

Luke 19:28-40

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[0 : 00] And doing Luke chapter 19, Luke 19, verses 28 to 44.

! So, if you watch a TV program, and you get the box sets, you can watch over and over again, what you find is, as you watch it for the second or third time, that certain new things keep jumping out at you, don't they? Or if you go to an art gallery, and you sit before a painting, you will find that as you sit and look, that things jump out of the painting which you've never seen before. And I think that's the way it is with the triumphal entry. That as we read these passages, which are so familiar, which for many of us, they've been familiar with us since we were children, we're often seeing something we've not seen before. And as we go back and read and read and re-read, particularly the passion narratives, and we see new things. So let me encourage you this week, if you're not in the habit of reading your Bible regularly, or if you're not in the habit of kind of daily reading your Bible, that you've slipped, why not this week take the four Gospels, and read, what does Luke have to say about the triumphal entry, and then the following day, look at what does Matthew have to say about the crucifixion, and read Mark's account of the Garden of Gethsemane, and then John, and read them over this week, next morning, Sunday morning, get up early and read what each one has to say on the resurrection. I promise you that as you do that, you will find things you've not seen before. So let's go back and set the scene. It's what we call Palm

Sunday. It's the week before Jesus' resurrection. And I want us to see four things tonight. I want us to see, first of all, an unnoticed miracle. An unnoticed miracle. Look at verse 30.

Jesus saying, go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a coat, baby donkey tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. Go to verse 35.

And they brought it, that is, the donkey to Jesus, throwing their cloaks on the coat, and they sacked Jesus of it. Do you see the words there, which are interesting, in verse 30?

[2 : 45] On which no one has ever yet sat. We are city people, aren't we, in the main? And that doesn't mean very much to us. But I think if you get raised on a farm, that will immediately raise an eyebrow, won't it? This was a wild coat. This is an unbroken donkey. He is untamed.

Some of the ones at the beach, you know, that you kind of pull along. And Luke deliberately makes the point, and Jesus makes the point, doesn't he? He says, it has to be a coat that has not been ridden on before. That's why I grew up in Swansea, you may not know that.

In the school I played with you, you would go to every Wednesday afternoon, you would go to different schools and play rugby. So if you went to Oslovera, there would be sheep on the rugby pitch, and before you played, you would have to get the sheep off the rugby pitch. But if you went to Penland, there would be wild horses and donkeys on the rugby pitch, and you would have to try and get them off the pitch. It was absolutely terrifying. I don't know whether you've seen a wild horse or a wild donkey. You can't get hold of them, can you? Unbroken donkeys will bite you. They will try what they do. They will try and scrape you to get onto them against feats and fences and barns. So for Jesus to get on an unused coat and ride so calmly, well, it's quite something, isn't it? Why an unused coat?

Well, we could look at the theological side, couldn't we? And we could say, well, it had to be set aside for holy use. It's interesting, as then, this theme of something unused. You think of the womb of Mary, the Virgin Mary. Her womb is unused before it housed Jesus. And then you go to the end of Jesus' life, and Joseph of Arimathea, that tomb that he was buried in, was unused. But in the Old Testament, that is fitting. When something is set aside for holy use, it could not have been used before. Before that time or for anything else. Now, there is fulfilment in the Old Testament in the life of Jesus that we will not realise until we get to heaven. But I think it goes beyond that, that this coat was unused because it was set aside for holy use. There's an unnoticed miracle that occurs every day over and over again. We try to see it. Jesus used an unbroken coat. He rode a coat and was

not thrown off.

He rode a wild coat and he used it for his own purpose. And there is a sense, isn't it, where that is what Jesus has done in every single one of our lives. We can all relate to that.

[5 : 33] Every single one of us has got wild and rebellious hearts and untamed hearts. And Jesus causes us to submit to his will and to his authority. And so we ought to smile as we read this story.

We ought to say to our children, to our friends, I am like that donkey. Every day Jesus has to conquer my will, conquer my mind. It's a continual action in my life. You must break my will. You must tame my tongue, Lord. You must put blindness on my eyes. There is a taming, a domestic justification that needs to occur. None of us are born with hearts that were more likely to be chained or broken by others. So when we look at the world, we don't say, well, that person is just too wild to Christ. Because we know, don't we? We can choose the most unlikely person in all the world to become a Christian if we can say, well, my heart, well, it's certainly as bad as that person's heart. None of us are born with hearts that are more likely to be broken than others. There's a breaking that goes on and on and on. Every day Jesus battles for my will to turn my tongue and master my heart. You see, it's an unnoticed miracle, isn't it?

That just goes by us. Secondly, we see a planned announcement. I was told this this morning. Let's see it again. Verse 29. Verse 29. When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, saying, go into the village in front of you where on entering you will find a coat tied on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you why you're untying it, you shall say, yes, the Lord has need of it.

