

Luke 19:28-48

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 29 March 2026

Preacher: Reuben Hunter

[0:00] If you could turn up that passage in Luke's Gospel that was read for us earlier. It's on page 878 in the Black Church Bibles. I'm going to look at that together. I think it's fair to say that it's a bit of a mixed picture in different directions.

On the one hand, it's fair to say that at this moment there is definitely more people are interested. Secularism has been found wanting and people are open to the claims that Jesus makes. It's certainly been my experience in conversation with my friends who aren't Christians, people that I know who for all kinds of different reasons don't follow the Lord Jesus.

There is definitely a willingness to have more conversations about Him. And high profile people are doing the same and because of that the interest kind of gathers. You may have come across podcast land.

Out there in podcast land, the talking heads, lots of high profile people are starting to talk about Jesus and ask questions about Him and engage a little bit more than we saw 5, 10, 15 years ago.

[1:22] The Diary of a CEO podcast had a Christian on recently and they engaged on real questions about the real matters of life. It was fascinating. And last year, of course, Joe Rogan, top of the list on the podcast, most listened to podcast.

He was lamenting the state of the world and as part of his answer, he said, quote, we need Jesus, like for real. And we've seen that here in this church, people just turning up.

No church background. They don't own a Bible. No particular issues or crises in their life. It doesn't seem that there's anything that's driving them to ask these questions. They just want to know more about Jesus.

If that's you this evening, you're the person that I'm talking to. Wherever you stand on this discussion about who Jesus is and what He's come to do and His significance in the world, if you're a skeptic, if you're a critic, if you're dragged along here by someone else and you're just being polite, you're the person I'm speaking to this evening.

There is definitely more interest. However, on the other hand, there is still hardness and negativity towards Christianity. The sort of hardness and negativity that has marked Western thought really since the Enlightenment.

[2:35] I've got a friend locally where I live and he'll often say to me, how are you getting on, Reuben? How are the tooth fairies? All still good? That kind of thing. I've got friends and they'll say, look, I'll try and talk to them about the truth of Easter, the truth of the history of Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

And they'll say, I don't care if it's true. I don't want anything to do with a joyless religion. Here we are on Palm Sunday, 2026, and the picture is mixed.

Critics, skeptics, some people are interested, and then there are still those who are following Jesus. Christians who love to follow Jesus.

So the picture is mixed. Well, it was the same on that first Palm Sunday that we have recorded in Luke chapter 19. Jesus comes into Jerusalem in fulfillment of the Old Testament.

So all of this bit of the Bible being fulfilled in these pages at this point in the New Testament. And some people are delighted. Some people are celebrating.

[3:39] Have a look. Luke chapter 19, verse 36. As he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. People took their cloaks off and they put them on the road. It's a way of saying, you can trample over me.

You are of so much higher value than me. We are not worthy. It's that kind of statement. 37. As he was drawing near, already on the way down the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven and glory in the highest.

They see Jesus for who he is. They see him as God's promised king, the one that their whole history had been pointing to. And here he is among them and they bow down and they worship him. They are delighted in Jesus. And again, if you look, verse 48, he's teaching the people and they absolutely love it. All the people were hanging on his words.

Later on that evening, they said, it was unbelievable. As he spoke, I could have listened all day, all night. I couldn't get enough of it. Some are delighted, but that's not true of everyone.

[4:52] Look at verse 39. Some of the Pharisees in the crowd, that's some of the religious leaders, they said to Jesus, Teacher, rebuke your disciples. Tell these people that are celebrating and having such a good time to shut up.

Then verse 45, we get to the temple. The temple is the place where God is to be worshipped. It's been turned into a marketplace. It seems turning a church building into an edgy commercial enterprise isn't a new thing.

And to top it all off, the religious leaders will do whatever it takes to get them to the church.

Whatever it takes to get this Jesus out of the way. Look at verse 47. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him.

Two Palm Sundays, separated by centuries. And yet the way people feel about Jesus hasn't changed much. We're gathered here this evening and it's not that different over the centuries.

