

**When Jesus Shows Up!**  
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Today is Palm Sunday – named for the Triumphal Entry of Christ into Jerusalem the week before He was crucified.

My sermon is entitled When Jesus Shows Up. When Jesus showed up in Jerusalem that day – it meant different things to different people. And Jesus showing up today means different things to different people and gets different results for different people. But this much I know - every time Jesus shows up, things happen! Matthew 21:1-11 says:

*As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to Me. If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away." The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.*

*The crowds that went ahead of Him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!" When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."*

### **1- When Jesus shows up, He requires something of you**

We may say, "Sure – I obey the Lord." But what if He asks us to do something unusual or something hard to do? "Go tell these people I need their donkey" doesn't sound unusual on the surface. But there is no other reference in the Bible of Christ ever riding an animal – He walked everywhere. So, He was asking His disciples to do something different, something they were not accustomed to.

There are times the Lord will have us do something very different from what we are used to doing. He'll get you out of your comfort zone.

Think about His request in a modern context: What if Jesus came to you and said, "Go down to the Home Depot parking lot and you will find a blue pickup truck with several people standing around it. Get in the truck and drive it to me. If anyone says anything to you, tell them the Lord needs their truck and they will give it to you." Yeah, right. But that's exactly what Jesus was asking these people to do.

What if Jesus asked you to do something strange, something difficult?

True love would obey Him. As Jesus said in John 14:15

*If you love Me, you will obey what I command.*

And that's exactly what the disciples did.

The point Matthew is making is that Jesus is the Master and true Owner of everything. Even things we call "ours" are actually His and He can rightfully demand them at any time! And when He asks for it – we should willingly give it!

## **2- When Jesus shows up - people willingly give**

Some gave their donkeys. Some gave their cloaks. Some gave their palm branches. Donkeys represented people's wealth, work and strength. That speaks several things to me, but mainly it tells me that when Jesus shows up, we must give up trusting in ourselves, our strength or our works. We must give up performance orientation to experience God's presence. We can't earn His presence. We can't do enough good to be worthy on our own. Thank God, Jesus made the way. In fact, He IS the way! Hebrews 10:19-22 says:

*Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.*

We've got to give up trying to earn our way with God and trust that Jesus already opened the way through His blood.

Some people gave a donkey, others gave their cloaks – their coverings. When Jesus shows up, the things we hide must be uncovered.

People have hidden from God and covered themselves since the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve hiding from God is like when my grandkids played hide and seek with me. The hardest part of that game was pretending I didn't know where they were. They'd do things like go into our closet and stick their heads under the clothes. But their whole body stuck out in plain sight. They thought if they can't see me I can't see them.

God came looking for Adam and Eve in the Garden. But God knew where they were. He called out, "Where are you?" not for His benefit, but for theirs. They needed to realize where they were. They had to come out of hiding and give up their cover up. So must we. So, give up your cover up. 2 Corinthians 3:16-18 says:

*When one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face,*

*beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

God wants to change us, but we've got to give up our cover-ups, confess our need and get honest with Him.

We must quit running *from* God and run *to* God.

We must quit hiding.

He knows where you are and He can outrun you!

People gave donkeys and cloaks – they also gave palm branches. The palm is a beautiful, but very useful tree. Its fruit is the daily food of millions. Its sap is made into drinks; its trunk supplies valuable timber; its leaves are manufactured into ropes, brushes, mats, bags, chairs, and baskets. This one tree supplied almost all the needs people had in biblical times.

So, giving palm branches represented seeking first the kingdom and believing the king to take care of all my other needs! It meant I will give to the point of sacrifice. When Jesus shows up, people sacrifice.

Worship is costly. You cannot truly worship without sacrifice. King David understood this – 2 Sam. 24 – He had disobeyed God and a plague broke out and 70,000 people died. The prophet Gad went to David and said in order to stop this,

*"Go up and build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." So David went up, as the Lord had commanded through Gad.*

When Araunah saw the king, he offered to give him the land, the oxen and the wood for the altar. But David refused and said, *"No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not offer to God that which costs me nothing."*

Many people today want a no-cost Christianity, but there is a cost to follow God. Even our worship is sometimes a sacrifice. Hebrews 13:15-16 says:

*Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess His name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*

The sacrifice of praise – our lips giving praise and our lives giving to others - Even during tough times – even when it costs – that's why it's called a sacrifice of praise.

There is a great lesson to be learned from the dictionary. When things start going bad, we often fear they will only get worse. Then we worry that the "worse" will take us to the "worst." To prevent the "worse" from turning in to the "worst," look at the unique setup God has provided in the English language. Any standard dictionary will separate the word "worse" (and its derivatives) and the word "worst" with one special word: "worship."

When circumstances seem to be slipping in the wrong direction, remember that worship is the buffer between "worse" and "worst."

