

Morning Sermon September 23, 2018
John 12:12-19 - "Raising the Dead Popularity"

Last week I detailed how our Lord Jesus set the stage for His raising of Lazarus:

* It happened near the time of the Passover, meaning a lot of people were in town.

* It happened before the time of the Passover, so people had the freedom to come to Bethany (near Jerusalem) to see Jesus or Martha and Mary.

It was such a dramatic event, raising from the dead, a man who had been dead and buried four days! I want to call the influence of this miracle on Jesus' popularity "The Lazarus Effect."

I. See the Lazarus Effect's influence on Jesus' triumphal entry –

1. Many people were new believers –

because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus. (John 12:11 NKJ)

2. These people were talking, and people who were hearing were coming to see Jesus –

The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, (John 12:12 NKJ)

3. These people were EXCITED and willing to EMBRACE Jesus as King of Israel –

took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! `Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! The King of Israel!" (John 12:13 NKJ)

4. The excitement, surrounding this event was at least partially caused by the raising of Lazarus, and the event itself becomes the vehicle for spreading the news about the raising of Lazarus

- Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness.¹⁸ For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign. (John 12:17-18 NKJ)

II. The miracle, the Lazarus Effect, excited people about Jesus but it did not fully educate people about Jesus, not even about the meaning of His triumphal entry -

1. Even Jesus' disciples did not "understand" this event –

His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and *that* they had done these things to Him. (John 12:16 NKJ)

A. The disciples had to be excited about the multitude's reception of their MASTER / TEACHER!

B. But remember, despite His miracles even Jesus' disciples had feared for His and their lives –

Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him." (John 11:16 NKJ)

C. Jesus, Himself had spoke of His imminent death –

But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. (John 12:7 NKJ)

D. With the multitude surrounding Him, worshipping Him, you cannot help but think that the disciples would hope that Jerusalem would immediately crown Jesus as their King!

2. Yet, if the disciples did not understand Jesus' purpose / mission, certainly the multitude did not understand!

Here is a great IMPORTANT TRUTH I hope we all embrace –
Excitement does not equal education!

This is something Jesus had taught in the Parable of the Sower –
"But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;²¹ "yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. (Matthew 13:20-21 NKJ)

Question: How did the multitude (and Jesus' disciples) misunderstand Jesus' triumphal entry?

A. They misunderstood the kind of "peace" and "salvation" Jesus intended to bring –

Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: ¹⁵ "Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, Sitting on a donkey's colt." (John 12:14-15 NKJ)

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey. (Zechariah 9:9 NKJ)

- *Coming on a donkey symbolized coming in peace, it pretty much had to ... horses symbolized WAR –*

Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the LORD our God. (Psalm 20:7 NKJ)

And Jesus will one day ride on one –

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. (Revelation 19:11 NKJ)

However, the Jews thought their Messiah / Christ would gain them victory over the Romans, much like David gave them victory over Goliath and the Philistines, they expected a military victory!

However, Jesus sought to conquer greater enemies: sin and death; and bring about a greater peace – peace with God –

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, (Romans 5:1 NKJ)

- B. *They underestimated the great sinfulness of Jesus' enemies, they also underestimated their own sin –*

You would think: (1) The raising of Lazarus (2) The hosannas of the crowd (3) The VOICE from Heaven –

"Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came from heaven, *saying*, "I have both glorified *it* and will glorify *it* again." (John 12:28 NKJ)

- *You would think these things might win Jesus' enemies to His side? Or at least discourage them and it seems to have discouraged them SOME – The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, "You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!" (John 12:19 NKJ) Yet not enough to stop them from killing HIM!*

- *Jesus' own disciple's failed / sinned - When things were going well, the multitude, the disciples shouted "hosanna!" Yet, when things got tough, His own Apostle Peter even denied him – three times - ³⁴ Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." (Matthew 26:34 NKJ)*

Peter did not understand his own sinfulness, weakness –

Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples. (Matthew 26:35 NKJ)

III. *If Jesus' raising of Lazarus is not enough to make truly "educated" godly disciples, how much less, the feel-good sermon? –*

They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, Saying, `Peace, peace!' When *there is* no peace. (Jeremiah 6:14 NKJ)

Or the drawing of the people in with some fun "exciting" event??? Raising the dead popularity is not = to raising the dead power! How much less stirring fleshy excitement?

1. *Therefore, we emphasize the Word of God at our church – For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Hebrew 4:12 NKJ)*

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life. (John 6:63 NKJ)

2. *Therefore, we do not shy away from telling the TRUTH about SIN, hopefully like Jesus did –*

"You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it. (John 8:44 NKJ)

Such preaching made our Lord Jesus some determined enemies, but it also SAVED souls! The miracle made Jesus popular, His Word reaching and abiding (staying) in our hearts makes us true disciples - Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. (John 8:31 NKJ) Truth sets us free. John 8:32

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