The question is, what do you make of this? Which crowd are you in? In fact, I guess a better question to ask, a more important question to ask is, what does Jesus make of this?

[6:03] What does Jesus make of the responses that people have to him? God's king has come. He has come to bring salvation and rescue from sin. That is what this bit of the Bible is claiming.

Because that's actually the thread that runs through the whole Bible. The whole Old Testament and New Testament. Here is God's king. He has come to deal with our biggest problem. He has come to put our broken world to rights.

He is the one, therefore, that provokes these responses. How does he feel about this mixed response? Well, we see how he feels. Or more accurately, we hear how he feels in verse 41.

It is the most striking thing about this story. Can you please look at verse 41? This is astonishing.

When he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it.

He came to all of this rejection. Some are celebrating. Some are rejecting. And he weeps. The word translated literally is, he wailed. As he drew near to the city, the city that was the center of God's dealings with his people, marked as it was by the temple, as the great sign of God's presence in their midst, he finds rebellion and rejection.

[7:16] And he cries out. Not in anger. Not in some sentimental kind of way. His response to this unbelief is compassion.

That's what the sense of the word is. He wept with compassion. And that's the first point I want us to see this evening. Jesus' compassion. We see this in the words then that break through the tears in verse 42. Verse 42.

Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace. Peace. Peace sounds good, doesn't it?

But it doesn't feel achievable. Certainly not in any kind of lasting way. When we look at our lives, when we look at our culture, when we look at the way things are in our experience, the idea of peace, it feels like something that is beyond our grasp.

Now, it's true that in the developed world, we've never had so much. But yet, we've never been so restless. We're anxious. Many of the traditional causes of anxiety, of course, the things that historically have been the cause of depression, anxiety, that kind of thing, they're in decline.

[8:30] Poverty, poor health, those kinds of things. But there are triggers all over the place. And the prescription of anti-anxiety medication has skyrocketed. And to make matters worse, the age of people that are being medicated with this sort of medication is dropping all the

time.

We're anxious. And we're angry. Of course, the 24-hour news cycle is designed to keep us angry and on edge because if you can have an anxious and angry population, you can control them and manipulate them.

But there is plenty going on that makes us cross. It seems, as we look around, that people's fuses just seem to be getting shorter and shorter. I went across London on the tube this morning, and I was sitting at the end of the carriage looking down on the parallel benches, and a guy got up from this side, and he went to get off.

He looked all very innocent to me. He got up and he walked past and he clipped somebody's foot on the way past, and they were into it. It was a full-blown row. He just clipped a shoe. He even apologized. No!

It blew up. That's not uncommon. We see that kind of thing all the time. And then, of course, social media just turbocharges the whole thing.

[9:40] We're restless. We're anxious. We can't switch off. It's survival of the fittest out there. And any piece that we think we can find is always just fleeting. Why is it like this?

Why is life like this? No one seems to be able to answer, actually. When we look out there, when we listen to the people in our culture, it just seems to me that the presumption is if we can get more of the right stuff, we'll be okay.

But the thing we know is the more of the right stuff that we get, whatever the right stuff is, the people that are selling it, of course, tell you what the right stuff is, but the more we get of that doesn't really seem to work.

The man I once heard say, we're still climbing the wall of worry.

We're anxious. We're angry. We're restless. We're worried. Why is that? Why can't we find a solution? The Bible can explain it. You see, the lack of peace in our experience is because, fundamentally, we're not at peace with the God who made us.

[10:51] One theologian has said this, we're not at peace with others because we're not at peace with God.

That summarizes the answer. That is the only answer to the restlessness, the anxiety, the anger that we feel. Every single one of us was created for a relationship with God, the God who made us. And every single one of us, by nature, has turned our back on that relationship. We've taken all of the gifts that He's given us, life and breath and friends and fun and all the things that we enjoy, and we've taken them, all given generously by God, and like a brattish child, we've snatched and we've not said thank you.

There's been a bit more sun out recently. The weather has taken a bit of a turn, it seems. Maybe gone back again, I don't know. But the sun comes out. The minute the sun comes out, the creams are out.

And they're down by the sun, standing outside, in an ice cream van, saying, I want a 99.