So those who were sent away and found it just as he had told them. And as they were untying the coat, he said, I want to say to them, why are you untying the coat? And they said, the Lord has need of it. And they brought to Jesus and throwing their cloaks on the coat, they sent Jesus on it. And as he walked along, they spread their cloaks on the road. So again, we need to ask the question, why didn't Jesus walk into Jerusalem? He'd made the journey many times before, but he'd never gone to this sort of trouble, did he? He just walked into the city. And yet this time he goes to great lengths to arrive in a particular way. And many times from the beginning of his ministry, he had announced that he was the Messiah, that he was deity.

[7 : 49] It wasn't that that title was laid on him, it was a title from the very beginning, a title that he was reaching out to claim. So do you remember when he came back, we talked about it again this morning, he went to his home synagogue, and they give him the scriptures, and he turns for passage that everyone in the synagogue knew spoken Messiah. And he reads that passage by his own choice. And then he said to the congregation, well, we're looking forward to the day the Messiah comes, aren't we? No, he didn't. No, he says, this day before your very eyes, in your very hearing, this passage has been fulfilled. Messiah is here. And they understood what he was saying and they tried to kill him. And so as he enters Jerusalem on this last week of his life, before the cross, he was choosing to say it one more time. But why did he choose to say it here?

Matthew chapter 21, verse 4, quotes that passage, doesn't it? From Zechariah chapter 9 that we looked at this morning. Let me read it to you. This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, 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. The rabbis of Jesus' day, they knew exactly what Zechariah chapter 9, verse 9 was about. And if you asked a rabbi in Jesus' day, well, who is the guy riding on the donkey from Zechariah chapter 9, verse 9, they would have said, it's the Messiah. That's how he will come to Jerusalem. So as Jesus comes to Jerusalem in this crucial week, the week before his crucifixion, as he enters it, he says, I must come on a donkey. And the crowds understand what he's doing. Chapter 19, verse 38, they say, blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. It's Messiah.

Peace in heaven and glory in the highest. They look at him and they call him king. This is Messiah. This is the king. And notice Jesus is making claim for himself again, isn't he?

This is either egomania at its height. This is a man saying, I am Messiah, and I will ride into Jerusalem as the son of God. Just like the son of God was supposed to do. And Jesus is the one who orchestrates this, not the disciples. C.S. Lewis puts it beautifully like this. He says, if you've gone to Buddha and said, are you the son of Rama? He would have said, my son, you are still in the veil of illusion. If you'd gone to Socrates and said, are you Zeus? He would have laughed at you. If you'd gone to Maharad and said, are you Allah? He would have first rent his clothes and then cut off your head. If he'd asked Confucius, are you Nirvana? I think he probably would have replied

with remarks that are in bad taste. The idea of a great moral teacher saying what Christ said is simply out of a question, in my opinion.

So, it says, the only person who can say that sort of thing is either God or a complete lunatic suffering from delusion. He is never regarded as a mere moral teacher. He did not produce that effect on any of the people who actually met him. He produced mainly three effects, didn't he? He produced hatred, he produced terror, he produced adoration. There is no trace of people expressing mild approval of him. So, you look at this passage and you see an unnoticed miracle with the cult. And you see a planned announcement that is orchestrated by Jesus.

[11 : 29] And then you see, thirdly, a simple praise. Look at verse 37. As he was drawing the ear already on the way down from the mountain wallets. The whole mountain of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that he has seen.

Saying, blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest. Most of these folks, they sincerely believe that Jesus was Messiah. But they've got a complete misunderstanding of what he'd come to do. I think I could argue and say every person in this room, even the little ones, have probably a better understanding of what Jesus came to do than the crowd at this point. Of who he was and what he came to do, including his disciples. Do you realise that? That every one of us here tonight probably understands more about Jesus than they did on that day. Because a crucified Saviour was beyond their reference. The cross for them was beyond their comprehension. But notice, which is very interesting, is that Jesus does not try and correct their theological misconceptions. There is no longer than that. But what does Jesus do? Well, he accepts their praise. And he loves their simple praise. Well, I hope as a church family, we are a church family that loves the

Bible. And we love to study the Scriptures. And I hope we love theology. We love to learn about God. We love to learn about Reformed theology because we believe it teaches us about what the church has taught about God. And I hope that we enjoy that. I hope we read that. I hope we discuss it. That's a good thing. Never be put off from that. But I want you to notice here, Jesus did not say to those around him who knew much, much less. He did not say, you've got no idea what you're doing. You don't know what you're doing. He just laughed for them.

He enjoyed their praise. And they did not yet get that he had come to die for their sins. They did not yet get that. They did not yet get the cross. But they had one thing right.

