Palm Sunday 2025 Sermon Manuscript

Luke 19:28-44

“Palm Sunday: Desiring the Right Kind of Peace”

 Peace, if you could quantity it, would be a priceless commodity. However, our world is anything but peaceful. If you were offered millions of dollar by someone, but there is a condition where you would have to live in a war torn country where your life is at risk every day in order to have that money, I think most people would refuse. Most people would rather live in a peaceful country living on a mediocre income than be rich and live in a war-torn country where your money probably isn’t going to help your chances of survival. Like I mentioned last week, historians have discovered that our history has been marked by constant war… We have wars within one’s own nation and wars with other nations. Historians say we have only had about 300 years of peace out of our entire history, from the time God breathed life into the first human being, from Adam to where we are today, we’ve only had a sliver of relief from war! Jesus said that one of the marks of the birth pangs of the end times is wars and rumors of wars. As our world becomes increasingly more and more wicked, wars will rise and increase in frequency. We are in desperate need of peace. We desire for warring countries to have a ceasefire, to have peace, where both parties agree to stop fighting and killing each other. While there have been successful ceasefires throughout history, many of them are not successful. I think about the ceasefire that was proposed in recent months by the US and Ukraine to Russia to end the Ukranian-Russian war. We of course hope that Russia agrees to it. However, it doesn’t look promising as Russian president Putin is not yet agreeing to it, citing several reasons for not wanting to end the war. It seems like he wants it to keep on going.

 Well, something similar happened about two thousand years ago when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey to live out the last week of His life. Palm Sunday is the Sunday in which we look and remember the beginning of Jesus’ last week of ministry here on earth, and remembering His entry into Jerusalem to be betrayed, handed over to the Romans, and ultimately crucified. Jesus the king of the Jews, came to Jerusalem to offer a “ceasefire,” so to speak to His rebellious subjects. It wasn’t one rival nation offering a ceasefire agreement to its other rival nation, but rather the leader of a nation offering a ceasefire to His own nation. Jesus came to offer peace, but His own people did not want the peace He was offering.

 The Jews were wanting political peace because they have been subjected by the Roman government for nearly a hundred years at that point. They were looking for a political Messiah, a warrior-king who would one day come and topple the oppressive power of the Roman government and establish Himself as king. They were not expecting a peaceful Messiah. Do you wish for peaceful world? Do you wish for a world where it is impossible to have wars? Well there will come a day when that will happen when Jesus Christ returns as the king of kings and lord of lords to establish His rule and reign finally over all creation. He will bring the actual war to end all wars to finally usher in ultimate peace. But before you can be a recipient of that ultimate peace, you must first see and recognize that there is no peace without Jesus reigning in your heart. You must recognize that without Jesus, there will be constant war in your heart against God. And so, my hope and prayer is that God will demonstrate those truths to you through us looking at Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem in Luke chapter 19. So look with me at Luke 19, starting in verse 28.

 “*And after He had said these things, He was going on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.**And it happened that when He approached Bethphage and Bethany, near the mount called “of Olives,” He sent two of the disciples, saying, “Go into the village ahead of you; in which, as you enter, you will find a colt tied, on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here. And if anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘Because the Lord has need of it.’” So when those who were sent departed, they found it just as He had told them.**And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?” And they said, “The Lord has need of it.”*

Jesus is preparing for His final week of earthly ministry before He delivers Himself up to sinners to die for them. The way Jesus wanted to die for sinful man was going to happen exactly the way He predestined it to occur. Jesus said, “I lay my life down on my own authority, no one takes it from Me.” But He uses the agency of men and sinful men to bring it about His sovereign purposes. And in this scenario, Jesus sends two of His disciples to retrieve an unused donkey from someone in the village ahead of them. It would be understandable for those disciples to feel a little bit of fear and trepidation about what they were going to do. In their minds, they were stealing, and what if the owner refuses or even retaliates when they try to take away the donkey?! Nevertheless, in an act of faith they obey their Lord. Now of course, it’s not stealing or theft because Jesus is the Creator and author of life. He owns everything and everything that we have is on loan from God and a gift from Him. And just as Jesus foretold, the owners of the donkey say to the disciples, “why are you untying it?” And the disciples respond, “*the Lord has need of it*” and the owners because they are under God’s sovereignty responds favorably to the response.

 And so, the disciples successfully bring the donkey to Jesus. Verse 35 “*And they brought it to Jesus, and after they threw their garments on the colt, they put Jesus on it. And as He was going, they were spreading their garments on the road. Now as soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God, rejoicing with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen,**saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!*” Although it was true that the donkey was a symbol of humility because it was a work animal, it also represented royalty in Israel’s history. King Solomon rode on a donkey to coronate his new kingship over Israel. However, God intentionally designed Israel’s kings to ride donkeys rather than horses to symbolize to the king and to the nation that a true king served His people. A true king leads with humility and is not to be oppressive to his people. What it also supposed to remind Israel was that the only one worthy of riding a majestic and powerful animal as a horse was Yahweh their God.

 So Jesus gets on the donkey and the disciples lay their garments on the road symbolizing submission to this king. But the disciples also are spreading palm branches and the significance of spreading palm branches before Jesus goes back to the Jewish Feast of Booths in Leviticus 23:40 where it would commemorate God guiding Israel out of Egypt. The palm branches were symbols of joy and life. That feast was about rejoicing in the fact that God has delivered His people from slavery to Egypt. Just as He did then, so the people once again believed the Messiah was going to deliver His people from slavery to Rome. And all of Jesus’ disciples were shouting and praising “*Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest*!” That part “*blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord*” is actually a quotation from Psalm 118. They knew their Messiah had come to fulfill what was prophesied about Him in Psalm 118. They knew their Scriptures. But the pharisees were not happy with this. They knew psalm 118, they knew what the disciples of Jesus were quoting, but yet they refused to acknowledge it because they were jealous of Jesus’ popularity. They couldn’t stand the crowds chanting the glory of the Messiah instead of chanting and giving praise to their glory. So in response to the crowds, they say this to Jesus, verse 39 “*And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples. But Jesus answered and said, I tell you, if these were silent, the stones will cry out*!”

