

LUKE

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Luke chapter 19 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Now keep in mind that Jesus has set His face towards Jerusalem, the cross is before Him. And in this chapter, we are going to be moving towards the final week of Jesus' earthly ministry.

But also keep in mind that Jesus is still ministering to people and as we are going to see this evening, He is going to have an encounter with a little man named Zacchaeus. Let me share this with you before we get to our study this evening as it will set the stage for what we will be talking about. We are told,

Charles Spurgeon, the famed Victorian preacher who preached to a standing room only congregation of 5,000 both Sunday morning and evening, also established a Pastor's College that exists to this day. A famous feature of the college experience was "the question oak," a large tree on Spurgeon's estate where, in good weather, students would gather on Friday afternoons to ask questions of Mr. Spurgeon and then deliver extemporaneous sermons. On one memorable occasion, Spurgeon called on a student to give a message on Zacchaeus. The student rose and said: "Zacchaeus was of little stature, so am I. Zacchaeus was up a tree, so am I. Zacchaeus came down, so will I." And the student sat down as the students, led by Spurgeon, applauded.

Zacchaeus' escapade makes for a fun story. The idea of a wee man perched like a bird in a tree (and being found out) is the stuff of humor and children's songs.

Zacchaeus was a wee little man
And a wee little man was he.
He climbed way up in a sycamore tree,
For the Lord he wanted to see. . . .

We can have fun with this, but we must remember that the story occupies a very serious place in Luke's account of Jesus' life because it is Jesus' last personal encounter before his arrival in Jerusalem and the events leading to his death. All that remains is his telling of the Parable of the Ten Minas and then the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. Significantly, the final line in the Zacchaeus story contains the summary line of the purpose of Jesus' ministry: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (v. 10). Saving the lost is what Jesus is all about.

In this respect the salvation of Zacchaeus has telling spiritual connections to the two events that preceded it. The healing of the blind beggar – the deliverance there of a man lost in blindness and poverty – corresponds here to the deliverance of a man lost in wealth and corruption. And its connection to the story before that, that of the rich ruler, is also clear because what is there stated is humanly impossible – namely, the salvation of a rich man ("Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God," 18:25). This impossibility now takes place in the salvation of rich little Zacchaeus.

- R. Kent Hughes, Luke Volume Two, That You May Know the Truth, pp. 221-222

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Luke chapter 19, starting in verse 1, and see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through His Word.

LUKE 19**VERSES 1-4**

Here is this man, Zacchaeus, living in the upper part or rich part of Jericho, who made himself rich by being a tax collector. You see, Rome would use these men, hire them to collect taxes, but they could raise the taxes to whatever they wanted and the excess they made above what Rome wanted they got to keep for themselves. Thus, there was much corruption involved in this business.

Now because he was collecting taxes for Rome, his fellow Jews hated him and all those who collected taxes for Rome. They saw them as selling out to Rome and not only that but they also were taking advantage of people!

What is interesting here is that the name, “**Zacchaeus**” means “righteous one” or “pure one.” That is almost funny if it didn’t hurt so much. He was far from being righteous our pure, at least at this point in his life. But that is all going to change as we will see.

Now here is something that I can relate to. Zacchaeus “**was of short stature.**” But for most things, that did not matter because he had the power of Rome behind him. That is until now when Zacchaeus heard that Jesus was passing through Jericho and he wanted to see him. But the crowds were huge and, because of his short stature, he could not see Jesus!

But that was not going to stop this man from seeing Jesus. I think this man was focused and determined. He was so determined with collecting taxes that made him rich, and now with Jesus, nothing was going to stop him from seeing this Man!

So, to see Jesus, he climbed up this sycamore tree, not a very dignified thing to do for a grown businessman, but he wanted to see Jesus so badly that he was willing to do anything, even climb up a tree!

I think Maclaren rightly said, “I wish there were more of us who did not mind being laughed at if only what we did helped us to see Jesus.”

I guess if someone or something is that important to you, you will do anything to see them or to put it more clearly, no matter what the world may say regarding your efforts, you are going to do it.