[12:05] I want a 99. And the mother said, come on Milo, come on. We live near Chiswick. I don't know, that's how it is down there. Come on Milo, we're going home.

And Milo, bald and bald, stamped his feet. It was an astonishing thing to see. So his mum did what? She bought him a 99. There you go, darling. And even that wasn't enough.

He grabbed it and it was as if he shoved his face into it as fast as he can, just stuffed it in his mouth without a word. And we think about that. I want it, I want it, I want it. You get it and you stuff it in your face and you don't say anything.

There's something not right about that. And yet, truth is, we're all Milo when it comes to God. That's what the Bible means by sin.

Give me what I want on my terms, God. And so understandably, that has led to hostility between us. That has led to a lack of peace.

[13:03] And yet, Jesus tells us here in Luke chapter 19, that he is a sinner. Hostility. Peace with God.

Peace with God. What he wants. The people didn't want it.

Again and again, as Jesus has taught them, as he has shown them in his miracles who he is, and they've ignored it and they've rejected him, and now they're plotting to destroy him.

And in the face of all of this, his heart breaks. And I want to say to you this evening, that Jesus holds out that same compassion to you.

However you have lived up to this point, Jesus comes to you with compassion and the offer of peace. And maybe you're saying, okay, fine, well, shrug your shoulders.

[14:07] And you say, well, look, I'm not the man or woman that I wish I was, but at least I'm not like them, whoever they might be. The person that you think is the worst version of whoever it could be.

Well, I'm not perfect, but I'm not them. And because of that, you don't think you need Jesus. Well, you might not be as bad as them, whoever they are, but as far as Jesus is concerned, well, that's actually neither here nor there.

You can always find someone who's worse than you. If that's the standard, you're fine. But that's not the standard, because you're not evaluated according to them.

You're evaluated according to how you've treated God and his gifts in your life. And when your life is lived on your terms in God's world, when your life is lived like Milo, there's an eternity between you and God.

Maybe you're coming at this from another direction and you're saying, you don't know what I've done. You don't know what I've done. The God of heaven won't have compassion on me.

[15:10] You're right, I don't know what you've done. I didn't become a Christian until I was an adult. I know how bad things can be. Plus, don't forget this. Jesus weiled because of the rejection of people who wanted to kill him.

And yet, if they had humbled themselves, he would have shown them mercy. Look at verse 42 again. Would that you, even you, even you who want to kill me.

If you'd known on this day the things that make for peace. I want to say this. However you conceive of yourself, Jesus meets you with compassion.

And you need that compassion. He weeps over rebellious Jerusalem. And that same broken hearted posture is how he meets you. It is an astonishing thing.

Despite taking all that he has given you. Despite the worst version of Milo that there could ever be. Turning your back on him. Demanding what you want. Getting it. Shoving it in your face.

[16:18] No thanks. He wants you to come to him for peace. And he meets you with compassion. It's too late for the Pharisees.

The old order of Israel. Would that you had known the things that make for peace. But, now they're hidden from your eyes. They have missed their chance. But it's not too late for you this evening.

Turn to the Lord. Ask him for peace. And he will have compassion. And the battle that rages at the level of your soul. That leaves you restless and anxious and angry.

It will cease. The peace of knowing the love of God for you will flood your life. Give yourself over to Jesus. And can I say? Do it quickly.

Because just as it was for Israel. This offer of peace won't be held out forever. Don't mistake Jesus' compassion for weakness. Because as we read on. Here's the second thing.

[17:18] More briefly. Here's the second thing I want you to see. We also hear his warning. Jesus' warning. He says to these people that are rejecting him. You had your chance. But now, verse 43. The days will come upon you when your enemies will set up a barricade round you.

And surround you. And hem you in on every side. And tear you down to the ground. You and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you. He promises to meet their hard hearts with judgment.

It is a terrifying thought. And he goes to the temple. He turns over the tables. He denounces their leaders. He's acting out there symbolically what will happen when the greater judgment comes.

Here's the thing.

All that he's saying here will happen. Happened as he promised when Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70. A matter of a couple of decades after he says this. Not a stone of the temple was left.

