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The Gospel of Matthew

The King Comes to His Temple

December 8, 2019

Sermon Text: Matt 21:1-17

Scripture Reading: Galatians 4:21-31

Mat 21:1-17 Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, (2) saying to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. (3) If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will send them at once.” (4) This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, (5) “Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted

on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.”

(6) The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. (7) They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. (8) Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. (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.”

(12) And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the

seats of those who sold pigeons. (13) He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers.”

(14) And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. (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, (16) and they said to him, “Do you hear what these are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read, “‘Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise’?” (17) And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there.

What does the earthly Jerusalem of the flesh inevitably do to the real children of the promise – that is, to Christ’s true people?

Gal 4:29 But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now.

So also it is now. The chief persecutor of Christ and His people is *false Christianity*. Study church history and you will find this to be the case.

If we are wise in respect to these things, then as we read of Jesus’ so-called triumphal entry into Jerusalem, *we know that trouble is brewing*. That Jerusalem was not the City of God:

Heb 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering,

The mode of Jesus’ entry into the city is a fulfillment of this prophecy:

Zec 9:9-11 Rejoice 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. (11) As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

We see here then how the Lord in His providence oversees the smallest details of our lives. Give some thought to this donkey this week. Consider all that it took for that colt to be there at

that particular man's place, the timing of its birth, and more. It really is true that not a hair drops from our head without the Lord knowing it.

Now, there is a huge disconnect, a kind of "elephant in the room" here as the Lord Jesus enters the city. Look at the response of most of the crowd:

(8) Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. (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!"

What was all of this? Hosanna? Son of David? He who comes in the name of the Lord? Listen to William Hendriksen explain:

"As to *Hosanna to the Son of David*, it should be noted that 'Hosanna' means 'save now' or 'save, we pray.' The attitude of the people toward God was perhaps about as follows, 'We beseech thee, O Lord, save now, grant victory and prosperity at this time, since because of thy goodness the appropriate moment has arrived.'

It is clear that the source is Psalm 118, which from the beginning to end is filled with prayer and praise.

Blessed is the One coming in the name of the Lord, is a quotation from Psalm 118. Combined with 'the Son of David' it must refer to Jesus as the Messiah. It was deplorable, however, that by far the most of these people did not go one step farther; they should have combined Ps 118 with Isaiah 53...then they would have recognized in Jesus the Messiah who saves His people *from their sins*.

Now – the elephant in the room. Here are the crowds praising God, welcoming the King, the Messiah, calling upon the Lord to save them...and yet this King comes to them *meek, and mounted on a donkey, even upon a colt, the foal of a pack-animal*.

Think about this. How do you suppose these people would have had their King come into the city? I think we can pretty confidently assume that it would *not involve him coming on a little colt in meekness*. No. How did triumphant Kings return to Rome? With magnificent teams of horses and chariots, white stallions, glory and pomp, right? Might and power. Certainly not in meekness. And definitely NOT a king who is going to

die on a cross. Nor do they want a king who says things like this:

Joh 18:36 Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.”

Now, let’s bring this point right directly home for our application today. It is not the proper handling of Scripture to simply stop at the point where we look at the people of Jesus’ day and note all their faults. Doing so will leave people today very comfortable, but the fact is that we are surrounded in today’s visible church by exactly the same sins as then. Let me show you. Look at what Jesus did once more:

Mat 21:12-14 And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. (13) He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers.” (14) And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them.

The worldly church wants a worldly king and worldly kingdom. It wants to be a place where “everyone” is comfy. It wants money to be made and big names to be glorified. All “in the name of the Lord” of course. I have no doubt at all if King Jesus came to the evangelical churches of today, He would immediately start cleaning house once again.

Let me give you an very current example of the worldly state of many churches today. This comes from a very recent article by a fellow named Jimmy Hinton who works hard to expose abusers, in particular sexual abusers, in the church. He has an interesting background – his pastor/father was a sexual predator. He says by way of introduction on his blog:

In July of 2011, just two years into my new role as minister, a victim disclosed to me that she had been sexually abused by my father, the former preacher at my congregation. Within seconds, my life began to unravel. My childhood hero was now a villain who had dozens of victims—all of whom were humiliated and violated in the worst possible way. My mother and I reported my father to the police and he is currently serving a 30-60 year prison sentence for sex crimes against children.

