

Christ, "Our King"

INTRODUCTION

I go through periods sometimes where I like to ask questions. And a few years ago, I simply liked to ask people, if you could have one wish, what would it be. I asked this question to Cathy several times (why, I asked several times, I have no idea, but I did). Each and every time without fail Cathy would give me the same exact answer. "World Peace." She never once asked for more money, a new car or house. It was always that she wanted world peace. I mean, when you really think about it can you blame her? Just in our lifetime (and I am talking mine and her's) we have witnessed two major wars in the Middle East. We have witnessed the World Trade Center attempted to be blown up, and then later taken out by two airplanes. We've seen countless school shootings, and not mention the threats that we are even currently seeing with ISIS and other extreme terrorist groups. I don't know about you, but it seems like there is a ton of tension everywhere. As we look at what is going on in the world with things like ISIS, the tension already developing with a Presidential Election next year, and not to mention personal things. Our family it seems has been bombarded with health issues, which then leads to stress and personal tension, and I think in all of this we could just use a little peace. We can use a time of refreshing. We need time to rest in the certainty of the future.

Often times, the way we find peace however is first through a fight. After the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941, FDR and Senate voted unanimously declare war on Japan, and there was only 1 dissenting vote in the House of Representatives. For the next four years the world was caught in a major battle (one that had actually started years before), and would eventually end after we dropped two nuclear bombs on Japan.

This is also how we tend to attempt to bring peace in our own lives. I mean think about it. Someone hurts us, what is our immediate gut instinct, it's to hurt them back. We think if we can just retaliate in some sort of way, that will even the score, it will bring balance to the system, and everything will be in equilibrium again restoring peace to the universe. And it may eventually bring about peace, but often times after many casualties, hurt friendships, broken trusts, and many many tears.

TENSION

What if when it came to our lives though, God provided a plan for peace, a way for peace, that didn't involve the casualties that we often find when we choose retaliation as a method to gain that peace? What if there really was a more peaceful way to bring peace? Sounds like something worthy of Nobel peace prize to me.

I want to preface this by saying that I do believe there is a time where we must fight, and when war is necessary. If this wasn't the case, I don't believe that God would have sent the Israelites into the land of Canaan the way He did. However, I think all too often, especially when it comes to our personal lives, we let our own personal feelings and emotions, our raw gut emotions take over, and we lose sight of what may really bring us peace to begin with.

That is the account I want us to take a look at today. To examine a time where people had expectations due to their raw emotions and feelings, and it had clouded a solution that was right before their eyes the whole time.

TRUTH

The account of Jesus coming into Jerusalem is an event so special that it is recorded in all four Gospels. Very few accounts can be found in all four, but the triumphal entry is one of them. For nearly 100 years Jerusalem was under Roman rule, and Rome was just the last of many other nations who had ruled over Israel. When Herod had heard about another King's birth – he had ordered the massacre of all the Jewish baby boys. He had been responsible for placing foreign idols inside the temple. The Jews had long-awaited the Messiah, their King to end this oppression and declare their freedom as a nation once again.

then walks Jesus into the scene - a man who has done some pretty remarkable things. He's turned water into wine. He's made a meal for thousands out of five small loaves of bread and two fish. He's healed a blind man. He's healed a lame man. He's brought people back from the dead. He's driven out demons from people. Jesus was a miracle worker. While all of these things are amazing feats in and of themselves, they also have a point. Jesus' miracles were there to point the way to God. That He was from God. That He was God in the flesh.

Now I don't know about you, but if there had been a guy walking around the Rockford or Northern Illinois region doing such things, I would want to go check Him out. I would want to see if there was legitimacy to what He was doing. You may even catch me following Him around. That's exactly what people had been doing. They had been hearing all of these things Jesus had been doing and they started following him.

There had been several before him, who had claimed to be the Messiah, the anointed one. However all of them came and went without any change, they were still under Roman rule, they were still being oppressed. They had no freedom, they had no peace. Something was different about Jesus. While he made indirect claims about being God or the Messiah, he wasn't as bold about it as those who had come before Him. He mainly let others reach the conclusion on their own and let them spread the word about who He really was. He had let

His actions, His miracles, His teachings point the way to reveal that He was the one who had been promised by the prophets hundreds and even thousands of years previous.

It is coming time for Jesus' to fulfill His duties – to be the sacrifice that would reestablish mankind's relationship with God for all eternity. Here is Luke's account of what happens next:

²⁸After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, ³⁰“Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here.³¹If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it.’”

³²Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. ³³As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?”

³⁴They replied, “The Lord needs it.”

³⁵They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. ³⁶As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

³⁷When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

³⁸“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!”^[b]

“Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

³⁹Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!”

⁴⁰“I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

⁴¹As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it ⁴²and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. ⁴³The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. ⁴⁴They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you.”

Jesus takes a colt to ride into the city. I imagine this happening like in a lot of action movies or TV shows. You know Jack Bauer is chasing someone down and needs a vehicle so He just opens a driver door, throws the driver out, and says, “I need this.” This was apparently actually custom in this time. A dignitary could essentially borrow/use someone else's personal property for personal reasons,

and this custom even extended to Rabbis. So Jesus using this man's donkey was not actually an unusual request.