And I think the bigger question for us is this, “**For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?**”

Mark 8:36-37.

Many today will do whatever it takes to gain a little more money, a little more of this and a little more of that. But when it comes to their eternal destiny, there is no desire to do anything about it. They sold their soul to the Devil, you might say!

I like the way that Morrison put it. He wrote, “But Zacchaeus had had a great will to grow rich, and he had found there a way to *that*. And now he had a great will to see Jesus, and he was not the sort of person to be stopped.”

What gets in your way of seeing Jesus? What gets in your way of hearing Jesus? We let so many things crowd our lives, we let so much noise get into our lives, that we can’t see or hear Jesus!

What should we do? Climb a sycamore tree! No please, don't do that literally. I don't want any calls from the police department that the people in our church are up a tree. What I do mean is get above the crowds that are distracting you and preventing you from seeing Jesus. Get above the noise that is drowning out His voice.

How do we do that? Get alone with Him. Read His Word, ask the Spirit of God to speak to your heart and you know what, you will not only hear Jesus but you will see Him as He shows you the things that He desires in your life.

That is what we will see here with Zacchaeus. If we seek Him, the Lord, we will find Him as we search for Him with all of our heart. He will reveal Himself to us. Let's read on and see what happens.

VERSES 5-6

First of all, let me ask you this question. Why did Jesus go to Jericho? Now some may say that He went through Jericho to get to Jerusalem, but I don't think that was the reason. You see, He had a couple of appointments. First of all, He was to meet two blind men in the poor section of Jericho that needed to see again. And now to see this short tax collector in this same city, different location.

An as Jesus is walking by He looks up and in this Sycamore tree is this man and did you notice what Jesus says to him. He calls him by name, Zacchaeus! That reminds me of what Jesus said in John 10:3-4 as He was speaking of Himself as being the Good Shepherd. This is what Jesus said, "... and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice."

Jesus knows our name and He calls out to us and we must listen. We see here with Zacchaeus that as Jesus calls out to him to come down the reason that Jesus wants this man to come down is that He would like to eat dinner with this man, with Zacchaeus!

I can just imagine Zacchaeus' response. I'm sure he almost fell out of that tree trying to come down as fast as he could. He was filled with joy that Jesus signaled him out of the crowd to eat with, a man that no one really liked, no one really wanted to associate themselves with except other tax collectors and sinners.

I am sure he had not heard someone call him by his real name. I am sure they had a lot of other names for him, but not his own. You see, tax collectors were not respected by the Jews. It was so bad that they were not even allowed into the synagogues. They also could not be used as a witness in a courtroom and the reason being was that they were so crooked. But Jesus reaches out to this lonely man.

And what I love, as Jesus calls out to him he comes to Jesus. Spurgeon put it like this, "Christ will not force himself into any man's house, and sit there against the man's will. That would not be the action of a guest, but of an unwelcome intruder."

And as the people watched what was going on, what Jesus said to this scum of society, at least in their minds, how do you think they responded? We don't have to guess because Luke tells us. Look at verse 7 of Luke 19.

VERSE 7

This is the heart of a Pharisee and I am not talking just about the Jewish religious leaders here. It says that “**they all murmured**” against what Jesus was doing. It is being self-righteous and those who are will look down upon others. They negate their sin but they love to exploit the sins of others. Not only that, they are too holy to be around people like that. Again, they were like the Pharisees!

They had no compassion, no love for people. And what we see here is that they are rebuking Jesus for associating Himself with this man, this sinner! But remember what Jesus said in Matthew 18:11, “**For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.**”

And in Luke 9:56 we are told, “**For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them...**” And He will repeat that same thought in just a few verses. That should be our heart also, to have compassion, love for the lost, reaching out to them, bringing them to Jesus. And not looking down upon them but crying out to God to save them!

It is as one commentator put it, “His example is our pattern. A Christian church which does not imitate its Master in its frank and continual willingness to associate itself with the degraded and outcasts has lost one of the truest signs of its being vitalized with the love of Christ.”

