

# Luke 19:28-40

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[ 0 : 00 ] A few years ago I was showing a friend around London and we were walking down by Green Park and then across the front of Buckingham Palace and just to the side of the railings, the gates opened and a car drove out with the Queen sitting in the back seat on her own.

And there was a sense in which it was just a very ordinary thing. It was as if her driver was just taking her down to the shop to get some milk. There weren't any outriders or anything else. There was one motorcycle that had sort of gone to clear a bit in front of her but it seemed very ordinary just popping out.

But of course there was also something extraordinary about it because as the car emerged and as people realized who was actually sitting in the back, there was a huge fuss. People grabbing their phones wanting to get a photograph and people sort of standing up straight in the presence of Majesty. I think I even waved. I didn't know what to do.

I've just seen the Queen. She was, I don't know, literally 10 feet away. The car was just so close and people had this, there was something about the grandeur of royalty that drew out this response. Nobody had told anybody how to react. Nobody had said you stand up straight, you acknowledge her presence as she comes past, you celebrate, you do whatever it is.

[ 1 : 30 ] Nobody had said you stand up straight, you do whatever it is. Nobody had said that there was just something within all of us. There was probably over 50 people gathered there who reacted instinctively. There was something of the grandeur of who was there that drew this response.

That's what we see on this first Palm Sunday. In Luke's account, in Luke chapter 19, which is a more mere account than the other Gospels, we see this.

Jesus is declared to be God's King. Look at verse 38. As he comes down the hill, instinctively people cry out and cheer.

Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. The presence of this one in their midst draws this response from them. The triumphal entry is something that the church marks on Palm Sunday, so we're going to do that this morning.

I want us to walk through Luke's account here. As I say, it's a bit briefer than perhaps Matthew's account, but it is telling us about the King, about God's King who has come.

[ 2 : 36 ] It is drawing out, particularly I want us to see three elements of this story. The first is his control. The first thing we see about God's King in this account is his control.

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 colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat.

Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, why are you untying it? You shall say this, the Lord has need of it. So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them.

And as they were untying the colt, its owner said to them, why are you untying the colt? And they said, the Lord has need of it. And they brought it to Jesus. If you think about Jesus' posture in the Gospels, it's actually quite unusual for him to express a need in this way.

I can't think of another time that he says, go and get that because I need it. But he does it here because he is orchestrating these events. And in order to do that, he needs the colt.

[ 3 : 49 ] The colt that Matthew tells us is the foal of a donkey. Now to start with, as we go through here, we see Jesus' control in the unfolding of the details of the day.

You see that. He says, go into the village. That village in front of you. Just pass the welcome to Bethphage sign, you'll find a colt tied there to a railing.

It's a young colt. Untie it and bring it to me. Oh, and if anyone asks you what they're doing, just tell them the Lord has need of it. Off the disciples go. And everything that he said will happen, happens.

The colt was there. The people asked the question. The disciples had been told that they would. They answer it as they should. And the colt is now standing beside Jesus. Now the colt belongs to Jesus by virtue of the fact that he created it.

Colossians 1 tells us, by him all things were created in heaven and on earth. That's true of the colt. It's also true of the disciples. And it's true of the owners of the colt as well.

[ 4 : 53 ] So there's a sense in which there's nothing untoward about any of this. Everything is as it should be. The Lord of heaven and earth, who owns it all by the fact that he created it, demands that his property comes to him.

And so it does. But Luke is giving us these details to show us that all that is happening is under the hand of the king of kings. And therefore all that will unfold in the coming days is also under the control of that same king.

No surprises. No surprises. No mistakes. No accidents. No accidents. How much does Jesus' control of everything factor in your life?

Whether it is the colt tied up in Bethphage or the traffic on your route to wherever you're wanting to go in a hurry or the unexpected diagnosis.

Do you see that Jesus is in complete control? The Lord of glory ordains every detail of the unfolding of your life.

[ 6 : 09 ] The good, the bad, and even also the ugly. He orders your steps. He provides what you have. He allows your bad decisions to play out.

You are where you are in life because Jesus is in control. Do you acknowledge this? Do you acknowledge that your life is not just some unfolding story that has no real direction?