They understood that he was the Messiah. And that he had come to their city and that was all the matter. Then he came to Jerusalem. Now I occasionally go and speak in places where their theology is very, very different to mine. Christian Union is a kind of a bugbearer of my life. So I was at Kingston Christian Union earlier this year. It was the most incredible thing. And we were singing. Singing has changed. They were now leading. And they stopped singing.

[14 : 30] Just the guys at the front were singing like a soldier. And there were many things that I didn't appreciate. At times I thought some of the guys leading the service was quite bananas really. And it grated on me. But I did have to say this. They did love the Lord Jesus.

And that was evident. And some of them loved the Lord Jesus more than me. I'm sure of that. And we do have to recognise that. And we do need to understand that we in Luke 19, these people, they had absolutely no idea what their theology at this point. And yet Jesus accepted their simple praise. It's quite shocking. An unnoticed miracle, a plain announcement, a simple praise. And then fourthly an early celebration. Look at verse 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 they had seen. Saying, blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest. An early celebration. This is a party, isn't it? This is a celebration. And for years I've wondered about it. It seems so out of place, doesn't it? Where is Jesus going? He is riding to the cross. It seems so out of place. It's like singing a funeral dirge at a wedding. It's like singing a wedding song at a funeral. This isn't the time for it. This is no such place for such joy and laughter. Just a few hours from now, just a few days, Jesus would say, he would have a lot of utter horrific words. He would say, just flick over the page in Luke 22 and verse 53. When I was with you, day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me, but this is your hour. And the power of darkness. That's where Jesus had him. Jesus had him to a place where darkness reigns. And that's why this parade, it seems so paradoxical, doesn't it? This singing and this dancing, it seems so out of place. But there's a great message here for us tonight. There are many times in this fallen world, too many times when darkness reigns. But we are still called, we are still

called to the dance. We are still called to the song. And there are some Christians that never, ever, ever understand that. They never understand that Jesus has called us to the dance. That he's called us to the song. That he's called us to the party. They say things which are theologically correct. They say we live in a fallen world. And of course, that is true, isn't it? There are some terrible things in this world. There are some terrible things in your lives at the moment. Some of which you're experiencing. And yet Paul said to the Philippians in the middle of it all, didn't he? Rejoice in the Lord always. And again I say rejoice. And these people who would be so continually locked in their pessimism, they must go to Jesus and say to Jesus, well I know what's going to happen on Friday. I'm on the inside track, Lord. I know that this is not a time for dancing and singing. I know more than these people. Jesus, I'll mourn with you. And Jesus would say, then well you are mourned by yourself. For I will sing and I will dance with my people. Jesus, this Friday you will be hanging on a Roman cross and God will pour the wrath of heaven and judgment upon you. And Jesus would say back to us, yes, by Sunday my grave will be empty. And this is just an early celebration that these people are giving the King. And on notice miracle, a planned announcement, a simple praise, an early celebration, finally and lastly, an overlooked prophecy. Look at verses 39. I love this.

Verse 39, some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, teacher rebuke your disciples. And he answered them, I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.

Now if you read the commentaries on this, I will say, well Jesus is obviously speaking metaphorically, isn't he? He's speaking in a kind of generic way, creation recognizes he is the Lord, I am the King. But actually I don't think that's right. I don't think this is hyperbole. I don't think this is spiritual truth. I think this is a prophecy. So I've turned over with me to Matthew chapter 27. Let's see later on that week what happened. Matthew chapter 27 verses 50 and 51. It's on page 835. Verse 50 of Matthew 27. Jesus cried out with a loud voice and yielded a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. Behold the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, which we often talk about, don't we? And the earth shook and the rocks were split. The disciples were quiet, but the rocks were not. Go down to verse 54.

[20 : 14] When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake, the rocks split. And what took place? They were filled with awe and said, truly this was the Son of God. The disciples were quiet. But at the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the rocks cried out.

And the people hear what the rocks are saying. And Jesus, Jesus, tell them to be quiet. Jesus, tell them to be quiet. They are calling you the Messiah that is blasphemous. And Jesus said, if I tell them to be quiet, the very rocks will scream. During the atheistic French Revolution, the kind of diabolical leaders, they entered a small French town with their troops. And they were there to burn down the church and everyone in the town. And he confronted one of the Christian leaders there and he said, we will tear down this church and we will burn what's left. And we will burn this Bible and burn your hymnals. And then what will you do? There will no longer be a word of Jesus. The French woman was undaunted. He looked at his attacker and he said, well, who will tear down the sun and the moon? Who will snuff out the stars? Will you tear down the sun? Will you also snuff out the stars? And then he said this, the heavens declare the glory of God. And the earth shows forth his handiwork. The Pharisees say, shut them up or we will. Jesus says, shut them up and the stones of the earth will shout the message. An unnoticed miracle. A planned announcement. A simple praise. An early celebration. And an overlooked prophecy.

This is your God, the servant king. And I call you now to worship him. Let's bow ahead some prayer.