Remember what Jesus said in John 13:34-35, “**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**” You see, they will know we are Christians by our love, may we not forget that. May we pattern our lives after Jesus!

VERSES 8-10

As they finished eating, somewhere between verses 7 & 8 of Luke 19, Zacchaeus gets saved, he repents of his sin. How do I know that? First of all, we see the evidence of his salvation.

How is that manifested. It is seen in his care of the poor, those in need, something he did not do before. Also, we see him restore back to those he took advantage of, which could have been a large sum of money.

You see, the Law required that if you stole something you had to return it plus 20%. Zacchaeus offers even more than what the Law required!

This was a dramatic change in his life for his whole life was based on taking advantage of others to make a profit! Now his name matches his life, “Righteous one” or “Pure one.” Not because of himself, but because of what Jesus has done in His life and the same is true in our own lives!

Now as you read through this you may come to the conclusion that his salvation is based on works, the good things that he has done. Not at all. You see, Jesus says that he is “a son of Abraham” not just by birth, genetically, but he had the faith of Abraham.

What is the faith of Abraham? Paul tells us in Romans 4:2-5, “For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’
Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.’

You see, a salvation by faith, not by works! Or to put it more correctly, we see that his salvation works, it is manifested in his life.

Now I could just see a big smile on the face of Jesus as He said these words, that Zacchaeus is saved, and the reality is, that is the reason Jesus came, to save those who are lost, all of us, if we would only receive that gift by faith. That is what He says in Luke 19:10, “**for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.**”

You mean He did not come to make me wealthy, healthy, prosperous, get a promotion, to get this or that? No, Jesus came to save us from our sins! Never forget that message!

VERSE 11

As Jesus continued to draw near Jerusalem the crowds grew. Why? Keep in mind that Passover was coming and Jerusalem swelled with Jews who came to celebrate this feast. Josephus tells us that a short time after Jesus, during another Passover, there were over two million Jews who came to Jerusalem to celebrate this feast. So the roads to Jerusalem were packed with people.

Also, Jericho was less than 20 miles away from Jerusalem. As the people heard the teaching of Jesus they were getting excited. They were pumped up you might say, including the disciples of Jesus because they are thinking, ***KINGDOM NOW!***

That meant that Rome is destroyed, their bondage is over, and they will enter the Kingdom Age where the Messiah will rule and reign from the throne in Jerusalem.

The only problem with that, and it is a big one, is they were totally wrong and Jesus is going to try to correct their misguided view. You see, Jesus spoke this parable to warn His disciples as well as the people that He is going to depart and return again before the Kingdom comes. And thus, when He is gone He wants them to understand what they were to do while He was gone!

It is as Morrison wrote, “It was an emblem of His own departure to a far country to receive a kingdom. It taught in figure that *first* there must be departure, and the long absence of the King, before the Kingdom could come in its full glory.”

Now for this Parable of the Ten Minas.

VERSES 12-14

First of all, do not confuse this with the parable in Matthew 25:14-30, which deals with the talents or abilities that God has given to us and how we use them or we don’t use them.

Here in Luke chapter 19 Jesus is speaking of our diligence in service as we use what God has entrusted to us, and thus He says, “**Do business till I come**” or “**Occupy till I come**.”

In other words, Jesus is telling them and us to keep doing the work, speaking and spreading the Good News. I know there are some that say that to believe in the Rapture is escapism and it causes us to sit back and do nothing as we wait for the Lord!

First of all, I do want to escape the effects of the Tribulation Period as God pours out His wrath upon a Christ rejecting world. And to say that believing in the Rapture makes us lazy is foolishness. We know the time is short and we want to use it to bring the Gospel message to those in darkness, those who have no hope! I hope that makes sense to you.

We are told that the nobleman went away and before he did he gave a Mina or a hundred days pay for a worker to ten of his servants. They all had the same amount and they are told to use it until he comes back or "**Do business till I come**" or "**Occupy till I come.**"

As this is taking place we are told that the citizens did not like what was going on. We are told that "**His citizens hated him**" and saying "**We will not have this man to reign over us.**"

Now keep in mind that this is not only speaking of the Jewish religious leaders but also the nation as a whole who rejected Jesus, they didn't want anything to do with Him!