Or that in some way you are in control in the details of everything? The Lord Jesus is in control of it all.

Now acknowledging that means that we will thank Him for the blessings. Because they're not ultimately our doing. It will mean you will trust Him for your struggles.

Because they are serving a purpose that you can't yet see. And it will mean allowing His Word as your authority to shape your goals and your vision for life.

[ 7 : 22 ] If Jesus is in control of everything, as He makes clear here, you should submit your life to serve His glory, not your glory. And we should repent of the desire to do otherwise.

Now one way this is seen is how we think about what we have. The things that we possess. When Jesus asks for something from you, whether that is your time, or your money, or your children, or even your worship.

As He demands that we gather Lord's Day by Lord's Day to worship Him, He makes that call on us. As He does that, do you respond like the owners of this cult? The Lord has need of it.

The Lord requires it. The Lord has asked for it. He demands it of you. However you hear those words here. Do you see that the owners give up their cult? There's no record of them saying, hang on a second.

They gave up their cult immediately. They didn't grumble. They didn't say, but this cult is my favorite one. This cult is mine. This cult is...

[ 8 : 45 ] I've got a special bond with it. No, they gave it up to their Lord and King. They lived with open hands. Everything that you possess, your time, your money, your children, your stuff, whatever, whatever you would fit into that, your dot, dot, dot, whatever it is, He owns it anyway.

Those things are all just on loan to you from Him, so hold them loosely. Well, to start with, Jesus controls the events of the day, but the control reaches further, and it reaches higher.

The very reason that He chooses this cult as His transport into Jerusalem is because in doing so, He is bringing to fulfillment an Old Testament prophecy. Back in Zechariah chapter 9, it says this, 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. A cult, the foal of a donkey.

The cult is His chosen means of transport because it is the sign that He is this Messiah King. That was what the Old Testament said to look for.

[ 10 : 00 ] Look for one who comes on a cult. And what that tells us is that the unfolding, it's not just the unfolding of the events of that day, it is the unfolding of history, and particularly salvation history, that are also in the hands of Jesus.

The one on the cult is the Lord of all. The Lord of all. He is the Lord of the very highest.

He is the Lord of the Queen who drove out in the car that day. He is the Lord of the King who sits on our throne today. He is the Lord of our government. He is the Lord of every one of us and every possible echelon that there is in society.

Every politician. Every sportsman. What have we got today? The masters. We've got every golfer at the masters and every one of his caddies.

We've got the boat race. We've got every Cambridge and every Oxford Blue all under the control and authority of this King.

[11:08] He is the Lord of all. There is great reassurance in that. When we hear of authority like that, it can make us fearful, but there is great reassurance for us in this.

When you trust yourself to this man, you are in the hands of the one who runs the universe and who is on your side. But there's also something important about his using a colt and that's our second point here as Luke shows us.

First of all, he shows us his control. Secondly, he shows us his humility. His humility. Verse 33, And as they were untying the colt, its owner said to them, Why are you untying the colt?

And they said, The Lord has need of it. And they brought it to Jesus and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it and as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road.

By choosing to ride into Jerusalem on a colt, Jesus isn't just fulfilling the ancient prophecy of Zechariah 9, but he's making a statement about the nature of the kingship of the one who is the king of Zechariah 9.

[12:15] Now ordinarily, a king would come, we know, with pomp and grandeur and all of the pageantry that we saw at the coronation of King Charles. Roads are closed, horses and carriages are prepared with trained professionals in charge.

There are robes and crowns and scepters and dozens of people playing their part in a huge spectacle. There's none of that with King Jesus. The colt was the sign, the prop, if you like, of the humble character of the rule of God's Messiah.

And he rides in, seated not on a royal saddle, but on the coats of some of his friends. When you come to Jesus, this is the character of the king that you worship.

The Lord of glory, the one who is in control of all, the Son of God from all eternity, who entered this world through the womb of a virgin, enters the royal city seated on the coats of his friends on the back of a donkey.

Jesus is a different kind of king. And so, his rule is a different kind of kingship. One that is marked by meekness and humility rather than military might.