The Roman emperor Titus sacked the city. And that's not just a niche historic fact. I want to tell you that is. It shows us that Jesus keeps his word. So then when we read later in the New Testament in Acts 17.

[18:24] That God has fixed a day on which he will judge the world. Not just this group. But the whole world. In righteousness. By a man whom he has appointed. Which man is that?

Do we know which man it is that he has appointed? Yes we do. He goes on. And of this he has given us assurance to all by raising him from the dead. Who has he raised from the dead? This same Lord Jesus that first Easter Sunday.

God has promised a much bigger judgment even than AD 70. On the last day for all who reject him the way the Pharisees do. And just as he kept his word about Jerusalem.

So he will keep his word about the last judgment. And we know he'll keep his word because of the empty tomb on Easter Sunday. Do you like all that stuff about compassion?

You're okay with that. You can tolerate that. But this sounds a bit much. You didn't come out this evening. You're saying because you wanted to hear about judgment. That's a bit heavy. I don't like it.

[19:22] Well I want to say this. You actually want a God who acts in justice like this. If someone walked into your house and mistreated your property. They would feel your wrath.

And so they should. That's completely right and proper. If you abuse somebody's stuff. You should expect them to judge you accordingly. Well God is no different. Or if you come at it the other way. If there's no accounting for the way that we have lived in God's world.

It doesn't ultimately matter how you live. It doesn't matter how you live. It doesn't matter how I live. I can treat you how I like. And you can do the same with me. My father. He was a decent man.

He worked hard. He treated his family well. He was very kind. And he was very generous to all kinds of people. Across the cemetery. Matter of meters away from where he is buried.

Are the graves of terrorists. Who gave their lives to killing and destroying other people. If there is no final judgment. If there is no justice in the world.

[20:21] It doesn't matter which one of those two lives you have lived. Because no one will have to give an account. Can you see? We want justice. When there's an injustice in the world.

We're outraged. Of course we are. There's something about that in the depths of who we are. We want to see justice. This is true justice. We want to know that wicked people didn't get away with their crimes.

And hard. Shocking as it is to hear. This is why what Jesus promises here. In this warning. Is good news. The question for you. The question for us all.

Will you heed the warning? The heart of the Lord Jesus is full of compassion. For all who will turn to him. And receive the peace.

The peace with God that he has come to bring. And he can make this offer to you. Because of where he's headed. You see Palm Sunday is the start of his final week. A week that will take him to the cross of Good Friday.

[21:21] And on that cross. We don't see a victim of a corrupt regime being killed. We see the Son of God taking the judgment that we deserve in himself.

So that we don't need to. The King who comes on Palm Sunday in the name of the Lord.

Is the King who suffers to bring you peace. Will you grasp the one who makes for peace? Peace with God that works its way out in your life.

So that you can live without the frantic, the anxious, the angry spirit that marks so many of us. In the midst of this mixed picture. About opinions of Jesus.

Will you settle it. That you will join those who worship him rather than reject him. Come to Jesus for peace. There is nowhere else to go. You can come to him now.

[22:21] In your seat. Cry out to him in your heart. And he will meet you with compassion. Come back on Friday to hear more on Good Friday morning. Come back next Sunday.

Easter Sunday morning and evening. Come back any given Sunday. We are here with the same message of this Jesus. As he walks off the pages of the Bible. Come back. Come to the Christianity Explored course that we're running as well.

Missed opportunities can haunt you. Remember Blockbuster? Remember the DVD stores? When Blockbuster were flying high, they were worth a fortune.

The CEO famously turned down the chance to buy Netflix for a mere 50 million pounds. Dollars maybe. I don't know. 50 million dollars. Netflix. It was the new kid on the block.

The CEO didn't think there was a future in something called streaming. Today Blockbuster. That's right. It's bankrupt. Netflix is worth over 150 billion.

[23:21] We all have our stories of missed opportunities. The religious establishment in Israel missed an opportunity that cost them way more than 150 billion dollars. It cost them their eternity.

I want to say this to you this evening. Don't make the same mistake. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.