Luke Lesson 78 (2021)

**THE KING OF PEACE**

Luke 19:28-44

Key Verse: 19:38

“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

Eight hundred years before the birth of Jesus, the Prophet Isaiah portrayed the image of the Messiah in many ways. Isaiah 9:6 is one of them. It depicts Messiah by saying, “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” In this verse, the Prophet Isiah pictures that God Almighty would become a man, rule the world as the king of peace. Its simple description is profoundly mysterious. How can the Holy and infinite God become a man? It’s unthinkable. But that’s what the Prophet Isaiah portrayed as the Messiah. Luke’s account describes Jesus as the Son of Man, fully divine and fully human.

When we say that Jesus is the King of Peace, it’s more than just an honorary title. He is peace and the giver of peace to the core of the human soul. We live in the age of anxiety. Many people suffer from an anxiety disorder. As Christian disciples, I should admit that we cannot avoid a certain level of anxiety. Due to the pandemic, everyone’s level of stress and anxiety has skyrocketed. As I recall the last few months, I am aware that many of us had to go through the tunnel of fear, disappointment, fatigue, frustration, anger, and sadness. Is there any way for us to overcome the chronic problems in our lives? Yes. Good medications are available. But that’s not the real solution. Our Lord Jesus, the King of Peace, gives us peace, the peace that the world cannot give (John 14:27). However, this peace is not automatic.

In today’s passage, as Jesus made his entry into Jerusalem, riding on the donkey’s colt, people praised God, shouting in a loud voice, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” They shouted aloud and made the Pharisees upset. However, it’s still questionable whether these people truly accepted Jesus as their king and let him rule their minds and hearts with peace. This morning, I hope and pray that we may welcome and re-welcome the King of Peace in our hearts through the study of this passage.

Look at verses 28-31. “After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead going up to Jerusalem. As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, ‘Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it.’” These verses show that Jesus prepared his entry into Jerusalem. Throughout his life and ministry, Jesus must have been in and out of Jerusalem many times. But this Passover would be his last visit to Jerusalem. He would become the ultimate sacrifice for the sin of the world in a few days. The preparation was simple. He asked two of his disciples to bring the colt, which no one had ever ridden.

Why did he need the colt? Why not a white horse or a camel? Or why not walk as usual? Well, there was a clear purpose of riding on a colt. It was to fulfill the messianic prophecy of Zechariah 9:9, “Say to Daughter Zion, ‘See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’” So by riding on the colt, what Jesus wanted to do was to declare that he is the Promised Messiah. Up to this point, the Lord Jesus had never allowed an open declaration that he was the Messiah. He often discouraged people not to do so, including his twelve disciples. But this time, he invited people to do so by riding on the donkey’s colt, based on Zechariah’s prophecy.

Look at verses 32-33. “Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, ‘Why are you untying the colt?’ They replied, ‘the Lord needs it.’” The phrase “Jesus is the Lord” means that he is the owner of everything, including our own lives. We are not sure whether Jesus prearranged the matter beforehand or his omniscience that made things possible. But the phrase “the Lord needs it” shows that Jesus wanted his disciples to know that he is the Lord over all things. And it happened just as Jesus had told them. Romans 14:8-9 states, “If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.” Two of Jesus’ disciples obeyed Jesus’ instruction and learned how to practice the Lordship of Christ.

However, practicing the Lordship of Christ is not easy. Unfortunately, many people, including Christians, think that their lives belong to them. But that’s an illusion. And the consequence of such an illusion is unhealthy, dangerous, and destructive. Some people live in an illusion by following their romantic or utopian dreams, not realizing that those are against God’s will. For example, the Jews in Jesus’ time had expected the Messiah to bring political liberation by destroying their enemies. It was deeply embedded into their psyche, so changing or questioning their idea was almost impossible. Most of them had never examined checked their dreams and expectations to see if they were comparable to the will of God. Self-examination and self-awareness were lacking badly. Lack of self-examination and self-awareness is a more serious problem than we think. So Jesus had to correct their false ideas of God’s kingdom through numerous parables, including the Parable of the Ten Minas (19:11-27) and the Parable of the Tenants (20:9-19). Faith without critical thinking can be dangerous.

Look at verses 35-38. “When they brought it to Jesus, they threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road. When 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: ‘Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!’” The crowd of disciples, including the twelve, became highly excited. Even though Luke’s account does not mention it, others cut the branches from palm trees ad spread them on the road (Mt. 21:8). As Jesus came near the place where the road goes down the Olive Garden, they began joyfully to praise God in loud voices. “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” According to John’s account, they shouted, “Hosannah!” which means “Save!” (Jn. 12:13) And “Blessed is the king of Israel!” (Jn. 12:13) I don’t think Jesus, who sat on the colt, waved his hand, saying, *“Thank you for your support!”* He just sat on the colt quietly while people were shouting and cheering. I am sure many thoughts came through his mind.