[13:28] One where, when he is opposed, he responds by doing what? By laying down his life. And Jesus comes to each of us with that same humility.

He doesn't bulldoze his way into our lives. But he gives us an invitation. Matthew chapter 11, verse 28. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Have you taken him up on that offer? Have you received that invitation for yourself? In a day when people in power seem to have little regard for the regular man on the street.

Our current government just keeps reaching further and further into the lives of its citizens, taking and taking and taking some more, whether it's our savings or our freedoms or our benefits.

[14:33] They don't care. They just want to take. But Jesus, the one who controls the universe, comes to you and he says, I'll be gentle with you.

I'll not take, but I'll give. Here's rest for your soul. Here's rest for those longings deep in your heart that you can't satisfy any other way.

Here it is. And here's a law for life that won't burden you but will be light and freeing if you live by it. Have you come to this king?

You do that by repenting of your sin, saying sorry for living life on your terms, turning your life around and giving yourself over to him and in doing that you're entrusting yourself to his humble, loving care.

Of course, we don't just take him up on this offer but those of us who have done that, we must also follow his example. If Jesus is the humble king that everyone who takes his name, that is everyone who calls themselves Christian, well then we should serve in the same kind of humble way.

[ 15 : 42 ] Given who he is, Jesus could have ridden into the city on a war horse but he chose the posture of a humble servant. The question we have to ask is in what ways is that posture visible in our lives?

If you have taken the name of Christ, is that humble posture visible in the way that you live? That will look different for each of us, of course it will, but let's remind ourselves that Palm Sunday is about the humility of our king and those who take his name must follow his lead.

Well we see first his control, secondly his humility and then the third detail Luke wants us to grasp. Perhaps the center of the story here is how Jesus then receives thirdly his worship, his worship, his control, his humility and then thirdly his worship.

It starts in verse 35 and they brought it to Jesus, the colt, and throwing their cloaks on the colt they set Jesus on it and as he rode along they spread their cloaks on the road.

This is the first open acknowledgement that Jesus is their king and the worship actually starts as the disciples put their cloaks on the colt and then lift Jesus onto it.

[ 16 : 56 ] It's like when a sports team lifts their coach or their star player onto their shoulders when they win the championship. It's a statement of honor and of glory and in fact it's a little glimpse of Jesus' exaltation.

They are lifting him up and then they lay their cloaks on the ground. The other gospels of course include the palm branches which was an ancient way to welcome a king.

This is a symbolic red carpet that is being rolled out in front of him. It's a way of saying if your colt walks on my clothes it's not an insult to me it's an honor. It's a privilege.

And then as he heads down it starts there with him being lifted up but then he heads down the Mount of Olives then the vocal praise starts up. 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 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.

The disciples proclaim him for who he is. He's the king and their words the words that they're using are an echo of Psalm 118 verse 26 blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord we bless you from the house of the Lord.

[ 18 : 14 ] It was one of the Psalms that the pilgrims sang as they went up to Jerusalem for the feast. They knew that that Psalm was the promise of the royal king and so here they see Jesus on the colt and they say there he is and they change blessed is he to blessed is the king.

Here he is. Here is our king. The king that we have waited centuries for he's in our midst. Jesus is God's king.

The one who is in control the one who comes in great humility is God's king and so it is fitting that his people would worship him. He has brought God's kingdom purposes to pass.

He has brought peace in heaven between God and man. He's going to the cross in order to accomplish that and so the disciples see him and they can't but worship him.

It is the only fitting response that their hearts would be lifted and that they would celebrate the one we've been waiting for. The king of the world is here. Now of course that's not true for everyone that was gathered at the parade that day.

[ 19 : 26 ] Look at verse 39. There they are hanging around like a bad smell as they always do. The Pharisees they're having none of it. All of this celebration and they're pulling their faces down in the worst possible look they can get.

Tell the disciples to shut up. Teacher rebuke your disciples for all this celebration. Of course Jesus can't do that can he? He can't do it because that option isn't open to him because to do that would be actually to engage in a cosmic lie.

