*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

April 3 - 8

“The Life of Jesus: Triumphal Entry”

**Monday, April 3 Matthew 21:1-11**

*“The city of Jerusalem was stirred as he entered”*

 As Jesus enters Jerusalem for his final week, everything about his person and mission comes together. Everything he taught and every miracle and tender act of kindness he has performed now find their ultimate meaning in the deeds of this final week. He announces the arrival of the kingdom of heaven, and then demonstrates its good news of salvation from sin with preaching the gospel and its power with miracles of healing and exorcism of demons. In his Last Supper he establishes a new relationship between God and people, and with his sacrifice on the cross the actual forgiveness of sin is accomplished.

 Jesus’ dramatic entry to Jerusalem shows him to be the divine-human king who fulfills the Old Testament prophecies of a future king but who also establishes the kingdom of heaven in a spiritual way that will allow him to reign in his followers’ hearts until he returns. Thus, Jesus enters Jerusalem as the King, not to establish a new earthly monarchy but to bring peace between God and humanity, and among humans, through his own death.

*You are my king, Lord, and you reign in my heart. Amen.*

**Tuesday, April 4 Psalm 118:22-29**

*“Blessed in he who comes in the name of the Lord”*

 The Psalm seems to describe either King David or some other person of God who was appointed by the divine choice to a high and honorable position in Israel. This elect leader found himself rejected by his friends and fellow-countrymen, and violently opposed by his enemies. He remains faithful to his God, and in time he receives the honor due him. He goes up to the house of the Lord to offer sacrifice and to express his gratitude for God’s favor, while all the people bless him and wish him abundant blessing.

 Jesus has done everything “in the name of the Lord,” that is, in the name of his heavenly Father. In that name he has healed the sick, restored the demon-possessed, preached the good news of reconciliation with the Father, and raised the dead to life. In that name he declares himself “king” as he comes into Jerusalem, and we are ready with our hosannas both for his first coming and for his second coming when he will return in glory.

*I bless and thank you, Jesus, for coming into my heart. Amen.*

**Wednesday, April 5 Mark 11:1-11**

*“They brought the donkey to Jesus and he sat on it”*

 Roman Christians to whom Mark writes can visualize the contrast between the triumphal entry of Jesus and the pageantry that greeted Roman Emperors on return from their wars. As a symbol of bloody conquest, Caesar chose a powerful war horse at the head of a processional that included his warriors, a shackled contingent of the conquered people, and an extravagant display of the booty that the army had taken by force.

 Jesus makes his triumphal entry on a donkey – a symbol of peace, not war; of humility, not pride. Behind him comes an entourage of twelve ordinary men, called to be his disciples, and a rabble of common people whom he has healed and set free. This contrast between Jesus and worldly conquerors helps us to understand why Jesus pays such personal attention to the details of getting, preparing, and returning the animal upon which to ride through the gates into Jerusalem. Jesus’ entry shows the error of those who want to see Christianity represented by a leader on a prancing horse at the head of a conquering army showing off its trophies.

*As I follow you, Lord, I am an example of your love for all humanity. Amen.*

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**Thursday, April 6 Luke 19:28-40**

 *“Teacher, rebuke your disciples”*

 The various reactions to Jesus in this passage reflect the range of responses to the question of who Jesus is. The two most prominent responses come from the disciples and the Jewish leadership – views that cannot be more opposed. The disciples regard Jesus as the Promised King through whom God has been working with great power, as evidenced by his miracles. In him is peace and glory, the presence of the gracious authority from heaven. The leadership, on the other hand, sees these claims as greatly exaggerated, even as something Jesus should not accept.

 Jesus’ appeal to creation show how fundamental the claims of the disciples are. Even creation knows they are true. These events, designed by God, show how Jesus is at the center of God’s plan to bring us back to himself. How one views these events determines how one relates to God’s plan. Even though they are now nearly two thousand years old, they still call us to consider everything God has done through Jesus. Luke’s readers of every age are asked in effect to choose sides. Is he my King, or is he something less?

*The world rejects you, Lord, but I bless you as my King. Amen.*

**Friday, April 7 Zechariah 9:9-13**

*“See, your king comes to you”*

 Each of the four gospel writers either allude to or cite Zechariah 9:9 in their description of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. As Jesus approached Jerusalem, he sent two of his disciples to find a donkey for him to ride on as he entered the city. The recorded shouts of the people during his entrance made it clear that they saw Jesus as the fulfillment of Zechariah’s prophecy, and Jesus’ purposeful choreographing of the events leading up to his entry show how he saw himself as the fulfillment of the prophetic message.

 In Zechariah, the instruments of war are removed by God. He is the one who takes away the chariots, the war-horses, and the battle bows. In their stead is peace that will be upheld by the ongoing rule of the king, and freedom for the prisoner who will be restored to twice his former glory. In Jesus, the instrument of our rebellion against God, which is sin, is forgiven on the cross. It is Jesus who will take away our guilt, and in its stead give us peace with God. He will free us from the consequences of our disobedience, and give us his abundant life.

*You take away my sin, Lord, and give me eternal life. Amen.*

**Saturday, April 8 John 12:12-19**

*“They heard he had raised Lazarus from the dead”*

 Lazarus has been raised from the dead! The word is out! There are witnesses who have seen it. Now the One who raised him is on his way to Jerusalem in spite of all the earlier threats from high places. One can feel the excitement building as those who accompany Jesus are eager to tell anyone who will listen the amazing things they have seen. And people in the city, a great host who have come for the Passover celebration, have heard he is coming and they surge out to meet him, and there is a mingling of the two groups.

 What mighty hopes and expectations they have. If Jesus has raised a man from the dead, surely he can set them free from the shackles of Rome. Their hopes and ambitions for Israel are worldly and nationalistic. But do we not often have false, worldly expectations of what Jesus will do for us – be our errand boy and satisfy our needs; help make our way easy and comfortable; be on our side whenever we decide to fight? We must be careful unless we selfishly demand Jesus to serve our wants rather than rule in our hearts.

*Teach me your ways, Lord, that I may walk in them. Amen.*