 What’s amazing here is Jesus’ patience. Jesus knew that the majority of His disciples misunderstood the reason for coming to Jerusalem. He knew that they took Psalm 118 to mean that the Messiah was going to enter Jerusalem to overthrow the Roman government in a military coupe and establish His reign on earth, making Israel great again. He didn’t rebuke the crowds for preparing the way to Jerusalem or singing praises to Him but He acknowledged and accepted their praise. In fact, Jesus said to the pharisees, “look if you silence these people, I will make inanimate objects cry out my praise! There is no stopping creation praising Me as the Messiah. But to the shock of the crowds, as Jesus got near Jerusalem Jesus didn’t rally the crowds around Him to charge into the city to start a war…no He started weeping. Verse 41 “*And as He approached Jerusalem and saw the city, He cried over it, saying, “If you knew in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.”*

 Jesus knew that although the disciples and the energy surrounding Jerusalem was reaching to a fever pitch with His arrival, it would soon fade away and be replaced by a murderous energy shouting to crucify Him! The Jews would soon realize that Jesus did not come to give them the peace that they wanted; freedom from Rome’s tyranny. They wanted peace according to their terms, not peace according to Jesus’ terms. They didn’t know verse 42 “*the things which make for peace*,” which is ironic because Jerusalem means “city of peace…” Yeru means city, and shalom means peace. Yerushalom – Jerusalem. And the consequence for rejecting Jesus’ peace for the Jewish nation was the destruction of Jerusalem and a loss of their identity as a nation. Jesus would send the Roman army in 70 AD to Jerusalem like He did with the Babylonians to Israel to lay siege and destroy, level, and set ablaze the city of peace. And history tells us that is exactly what happened in 70 AD. Many know of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey as the triumphal entry, but it really wasn’t triumphal. It was a sorrowful entry. It was Jesus coming to His own and His own rejecting Him as John 1 says. To give the Jews credit, what they got right was their understanding that the Messiah was going to come to rule and reign over all earthly powers and governments. But what they failed to realize was that Christ was going to come first to establish His rule and reign in people’s hearts before coming again to rule the whole earth. He had to come first to establish peace in warring and sinful hearts before establishing physical peace on earth.

 What is that peace that Christ came to give? It is peace from sin. It is peace from our hostility against God and with others. Colossians 1:18-20 says about Jesus, “*For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, And through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross—through Him—whether things on earth or things inheaven.*” God is offering you His peace… but…but… it has to be on HIS TERMS, not on your terms. Jesus is saying to you as He said to His own people, the Jews, “*If you knew in this day, even you, the things which make for peace*!” In other words, “Oh that you would accept God’s terms for peace!” Israel thought they were on good terms with the Messiah. They thought the people that Christ needed to save or judge were the Gentiles, especially those ruthless Romans. But little did the Jews realize that they were just as desperately in need of cleansing and forgiveness as the Gentiles were. They failed to see their need for Jesus’ peace because they were not desiring the right kind of peace. They were putting all their hope in receiving earthly comfort and relief when their greatest need first was for spiritual comfort and relief from the oppression of their sins. Someone who is set free from their sins who lives in an oppressive country like North Korea is infinitely freer than someone who is not free from their sins but lives in a free country like here in the States. And this peace that Christ gives is not of this world. Jesus said in John 14:27, “*Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful*.” (not according to the world’s definition of peace). It is a type of peace that can overcome any trouble or fear that arises in your hearts.

 I don’t know the reason why you came to church today to sit here in these pews. I hope it’s for biblical reasons because you desire to worship Christ with the rest of the saints, to be nourished and fed on God’s Word and encouraged by the fellowship of the saints. But if you are here for whatever reason that you brought you here but you have never submitted your life to Jesus and His lordship, if you have never cried out for Him to forgive you of your sins, if you don’t have the desire to please Jesus Christ and live for Him and give Him the glory… your greatest need is His peace, His saving peace…because right now according to the Word of God, you are at enmity with God, meaning you are at war with God. Right now, you are like those rebellious citizens of Jerusalem that refuse to accept Jesus’ terms of peace. You desire peace, but according to your definition of peace, not His. You are the master of your own life and ultimately you, not Him, decides how you live your life. That is the nature of the sinful human heart, it is rebellious against its maker, and refuses to submit to God’s “ceasefire.”

 The Bible says God is at war with you and will one day triumph in judgment over you. And the reality is you cannot win against God. In the end God will execute vengeance on all rebellious citizens who betray Him and reject His terms of peace because He is a good and just Judge. And the punishment for treason against the high king of kings is the execution of being thrown into the lake of fire forever. But God doesn’t want you to end up in hell. Ezekiel 18:23 says, “*Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked?” declares Lord Yahweh, “is it not that he should turn from his ways and live?*” Your sin has separated you eternally from God. But through Christ He has now reconciled you back to God. And we will look more at that act of reconciliation and sacrifice that was done for you this Friday. But until then I leave you with the words from the apostle Paul and his companions in 2 Corinthians 5:19-23 “*God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their transgressions against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. So then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as God is pleading through us. We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*.” So I plead with you, “*be reconciled to God*.” Let’s pray

Benediction:

“*Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually give you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all!”* – 2 Thessalonians 3:16