VERSES 15-19

Here we see that when the master returned, he dealt first with his servants. As this chapter ends we will see that he will deal with the rebellious citizens, but they were not his first concern. He first wanted to know how faithful his servants had been in his absence.

So, we see here that Jesus is calling His servants to see how faithful they have been while He was gone and as Jesus looks at their lives He will reward them.

Paul, in II Corinthians 5:9-10 tells us, "**Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**" This is the Bema Seat of Christ or the Judgment Seat of Christ where the rewards for service will be handed out, not punishment for failure.

We see this also in I Corinthians 3:11-15, where Paul tells us, “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”

You see, you won't lose your salvation for unfaithful service, just your rewards! Are you serving the Lord or on a sabbatical? Jesus is telling us to continue on in the work until He comes, don't give up. In other words, as Jesus said, “Do business till I come” or “Occupy till I come.”

And I love what Paul said in I Corinthians 15:58 regarding the command to forge ahead, don't give up, don't drop out of the race. He said, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

Make no mistake about it, the work is tough, it is not easy, and at times it seems discouraging as we don't see things happening. But Paul is encouraging us to not give up because all we do for the Lord is not in vain, it is not empty, it will accomplish what the Lord desires. Never forget that.

Now we also need to keep in mind that Jesus is speaking of the Kingdom Age and service as we enter into that period of time. You see, in the Kingdom Age we will continue to serve the Lord as He places us over various cities during His reign. And as you read through these verses you will see that the number of cities Jesus gives us authority over is in direct proportion to our faithfulness to what He has entrusted to us.

VERSES 20-26

Here we see the third servant come before the nobleman and he did not have a good report. Why? Because he did not obey the master's command to do business or occupy until he comes. He did nothing with what the nobleman gave to him.

And he even made excuses for his lack of service, his laziness, his lack of faith in the kings return. Thus, the nobleman has all that was given to him taken away. You see, if you don't use it you will lose it!

Now this is not a salvation issue here. But he does lose the rewards and since he was unable to manage his master's things, he was given nothing to manage in the Kingdom!

It is as Morris wrote, "In the Christian life we do not stand still. We use our gifts and make progress or we lose what we have."

Now let's think about this for a minute. How in the world does this relate to the disciples thinking the Kingdom is here and Jesus correcting their error? The point is this, the Kingdom will be delayed and thus we are to occupy or do the work until He comes. Don't get lazy, don't make excuses because He is coming back!

Now there is one group we did not talk about yet. Those who hated him, rejected his authority, his rule over them. What is going to happen to them? We don't have to guess. Look at Luke 19:27.

VERSE 27

Yes, the one who did nothing was not going to be rewarded but those that rejected the nobleman committed treason and they would be dealt with. I know it seems harsh but listen again to what we are told in Luke 19:14, “But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We will not have this man to reign over us.’”

That is the response of every person who rejects Jesus. They refuse to let Him rule their lives and they will be judged for their sins.

You see, everyone will have to answer before the Lord one day, those who love Him at the Bema Seat of Christ for their rewards and those who have rejected Him at the Great White Throne judgment for their degrees of punishment in the Lake of Fire.

You can deny or reject the Lord from ruling in your life but you can't escape the reality that one day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord. Some out of love and others out of who Jesus is, Almighty God, you can't escape it!

In Revelation 19:11-16 we see the Lord come back and judge this earth. We are told, “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. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”

Like I have said, all those who have rejected Christ will stand before Him at the Great White Throne judgment and they will be cast into the Outer Darkness for eternity. This should be frightening for those who have rejected Him, but many just ignore the warning. I like what R. Kent Hughes wrote about this. He said,

We may be horrified by the fierceness of this passage, but beneath the terrifying imagery is a solemn fact: Jesus, coming in the world, forces every person to decide – and the decision is a matter of life and death.