Indeed, the phrase “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!” is an accurate description of who Jesus is. Jesus is the King of Peace who deserves our praise and honor. However, their messianic idea was incorrect. What kind of king is he? He is not a military conqueror who uses violence, as many people expected. The king who rides on the colt symbolizes humility and gentleness. He is humble and gentle in heart. He is no threat to anybody. Even though he is the Lord of lords and the King of kings, anybody can approach him, touch him, and shake hands with him. He is our friend who accepts us just as we are.

The crowd of disciples expected that as soon as Jesus entered Jerusalem, he would destroy their enemies and build the new kingdom of Israel. But what Jesus would do in Jerusalem was quite the opposite. He would establish his kingship by becoming the ultimate sacrifice on the cross, rejected by the Jewish religious leaders, and violently murdered. And on the cross, Jesus would cry out to God the Father to forgive those who mocked and killed him on the cross. Most people would be disappointed by his death. But his death on the cross, shedding his blood violently, was the vivid demonstration of God’s unchanging love for sinners. Yet, he would not remain in death. He would rise from the dead.

Through his death on the cross, Jesus showed who God truly is. Our God is not the God who is rude and angry toward sinners. Instead, he is always the God of mercy, gentle, humble, and patient toward sinners. He is broken-hearted for those who suffer in the darkness of sin and death. We should always turn to him just as we are, and he will never reject us. The problem is not that God does not forgive but that we harden our hearts toward him because of fear and unbelief and remain in the darkness of sin and death.

This humble and gentle Jesus is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of who God really is. We can always turn to him just as we are. Jesus said in Revelations 3:20, “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.” This Jesus is our peace, strength, joy, wisdom, refuge, defense, advocate, and reward. He is everything. We need him every day.

King David confessed in Psalm 23:1, “The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.” What did he mean by “I lack nothing”? It means that when he had a very personal love relationship with the Lord God, he was self-sufficient and fully content. He continued to say, “He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” (Ps. 23:2-6) King David was not a perfect man. He had many difficulties. Terrible mistakes, including the sin of adultery and murder, tainted his resume. But he didn’t harden his heart. He trusted in God’s unchanging love and turned to him repeatedly. Thus, he experienced the grace of forgiveness of sins. He confessed, “The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.”

We must remember that Jesus became the ultimate sacrifice not to change God’s angry heart toward sinners. Instead, he became the ultimate sacrifice to demonstrate God’s unchanging love for sinners and change our attitude toward God, from fear to faith, so that we no longer live in darkness but live in love and peace.

Look at verse 39. “Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, ‘Teacher, rebuke your disciples!” The Pharisees didn’t like the disciples using messianic terminology for Jesus. They thought that Jesus’ disciples were going too far. So they asked Jesus to silence them. However, Jesus refused to silence them. He said in verse 40. “‘I tell you,’ he replied, ‘if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.’” He was saying, *“I am the Messiah! But you are rejecting me!”*

Look at verses 41-44. “As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, ‘If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring peace – but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They 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.’” In these verses, Jesus predicts the destruction of Jerusalem in the near future. Jesus lamented over them because they failed to see God’s salvation through the forgiveness of sins. “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring peace – but now it is hidden from you.”

Why is it hidden from them? It’s because they held on to their own understanding, not the truth of God. Most people in history, including the Jews, thought that a certain level of violence is necessary to keep the peace. But God’s way of salvation is entirely the opposite. It was through the grace of forgiveness. Jesus’ death on the cross demonstrates God's unchanging love for sinners and reveals how we should live as his children. God’s message through Jesus is that victory over hatred will not be achieved by any form of vengeance or violence but only by the power of love and forgiveness.

Jesus is not just one of the greatest men who ever lived and died. He was crucified, but he didn't remain dead. Instead, Christ rose again, defeating the power of sin and death. Now, he lives within those who believe in him. However, we know that life is complicated and challenging for everyone, including Christian disciples. We cannot avoid being anxious if we live in this world. We often feel overwhelmed, disappointed, frustrated, exhausted, and sad for any reason. But the good news is that Jesus is our peace and the giver of peace no matter what circumstance we may be in. Therefore, instead of remaining in our anxiety or any negative power, we should come to Jesus the King of Peace. He said to his followers in Matthew 11:28, “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.” Apostle Paul also said in Philippians 4:6-7, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Is any of you weary, burdened, and anxious for any reason? Please, come to Jesus. He is always available. May we not let the King of Peace our Lord stand outside. May we welcome him in our hearts moment and moment and have communion with him. “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” May the peace and grace of the Lord be with you!