theologically, and eschatologically, Jesus is fulfilling all promise, prophecy, and picture. Although it appears as a last offer, last gasp, Jesus never flinches and is always steady in His steps. Jesus is King and He offers Himself as such to the nation.

TRAPPING HIM

Pharisees trapping Him [19:3; 21:15, 23, 45, 46; 22:15, 18, 24, 34, 35; 26:3-5]. Matthew's Gospel always has the undercurrent of the Serpent's Seed seeking to destroy the WOMAN'S SEED.

TEMPLE

Notice His relation to the Temple in this section [21:12, 14, 15, 23; 24:1]. The “last” week of Jesus revolves around the Temple. The Temple is the one place where HEAVEN AND EARTH MEET.

We have examined the text in detail in the past, so I wish to take the bird’s eye view in this study. There are four points for today’s study. We will fly high in order to get the fullest picture possible.

OUTLINE

- I. The Structural Context – the kingdom is coming
 - An Upside Down Kingdom

This idea is not secondary; it is primary. From the very beginning in Matthew 1, we are hearing something that is unsettling and shocking [Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bethsheba]. Who would have thought it would end up like this?

It is for this reason any Christian theology that does not have Jesus at the center is wrong and misguided. The way of the cross is the yoke of Jesus. And it is this yoke, this cross we are to wear. It is our “jersey.” I put on the jersey of our arch rivals and receive the scorn of the local team favorite.

Consider the language of The Beatitudes

² And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

³ “Blessed are **the poor in spirit**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ “Blessed are those who **mourn**, for they shall be comforted.

⁵ “Blessed are the **meek**, for they shall inherit the earth.

⁶ “Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst** for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

⁷ “Blessed are the **merciful**, for they shall receive mercy.

⁸ “Blessed are the **pure in heart**, for they shall see God.

⁹ “Blessed are the **peacemakers**, for they shall be called sons^[a] of God.

¹⁰ “Blessed are those who are **persecuted** for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when others **revile** you and **persecute** you and **utter all kinds of evil against you** falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you

19:30 “But many who are first will be last; and the last, first.”

RICH YOUNG RULER

20:16 “So the last shall be first, and the first last.”

HIRED WORKERS

20:26 "It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you [FIRST] shall be your servant [LAST], 27 and whoever wishes to be first among you [FIRST] shall be your slave [LAST]; 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

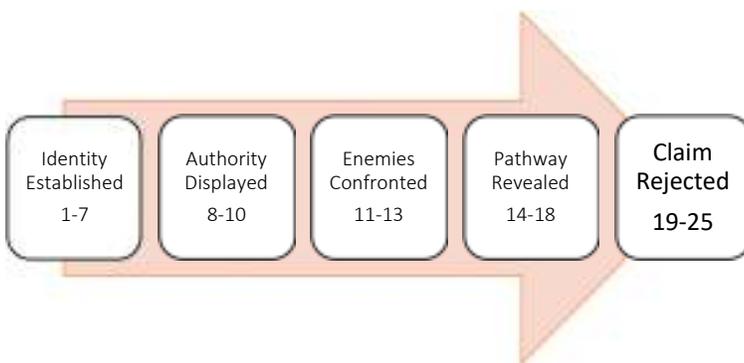
POSITIONS OF POWER

22:14 "For many are called, but few are chosen."

THE SON'S MARRIAGE

23:11 "But the greatest among you [FIRST] shall be your servant [LAST]. 12 "Whoever exalts himself [FIRST] shall be humbled [LAST]; and whoever humbles himself [LAST] shall be exalted [FIRST].

THE SCRIBES AND THE PHARISEES



Jesus has already spoken of His death, burial, and resurrection (Matt. 16:21; 17:12; 22, 23; 20:17-19). The PATHWAY to "success" encompasses these three elements. There can be no glory without suffering. The redemption of His people will be through the BLOOD of His LAMB.

Yet no one would have thought it would end up like this.

II. The THEOLOGICAL Context - The glory is returning

- The Temple Revisited

1. Adam and Eve leave the Garden and head EAST (Gen. 3:24)
2. The glory leaves the Temple toward the EAST (Ezek. 11:23)
3. The glory reenters the Temple from the EAST (Ezek. 43:1-7)
4. On Palm Sunday, JESUS enters through the EASTERN GATE; HE comes from the EAST.
5. The Temple is entered through the EAST and faces WEST.

Jesus is intentionally fully the Ezekiel prophecy, picture, and promise.

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III. The HISTORICAL Context - the victory is displayed

- Pilate vs. JESUS

One of the issues surrounding this event is whether or not it is political. Friends, everything about Jesus is political. Our problem is that we ask the wrong question. We are like Joshua before Israel enters the Promised Land in Joshua 5:13-15.

¹³ When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, **“Are you for us, or for our adversaries?”** ¹⁴ **And he said, “No; but I am the commander of the army of the LORD. Now I have come.”** And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, “What does my lord say to his servant?” ¹⁵ And the commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, “Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.