The noble Son came, and before he went away to acquire his kingship two things happened. First, he gave a gospel deposit to every one of his followers. And second, his enemies attempted to deny his kingship. But through his death, resurrection, and ascension, and glorification he substantiated his eternal position as King of kings and Lord of lords. And he will someday return.

To those who have invested his investment, there will be unthought-of rewards. To those who have hidden it, shame. To those who reject him, death.

We are at the final hour. The King is coming. How are our investments?

- R. Kent Hughes, Luke Volume Two, That You May Know the Truth, p. 236

VERSES 28-38

We have now reached the last week of Jesus' earthly ministry. It is the Sunday before Passover, the day they would inspect the sacrificial Passover lambs to see if they had any spot or blemish on them. In five days they would celebrate Passover and if there was any spot or blemish on these animals, they could not be offered as a sacrifice to God. So for the next five days they will be looking at Jesus closely and as you read through these accounts in the Gospels you will see they found no fault in Him, no sin in Him! He is the perfect sacrifice, the One who could pay in full the penalty for our sins!

And what we have read here is that the Passover Lamb, Jesus, is going to ride through Jerusalem as the Messiah the Prince. Like I have said, Jesus Christ is going to be inspected by all, and as Peter tells us, "knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." I Peter 1:18-19.

Now Bethany and Bethphage are located on the eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives facing the Judean wilderness. Thus, to get to Jerusalem you have to go over the top of the Mount of Olives, down the western slopes and on into Jerusalem through the eastern gate. But this time Jesus is going to enter the city a little differently, riding in on a colt, the foal of a donkey. Big deal, right? You bet it is!

You see, some 520 years earlier, in around 487 B. C., the prophet Zechariah said, "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.

Here we see that prophecy come to pass! Now why would He ride in on a donkey? Because in His First Coming He came to bring peace through His atoning work on the cross of Calvary, and the donkey identified with that. When He comes again in His Second Coming He will be riding on a white horse in victory as He comes to put down sin and establish His Kingdom!

Morris sums this up for us as he wrote, “The ass was the mount of a man of peace, a merchant or a priest. A king might ride an ass on occasion, but he would be more likely to appear on a mighty war-horse. Zechariah’s prophecy saw Messiah as the Prince of peace.”

Now, as Jesus begins to make His way into Jerusalem, the crowds of people who have come to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover, began to praise and worship Him, singing Psalm 118, part of the Hallel Psalms or the Messianic Psalms (Psalms 113-118).

It is as Psalm 24:7-10 tells us, “Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory.”

If He is not in your heart, if you have not received Jesus as Lord and Savior in your life, let the King of glory come in, open the door of your heart, and He will come in!

This is interesting to me is that this is the only time Jesus allowed the people to recognize Him as the Messiah the King. Other times, when the people wanted to make Him King, He moved away from them as John 6:15 tells us, “Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.”

Why did Jesus avoid this recognition except for this day? Because this is the fulfillment of what the prophet Daniel spoke of over 500 years before this took place. In Daniel 9:24-25 we are told, “**Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.**”

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.”

Daniel is speaking about the coming Messiah, and being a captive in Babylon, he uses the Babylonian calendar of 360 days per year. Thus, 69 seven year periods of time would come to 173,880 days.

The starting point, as Daniel tells us, is the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, which was given to Nehemiah by Artaxerxes Longimanus on March 14, 445 B. C., according to Nehemiah chapter 2. If you do the math, including the leap years, you would come to April 6th 32 A. D., we call it Palm Sunday, the only day that Jesus Christ came as Messiah the King into Jerusalem, a prophecy fulfilled to the exact day! If you want a more detailed note of this you can check out our Daniel chapter 9 study, it goes through all the math in detail.

As Jesus is riding down the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem we see the people saying, “**Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”**

Now in the other Gospel's we are told the people were crying out "**Hosanna!**" which means "Save now!" Tragically, the people missed the point. They were looking for Jesus to free them from Roman bondage, they wanted a political king to save them from this tyranny, and thus, when that didn't happen and Jesus was arrested, these same people will be crying out "***Crucify Him! Crucify Him!***"

And we wonder how they could change so quickly but don't miss the point. People still do that today. They cry out to God for this and that and when it does not happen, they don't get what they want, they get mad at God, they curse Him. Which tells me that they never really had a relationship with Him in the first place.