Then something amazing happens. As Jesus gets closer to Jerusalem people start praising Him as King. The people are bypassing what the religious leaders of the day were saying, and they were proclaiming Christ as king. The religious leaders even try to stop this from happening. While the text doesn't mention this part, I just imagine at first as people are laying their cloaks on the ground, as they are waving palm branches and loudly proclaiming Jesus as king, the leaders are running around, trying to grab the branches, saying to them, "No stop it, He is not the King, you're going to get us in trouble. He can't lead a rebellion against Rome." But as they try to stop it more and more people join in, and they realize the only way to get this to stop is by getting Jesus Himself to tell them to stop, so as they approach Jesus, He says, "Sorry, this proclamation of me as King is going to happen, whether its this crowd, or its that big boulder over there. The time has come for people to see me as King."

Then as Jesus makes His final approach to the city, this proclaimed King begins to weep. Jesus knows that while they see Him as King now, in a few short days they will be demanding this newly proclaiming King to be executed. The way of peace that He is bringing them would soon be forgotten and the majority of them would once again establish the idea of a King who who forcefully overthrow the Roman government. That the way to peace was through their own might and military campaign rather than the sacrifice that He was about to undergo. Since the people will revert back to this way of peace, Jesus foresees what will happen to them. Total destruction. A few decades later, Titus of Rome does exactly this, comes into Jerusalem and completely destroys it. The way to peace was not through a huge military campaign or their own might, it was through the recognition and surrender to the King.

APPLICATION

You see, the religious leaders didn't ever see Jesus as King. The people may have seen Jesus as King for a short while, but they never surrendered to the King, and it was only a few of Jesus' faithful followers who truly served the King. But this was the way to peace, to see the King, Surrender to the King, and to Serve the King. This is the same for us in our lives today.

See the King -

With all of the extra-Biblical evidence that exists today, it is pretty hard to deny that Jesus of Nazareth existed (although there are many places around the world today who still try to deny his existence to prevent people from following him). But while people do not deny His existence, they don't see Him for who is. They don't recognize Him as King. He's a great teacher, He's a women's rights

activist. He's a cult leader in some of their eyes. But what is even more sad is that sometimes Christians don't even recognize Him. They see Him as Redeemer, Savior, Friend, and while He is all those things. He is also King of Kings. He is Lord of lords. This in our American heritage can be hard to grasp because we live in a governmental system that is opposed to complete control. We live in a system based upon checks and balances. We are a country that values our freedom, and if we recognize that we have a King, it means that we are subject to someone else. We are giving up our freedom. In our culture we see this as a bad thing because we have seen the abuse that occurs when someone has complete control, and that is where Christ as our King is different. He is a king who sympathizes with us, a King who cares about us, who wants what is best for us. A king who values us, and who is a perfect King who is not looking to gain more power and control because the reality of it is that He already has complete control and power. He is a King that values us so much, He let's us choose whether we want to be a subject in His kingdom or not, and if we don't want to be a servant of the King, we reserve the right to be a part of this kingdom. A kingdom that will perish and fade. A kingdom that is destined for an eternal separation from Him. If we want the peace that can come from the Prince of Peace, from the King of kings and Lord of lords, we must first see and accept Him as King.

Surrender to the King -

But it's not enough to just recognize Jesus as King. Many that day as Jesus entered into Jerusalem saw Him as King, recognized Him as king, and less than a week later they were turning their back on their king and shouting "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" Jesus has many blessings He wants to give us. He really wants to give us the best life worth living. This means us being subject to His laws, His rules. He has given them to us to live the best life. Jesus reminds us that we can't serve two masters. He must be the one that we surrender to. Alcohol have control of your life? You have to surrender it to God. Your job have control of your life? You have to surrender it to God. You have a grudge that is holding you captive? You have to surrender it to God. When we serve the King, we need to surrender everything to Him, to be dependent on Him. We have to learn to trust Him with our everything. Again, this is a difficult struggle for us. We are taught to be self-sufficient, self-sustaining, self-fulfilled. Besides think about it. If God can part a sea, raise the dead to life, cause city walls to crumbles after a few laps and trumpet blasts. He can take care of your addiction, sickness, and anxiety. Remember Jesus promises us that if we surrender it to Him, He will give us rest, He will give us peace. Worn-out? Tired? Feel a burden upon you? Jesus promises this: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Give it to Jesus, give it to the

King, we want to care for you, take care of you, but before He can give you rest and peace, you give it to Him. Surrender it to Him. Surrender yourself to Him. He is the master like no other. He is not trying to gain profit or power. He is a kingdom of peace and love.

Serve the King -

A king not only has laws, but a king has tasks for His kingdom. He has servants who are willing to do what He asks. When he says jump, his servants say, "Yes master, how high?" When He says run, his servants say, "Yes master, how far?" When he says give to those in need, his servants say, "Yes master, how much?" When he says go into all the world and tell others about my Kingdom, his servants say, "Here I am Lord, send me, where specifically would you like me to go master?" You see the King has plans for His servants. He has places He wants them to serve, and this can be very different for different people. But He calls all of His servants to well serve. Maybe that means helping with kids in the nursery. Maybe that means helping the homeless. Maybe that means caring for pregnant teenagers. Maybe that means helping others overcome addictions. Maybe that means cleaning up the dog poop that has been piling up all winter in your 90-year-old neighbors back yard from her tea cup yorkie. God has called us to serve. When we start to serve in the kingdom, we start to realize that we are a part of something much, much bigger than ourselves. And when we realize that we are a part of something much, much bigger, our worries, our concerns, our cares start to become less about ourselves and more about what the things God cares about. When we start to look outside of ourselves, our issues, our struggles start to look less and less big. We start to find peace in our lives when we see the things that God is working on in and through His kingdom.

INVITATION

So do you need peace? Where are you in your commitment and walk with the King.....