It would be to tell an untruth about reality. To rebuke anyone for giving him glory would be to deny his true identity and he can't do that. It would also be to engage in idolatry because he would be saying that someone or something else is worthy of worship which is also not true.

He can't do that either. And actually he can't do it because it would be to deny the disciples the greatest privilege any man any woman boy or girl can enjoy and that is to give glory to the one who stands at the center of reality.

You know that that is our highest privilege that we get to worship the king of glory. That is what we were made for to glorify God and enjoy him forever and to be denied the ability to do that by the God of glory would be frankly absurd.

[ 20 : 54 ] Which is why even if the disciples didn't speak up it wouldn't matter because verse 40 the very stones would cry out. Creation itself would open its mouth in praise of the one who is at the center of all reality.

The question for us this morning is where would you be standing? if you were at the parade that day would you be worshipping or would you be whinging with the Pharisees?

And it comes down where you stand comes down to what you make of the claim that Jesus is God's king. C.S. Lewis famously said that we only have three choices.

Either Jesus is deluded about himself or he is engaged in a grand deceit that is he knows he isn't God's king but he's playing along so either he thinks he is but he's not.

He knows he isn't but he's playing along with this great deceit. Either he is a lunatic or a liar or actually he is who the Bible presents him to be and that is Lord Lord of all.

[ 22 : 05 ] Those are the only options open to us. Here's Lewis you must make your choice. Either this man was and is the son of God or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about him being a great human teacher.

He's not left that option open to us. He did not intend to. So will you humble yourself before this king? Will you join the parade of those who give him glory and praise?

He doesn't need you. The whole of creation even the inanimate creation will give him the glory he deserves but he does invite you into this relationship with him.

Will you stand at a distance with the Pharisees or will you follow him in praise with the disciples?

And here's the thing as amazing as that first Palm Sunday was Jesus has even more glory now because this ride to Jerusalem was not to a coronation but to a cross where he was lifted up to his crucifixion and that death was a further glory as it purchased us from our sins.

And then three days later he was further glorified as he was raised from the dead triumphing over death. Death couldn't hold him. He put death to death.

[ 23 : 36 ] And then again after that he is exalted even further to his father's right hand where he now sits. We're here this morning he is at his father's right hand in glory seated on his royal throne.

There was glory on that first Palm Sunday but there is even more glory now. The question is what will you do with this king? And for those of us who do follow him do you see the challenge?

There is a very obvious challenge to us I think in the public nature of his homage here. There is no such thing as private Christianity. When you name the name of Christ you are submitting your life to the king who has total authority as I said at the beginning.

He has total claim over you over every mouse click every phone conversation every WhatsApp message every Instagram post every choice about a job every girlfriend boyfriend or spouse and every decision about how to raise your children and every other decision as well.

The Christian does all of that under the lordship of King Jesus. But that lordship is also radically subversive because when we when we claim that he is our lord no other authority than Christ is ultimate.

[ 25 : 00 ] No government no economic forum no HR department no influencer. So where these voices come our way and insist that we deny the lordship of Christ either by word or by action we have to say no.

And that's a challenge. It is a challenge in our day because the pressure to do this is rising in all kinds of ways. In our culture in our education in medical ethics corporate demands whatever it might be when you name the name of Christ as Lord no one else is Lord.

and we must follow God rather than man. But as we close this morning in the face of all of this in the face of that challenge I want us to allow the fact of Jesus kingship to encourage us.

You see when you want to follow Christ in the midst of this growing hostility when you get called in by HR because you refuse to acknowledge the false gods that they want you to acknowledge or you get passed over for promotion because you don't play the games that you can't play because you're a Christian or even just when you try to share the gospel with your friends and neighbors and they have no interest and you feel the rejection of that and you just think this gospel is never going to prevail.

The darkness is too thick. The opposition is too hard. Remember that Jesus is God's king. He's lord of all.

[ 26 : 33 ] There is no greater authority and he has come in the flesh. He has revealed his kingship here in full view and he will build his church and keep his promises.

So take heart. Allow Palm Sunday to encourage you. Be faithful. Be courageous and keep on. Let's pray together.