We may get frustrated because of what is going on in our lives, but keep in mind that He is in control and His ways are perfect. If Jesus came and freed them from Roman bondage they would still die in their sins. And instead of a short time of difficulty, they will have an eternity of punishment. You see, God knew what He was doing!

VERSES 39-40

Please understand that Satan hates it when we worship God and those that don't know Jesus can also be very hostile to our worship of God. These religious leaders knew what the people were saying, that Jesus is the Messiah, and they wanted the people to stop and they wanted Jesus to step in and stop them. But they did not stop and Jesus was not going to stop them, they were singing out the truth of God's Word and His praises!

Worship today is getting more and more secular and the focus is not upon God but upon the worshiper. It is all about ***ME!*** Folk's, worship is never about you, it is about the Lord. It is not, "***How great I am!***" Or, "***Amazing Joe, how great he is!***" I know, funny but that is what worship becomes many times!

Also, it is sad when we as Christians become hostile to worship, when they fight against it, they just don't like it! You need to like it for Heaven is a place that is filled with the worship of God.

We also need to understand that our worship can become mindless, just singing words or pumping the people up, and God is not honored by that and we are not drawn into His presence through it.

Keep your heart upon Him and focus on the words you are singing unto Him, and during the instrumental parts, just praise Him, thank Him, think about Him, mediate upon Him.

Worship here at Calvary is important, for I believe in our worship of God we are drawn into His presence and we are preparing our hearts and minds to receive His Word, what He has for each of us!

Worship is not mindless, we should be praising the Lord but for what? Listen carefully to what they were praising the Lord for. We are told that, "...the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen." Make no mistake about it, anyone who says, "Praise the Lord!" should be able to answer this question: "Praise Him for *what?*"

I do like the response of Jesus to what these Pharisees said to Him, to stop the people from praising Him and acknowledging that He is the Messiah. And He said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

That would have been awesome to see and hear but here we see that the people He came to redeem will praise Him. Now when we were in Israel I brought home two of these rocks from the Mount of Olives that would have cried out if the people were silent. So far, no noise from them!

Now are we to take this literally or is Jesus just speaking symbolically? I don't think He is speaking symbolically. Let me share with you a few verses for you to think about, and keep in mind that **ALL** of creation will worship Him.

First of all, in Psalm 148:7-13 we read, "Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all the depths; Fire and hail, snow and clouds; Stormy wind, fulfilling His word; Mountains and all hills; fruitful trees and all cedars; Beasts and all cattle; creeping things and flying fowl; Kings of the earth and all peoples; princes and all judges of the earth; Both young men and maidens; old men and children. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for His name alone is exalted; his glory is above the earth and heaven."

Next, in Psalm 96:11-12, we read, "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and all its fullness; Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice before the LORD."

And lastly, in Isaiah 55:12 we read, "For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands."

I may be wrong, but I truly believe all of creation will sing forth with praise unto God, and I can't wait for that day!

VERSES 41-44

Picture the crowds of people around Jesus and they are singing praise unto Him, to the Messiah. And as all this is going on Jesus looks at Jerusalem that is before Him and He begins to weep!

That word, “Wept” is better rendered “*wailed*” or Jesus burst forth in tears, sobbing over Jerusalem and her people. Why was He weeping on this joyous occasion? Because His people didn’t recognize what day it was! That this was the day that the Messiah would come and in a short time He would save them from their sins, and yet they were blinded to this.

Should they have known? You bet they should have known. As I have said, Daniel tells us, to the exact day the Messiah would come, and even if they were off, He was with them for over three years teaching and healing, fulfilling what the Old Testament prophets said the Messiah would be. In fact, of this day, we read in Psalm 118:24, “This is the day the LORD has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.”