We want to know if Jesus is a democrat or a republican or an independent or a libertarian or a socialist. We want to know whose side He is on. It might shock us when HE responds with, **“Neither, I am on God’s side, are you with me or against me.”**

In this moment, the nation asks, “Are you with us or with Rome?” And Jesus says, “Wrong question. Are you with ME?” That is the same question we must ask ourselves today? It isn’t about this nation or that nation, this political party or that political party. IT IS ABOUT JESUS and will you right now bow before Him?

Let me give you the historical context for this moment.

“Jesus entered the holy city from the East, riding on a donkey. With his imperial cavalry and soldiers in attendance, Governor Pilate arrived majestically on horses from the West. The two processions were entering the city for different purposes: **Jesus as the Prince of peace and Pilate as a keeper of the peace.** Normally, only about 100,000 visitors came to Jerusalem for Passover. This particular year, however, there were 2.7 million in attendance.”¹

There is a conflicting tension, however, in what we see visually, hear theologically, and are about to experience physically. The visual is that of a conquering King, what we hear theologically are those passages that speak of God fulfilling ancient promises of the Shekinah glory returning to the Temple from the prophet Ezekiel, but what we see physically is the King’s claim rejected and His enemies “winning.” This sensory overload is intentional. We still live in this upside down world where evil is called good and injustice seems to engulf the land. Yet, God is at work. Our text, this gospel, and the entire word speaks of God’s persistent and steady march to fulfill His promise of a world flooded with the knowledge of His glory as the waters cover the sea. Wow, this is PALM SUNDAY.

Yet no one would have thought it would end up like this.

- IV. The ALREADY / NOT YET Context – the vision is expanding
- The Beginning of the End

We mark this day with donkeys and leaves. But something more is at play. Our passage quotes Zechariah 9:9, 10. The context speaks of conquest and peace.

Zechariah 9: ⁹Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your king is coming to you;

righteous and having salvation is he,
humble and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
¹⁰ I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
and the war horse from Jerusalem;
and the battle bow shall be cut off,
and he shall speak peace to the nations;
his rule shall be from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

“The palm became so closely associated with victory in ancient Roman culture that the Latin word *palma* could be used as a metonym for "victory", and was **a sign of any kind of victory**. A lawyer who won his case in the forum would decorate his front door with palm leaves. **The use of the palm in this setting indicates how the original meaning of "victory" shaded into "peace" as the aftermath of victory.**”²

“Why Wave Palm Leaves There are a couple of explanations. One is that it was common practice in the ancient world **to welcome home a king or war hero by laying out a path of branches for him to ride/walk on - similar to rolling out the red carpet today in English-speaking countries**. Others suggest that Romans honored champions of the games and the military with palm branches. Another explanation is that it is a reminder of the Festival of the Booths commanded in Leviticus and Deuteronomy.”³

Psalm 118:22-27

²² The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

²³ This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

²⁴ This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

²⁵ Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success!

²⁶ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We bless you from the house of the LORD.

²⁷ The LORD is God, and he has made his light to shine upon us. Bind the festal sacrifice with cords, up to the horns of the altar!

ALREADY / NOT YET - REV. 7:9-12

In His final acts of defiance, He sets Himself against all worldly powers and once more sets Himself up as the fulfillment of the SEED PROMISE and the completion of the BLOOD PICTURE.

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WHAT ABOUT ME?

What am I supposed to make of this? What are we supposed to do with this?

Let us note a handful of verses in our passage.

⁹ And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" ¹⁰ And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?" ¹¹ And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee." ¹⁴ And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them.

Versus

¹⁵ But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant,

- **You will either bow before Him or you will be broken by Him, but either way JESUS IS KING.**
- When JESUS IS KING, nothing else matters. When He isn't, nothing else matters.

Every movement and step is an intentional fulfillment of what has been promised. Structurally, historically, theologically, and eschatologically, Jesus is fulfilling all promise, prophecy, and picture.

Although it appears as a last offer, last gasp, Jesus never flinches and is always steady in His steps.

Palm Sunday is part of this determined theme of the upside down kingdom. Everything one might have anticipated and desired is turned upside down. What you don't expect to happen does.

Our passage assures us that God is fulfilling ancient promises. Today God is winning and is setting up His kingdom. It does not look like anything we would expect and He is not finished, but He is working in our circumstances and scenarios. What area in your life do you need to give to Him and accept His authority over? At its largest level is it our national politics, or economy, border policy, is it your work place, your marriage, your chronic illness, your parenting, your child? What is it that has left you blank? Can you, can I today accept Him and bow before Him? This act of submission is daily and even moment by moment. None of it is a one and done. Yet, today will you join me in saying YES LORD? He alone is King and we are His subjects.

KIDS – today's object lesson is the Jelly Belly. Jelly Belly's have some nasty flavors. You expect them to be sweet and then they have flavors like dirt, poop, and vomit! Life doesn't always look like you want it, but do know that God is working and moving everything forward in fulfilling His promise to bring heaven on earth and to meet you for your joy.

¹ https://www.biblewise.com/bible_study/questions/palm-sunday.php

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palm_branch

³ <https://amazingbibletimeline.com/blog/why-wave-palm-leaves/>