In his article, Hinton takes on the Southern Baptists and their new so-called “Caring Well” program that their “experts” have designed:

The foundation of righteousness and justice requires an account for people who refuse to repent. If we don't know what righteous behavior is, the scales automatically tip in one direction or the other based on what we *feel* about a person and justice becomes impossible.

Jesus echoed John's words in Matthew 7:19 when he said, “*Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.*” Over and over again Jesus named wolves and kept them away from his sheep. He overturned tables and chased oppressors out of the Temple with whips. He gave a lengthy “woe to you” sermon without ending with, “But all are welcome here.”

He said that it would be better for the one who causes a little one of his to stumble to have a millstone tied around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. He said he was sending his disciples out like sheep among the wolves. Therefore, they were to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.

He said that the hired hand runs away when the wolf comes because he cares not for the sheep: “*He sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them*” (John 10: 12).

Over and over and over again, the scriptures are clear that wolves pretend to be sheep, sneak in, and destroy. It's not just what wolves do, it's who they *are*. Never is the plea to give them community, more love, empathy, understanding, etc. Why? Because of righteousness and justice.

Paul says to avoid such people. He goes on to say that evil people and impostors go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived (2 Tim. 3:13). Peter gives a gut wrenching description of false prophets who were sexual predators in 2 Peter 2. There is zero hint of empathy, restoration, or redemption. Why? Because of God's foundation. Jesus doesn't say that wolves can be saved. He says they produce thistles and are incapable of producing good fruit. Therefore they are cut down and thrown out. To be clear, those are Jesus' words and not mine.

Consistently wolves are identified and told to get out. Make no

mistake that people who pretend to be righteous in order to steal away the innocence of children and violate them in the worst possible ways are not sheep. They are not people who “mess up, slip up, or fall into temptation.”

I’ve been around abusers and have been studying them for a long time. They know exactly what they are doing. They are meticulous in their planning, scheming, and execution of their plans. Very rarely do sexual predators repent, even when the words are there. This is not because they are “struggling” with sin. It is because they are deceptive wolves. They thrive on deceit and stealing that which does not belong to them.

Regardless of what one’s theology is on sheep versus wolves, what concerns me the most is that the Caring Well curriculum coddles predators, welcomes them into the church, and gives them all the secrecy and anonymity they need in order to keep abusing.

This, you see, is the kind of “church” the world wants. It is the kind of “Jesus” the world wants. A Jesus who gives what the flesh wants, all in God’s name. Power. Wealth. Fame. *And never mind those untouchable lowly people who have nothing to give*

us. Never mind those who have been abused and are down-trodden, or those who are saying that all is not well in the churches.

What does Jesus do immediately after he cleans His Father’s house?

(14) And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them.

Hendriksen comments on this:

“What a scene! While some people are expelled, others are welcomed. Jesus has not changed any. He is still the Good Shepherd. So when the blind and the lame come to him *right here in the temple*, his eyes, a moment ago flashing with the fire of holy indignation, fill with tender compassion. He did not say ‘Come back some other time. I am not now in the mood for healing you.’ On the contrary, the Great Physician is standing there in the midst of overturned tables, scattered coins, and knocked own benches, manifesting his healing power and marvelous compassion to those in need. None of those who came to him went away disappointed.”

The focus turns to where it should be in the church – to the downcast, to the weak. Before this, such people were

dismissed and expelled to make room for the big names and those in power. Of course, these devils in wool didn't like this at all:

Mat 21:15-17 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, (16) and they said to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read, "'Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise'?" (17) And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there.

It is not too harsh and critical to say this loudly and clearly today – *the visible church in so many cases is not a house of prayer, but has become a robbers' den.* A place where the true children of God, where true worshippers, are despised and silenced.

Be certain of this, *the King is coming to His Temple once more.* And He is going to effect one more final cleansing of His Church.

Mat 13:40-43 Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. (41) The Son of Man will send his angels, and

they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, (42) and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (43) Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

It would be a very good thing for each of us to seriously examine ourselves, asking "what church do I really want? What kind of king do I want? What is my idea of the kingdom of God?"

Because the truth is that most people who profess to be Christians, and think themselves to be God's people, *aren't.*

He who has ears, let him hear.