This was to be a time of peace. Peace with God through Jesus, but they rejected Him and thus, destruction was going to come upon them! Morgan puts this cry of Jesus like this, “The cry was that of a frustrated desire. He had visited the city, with the desire to deliver it from the things of destruction; and with the offers of the things of peace. The spiritual blindness of the rulers and people was such that they did not discern the meaning of the visitation. The result was inevitable. There could be no escape from the destruction.”

And make no mistake about it, the destruction that was to come in 70 A. D. by Titus and the Romans was going to be beyond comprehension. Josephus tells us that the famine, the food shortage as the Romans surrounded the city, was so bad that the people began to eat each other to survive. He goes on to say: (Wars of the Jews, 5.12.1-3).

“All hope of escaping was now cut off from the Jews, together with their liberty of going out of the city. Then did the famine widen its progress, and devour the people by whole houses and families; the upper rooms of women and infants that were dying by famine, and the lanes of the city were full of the dead bodies of the aged; the children also, and they young men wandered about the market places like shadows, all swelled with the famine, and fell down dead wheresoever their misery seized them. For a time the dead were buried; but afterwards, when they could not do that, they had them cast down from the wall into the valleys beneath. When Titus, on going his rounds along these valleys, saw them full of dead bodies, and the thick putrefaction running about them, he gave a groan, and spreading out his hands to heaven, called to God to witness this was not his doing.”

(Cited in Spurgeon. He adds: “There is nothing in history to exceed this horror. But even this is nothing compared with the destruction of the soul.”)

Like back then people today have choices to make. Paul tells us in Hebrews 2:2-3, “For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him.” There is no escape if we reject Jesus! There is no excuse for us if we reject the truth that is before us!

And I wonder today, those who are rejecting the return of Jesus, they don’t know what time it is on God’s prophetic time-clock, if the Lord will hold them accountable as well! I believe He will because He has told us the seasons, the things that will be taking place before He comes for His Bride, the Church and many in the Church have no clue what is going on. It is time to wake-up from our spiritual sleep!

VERSES 45-48

This is probably Monday now, and it is the second time that Jesus drove out the money changers and those who were trying to make a profit off of God, merchandising the things of God and ripping the people off. The first-time Jesus did this was when His ministry began and you can read of it in John chapter 2, and now He is closing His earthly ministry.

Tragically all this was going on in the Court of the Gentiles so all could see the corruption within the priesthood, within the people of God. Obviously, this did not make the religious people happy when He did this and they wanted to kill Jesus, but the time was not right, too many people around Him, and Jesus was going to be crucified on the Passover!

What I love here is that Jesus was still teaching them because “... the people were very attentive to hear Him.” And what happens when people don’t want to hear Him? He will be silent to them, He will give them what they want.

I wonder if that is what we are seeing in the church today. The teaching of God’s Word watered down or misapplied, or neglected because people just don’t want to hear it! May that not be. May we have a hunger and thirst to know God through His Word opened up to us by His Spirit!

God’s house, where we gather to worship Him, should be a place where we can worship Him and not be forced to give money, to buy this or that. It is a house of prayer or communication with God and not for making a profit off of God!

Now in regards to making a profit off of God, yes, we can look down upon what they were doing, but don’t forget we see this happening today, where people are merchandising God, making a profit off of God, ripping the people off for their own gain!

I can't tell you all the different music license's we need to play worship music here at the church, on the radio station, on the internet! It is crazy. We have books that are marketed, CD's, this and that. And I realize that people need to make a living, but this is way beyond that. We need to be careful because the world is watching us because all that we do is being done, in a sense, in the Court of the Gentiles, in this world for them to see!

Now let me make an application here in regards to Jesus turning over these tables of the money changers. Are there some tables in your heart that Jesus needs to turn over? Get out of the way so He can work? If there is you need to let Him come in and get rid of those things that are making a mockery of Him and cause us to live a life of hypocrisy.

Remember, He is forming us into the image of God by His Spirit, let Him work in you and through you for His glory! Let Him turn over those tables that are holding things that don't bring Him glory and remember, "**being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.**" Philippians 1:6. Don't forget that and let the King of Glory come in!