



Palms, Praise, Fools, and Killing ***An all-creatures Bible Message***

**Palms, Praise, Fools, and
Killing**

**A Sermon Delivered at
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Scripture References

Proverbs 1:7

15:5

John 12:12-50

Romans 1:22

Palms, praise, fools, and killing describes the fickle ways of the people in and around Jerusalem when Jesus entered, and it is still going on today.

As I was contemplating how to put together this Palm Sunday message, I couldn't help but think about the fact that it was April first, April Fools' Day, and the contrasts they represent.

There was also a very interesting contrast unfolding between good and evil when Jesus entered Jerusalem.

Let's take a look at this in John 12, beginning at verse 12.

12. On the next day the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

13. took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him,

and began to shout, "Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, even the King of Israel."

From what they are shouting, they positively know that Jesus is their Messiah.

These people sure seem to be honoring Jesus and glorifying God, and many of them are; but there are some of them with a different agenda.

We have a date palm, and if you have ever looked closely at the palm leaves, they are very long with many leaflets growing on either side, which people mistakenly think are branches.

But on the thick part of these long leaves, near where they join the main stem, there are long and very sharp thorns, which to us is an added reminder of the intent of the hearts of the people in the crowd.

These people have presented these palm leaves as a symbol of peace before Jesus, but lurking among them are those who wish to harm Him, like the sharp thorns on the leaves.

Let's go on and see how these things unfold:

14. Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written,

15. "FEAR NOT, DAUGHTER OF ZION; BEHOLD, YOUR KING IS COMING, SEATED ON A DONKEY'S COLT."

16. These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him.

This is another of those comments that were inserted into the story so we can understand more about Jesus' disciples.

17. 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.

18. For this reason also the people went and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign.

His message of light and life was reaching some people, but what about the others?

19. So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him."

Aren't these Pharisees just like many of the people today?

While they really know the truth, they're still full of jealousy, and don't want anyone before them, even God; thus they seek to do evil.

They are like the people spoken about in Proverbs 1:7...

7. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge;
Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

They would rather live in the darkness and death of this corrupt world, where they seem to be in control, than in the heavenly light and life that Jesus is offering them.

They are like the people whom we encounter every day, who absolutely know that farmed animals suffer horribly every day; yet because of their lust for their flesh, skin, and fur, they turn a blind eye to their suffering and death, and continue to buy, eat, and use the products of these animals' torturous exploitation.

I shudder when I think of these people's decision, for they are like those who Alexander Pope wrote about in his poem *An Essay on Criticism*: "For fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

But no matter how many of these foolish, evil acting people we encounter every day, there are still those who seek the truth, such as the Greeks who came to see Jesus.

20. Now there were some Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast;

21. these then came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and began to ask him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

22. Philip came and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip came and told Jesus.

23. And Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

Jesus' response may seem a little odd, in that He doesn't seem to be responding to Andrew, Philip, or the Greeks, and there is no record of Him doing so in the Bible; though based upon what we know about Jesus, He most likely spoke with them.

What Jesus is commenting upon is the fact that the Gentiles are now seeking Him, which Jesus takes as a sign that His ministry to the Jewish nation has come to an end, and it is time for Him to depart this world, for He can do no more to help His own people (the Jews) see the light and life He is offering them.

They are like the people whom Paul wrote about in Romans 1:22...

22. Professing to be wise, they became fools.

Jesus knows that some people are true believers and followers, but most are not, for they don't want to change their lifestyles from the ways of darkness and death they have been living in.

Most of the time we feel the same way about our compassionate ministry that encourages and challenges people to end the violence and exploitation against millions of our fellow human beings, and billions of animals every year, and to live in the peace, love, and compassion that Jesus teaches us.

Unfortunately, most people reject it, just as they rejected Jesus.

Thus, Jesus continues His teaching to those who will listen, among whom are probably the Greeks who were seeking Him.

24. "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

25. "He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.

26. "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

So, Jesus continues and tells of His pending death:

27. "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour.

28. "Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

29. So the crowd of people who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, "An angel has spoken to Him."

Do you hear the lack of faith, and the doubt in these people's heart and soul? for while hearing it, they still don't fully believe, or want to believe.

30. Jesus answered and said, "This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes.

31. "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

The ruler of this world is Satan.

32. "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."

33. But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die.

34. The crowd then answered Him, "We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?"

35. So Jesus said to them, "For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes.

36. "While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light." These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them.

37. But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him.

38. This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT? AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED?"

39. For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again,

40. "HE HAS BLINDED THEIR EYES AND HE HARDENED THEIR HEART, SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT SEE WITH THEIR EYES AND PERCEIVE WITH THEIR HEART, AND BE CONVERTED AND I HEAL THEM."

41. These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him.

42. Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue;

43. for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.

Isn't this like what we are told in Proverbs 15:5?...

5. A fool rejects his father's discipline,
But he who regards reproof is sensible.

They have rejected God's will and the teaching of Jesus, and the discipline it brings to our lives to separate us from the darkness and death of this world.

44. And Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me.

45. "He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me.

46. "I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.

47. "If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.

48. "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.

49. "For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak.

50. "I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me."

Are we listening?

Do we believe in Jesus and follow His teaching?

Do we live in the Light that Jesus brought into the world?

Or, do we covet the darkness and still live in it?

Jesus offers us light, life, healing, love, peace, and compassion; are we going to accept it all, and share it with others through our lives?

Or, are we foolishly going to reject what Jesus offers us, and be a part of the world, which offers us only darkness, violence, corruption, sickness, suffering, and death?

You don't have to answer these questions, now, because what you have on your dinner plates this coming Easter, and all the days to follow, will answer the question for you.