That's why:

### **3- When Jesus shows up, people praise.**

The people cried out Hosanna, which means, "Save us now!" This is acknowledging who Jesus is: our Lord and Savior. Jesus did not get upset that people were praising Him. In fact, the story of the ten lepers who were healed shows that it is the lack of praise that bothers Jesus! In fact, He said that loud praise is God-ordained. That's why-

### **4- When Jesus shows up, everyone knows it.**

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city knew it. This is our prayer – when we show up for church, God shows up. Because when God shows up, everyone knows it. It takes more than just a good service with good music and a good sermon. You can have those things without God showing up!

It's one thing for you or me to show up; it's something quite different when Jesus shows up. 1 Corinthians 14:24-25 says:

*If an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!"*

When Jesus shows up, people know it. And when Jesus shows up, He stirs things up. In fact, He knocks some things over. Matthew 21:12-13 says:

*Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. "It is written," He said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'"*

### **5- When Jesus shows up, He takes over**

When Jesus takes over, He turns some things over.

When Jesus takes over, He drives some things out and some people out.

We sometimes picture Jesus as a wimpy namby-pamby sissy with a halo floating through the countryside saying "Peace, man." But in reality, He got tough when He needed to. He still does when we let other things take the place of relationship with Him. No sin can stand in the presence of a holy God.

### **6- When Jesus shows up - supernatural things happen**

Matthew 21:14 says:

*The blind and the lame came to Him at the temple, and He healed them.*

When Jesus shows up, people don't stay the same. They go away different. We believe in miracles. The greatest miracle is He changes us! He gives forgiveness, healing, freedom, salvation, restoration, change! You don't meet Him and go away the same.

How we respond when Jesus shows up determines how we go away. We will either go away better or worse, but we will not stay the same. Some go away healed and some go away hardened. Some go away happy and some go away sad. Some go away praising and some go away criticizing. This is always an amazing thing to me, but:

### **7- When Jesus shows up, some people don't like it.**

Matthew 21:15-16 says:

*But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant. "Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, "From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise?"*

Here's the interesting thing: Jesus is quoting Psalm 8:2 – but when you read Psalm 8:2 it says –

*Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, because of Your enemies, that You may silence the enemy.*

One says out of the mouth of babes God ordained praise; the other says out of the mouth of babes God ordained strength. So – which is it? Praise or strength? Well, both.

The word in the original Hebrew is *ʾoz* (oze); which means force, security, majesty, praise, boldness, loudness, might, power, strength. In God's vocabulary – praise and strength are synonymous! They mean the same thing! Without praise you have no strength!

God has ordained that praise would be a weapon and when we begin to praise – it silences the enemy. Some of you are in situations right now where the enemy is having a field day – lying to you about your future, telling you God is not good or that God does not care. He's constantly whispering in your ear, "You're not going to make it. God has abandoned you. You are doomed to fail." Don't you want to shut that liar up? Then PRAISE GOD! Satan can't stand it when we praise God. He runs from it. That's why he tries so hard to stop it!

Psalm 18:3 says:

*I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from my enemies.*

In other words, when I praise God, He saves me from my enemies. And praise not only silences our enemy - it also prepares a place for the presence of God.

Psalm 22:3 says that God inhabits the praises of His people. In other words, God says, "When you praise, I'll show up." That's true in church and it's true in everyday life.

We all have areas in our lives where we need the presence of Satan out and the presence of God in. The question is: How do we attract God to our situation? Let me tell you, it might not be what you think. We usually think God moves in response to strong people or wise people or important people. But go back to the passage that Jesus quoted - Psalm 8:2

*Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, Because of Your enemies, that You may silence the enemy...*

He did not say, only out of the mouths of mature Christians, strong believers, or wise leaders I have ordained praise. Who does the power of praise come through? Out of the mouths of babes and nursing infants. A nursing infant has absolutely no power or strength. None. They are helpless. They cannot do anything for themselves.

Got the picture?

Jesus said – it's out of weakness and helplessness that I have ordained praise that silences the enemy.

It's not our strength that defeats the enemy.

It's not our wisdom that defeats the enemy.

It's not our goodness that defeats the enemy.

In fact, IT'S NOT ABOUT US AT ALL! It's all about Jesus – who already defeated the enemy.

Through praise we enforce the victory that Christ already won.

God is not looking for strong people.

He is looking for people who know they are weak and He is strong.

God is not looking for wise people.

He is looking for people who know they are foolish and He is wise.

God is not looking for people who boast in themselves.

God is looking for praisers who will boast in Him.

God is seeking worshippers who worship in spirit and in truth!

So, whenever you need God in a situation, you need to begin to praise Him in that situation. He's looking for praise. Praise gets His attention. So – don't be like those who criticized the people who praised. Instead - remember Luke 19:39-40

*Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!"  
"I tell you," He replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."  
Jesus was saying the He will be praised one way or another.*

We were created to praise God and if we don't, He'll create something else to praise Him!

I don't know about you, but no rock is gonna rejoice in my place!

No stone is gonna do my shouting!

No boulder is gonna bless God for me!

No pebble is gonna do my praising.

No person is going to take my place of praise!

No circumstance is going to take away my praise!

No devil in hell is going to steal my praise!

In all things I will give thanks. I choose to rejoice in the Lord no matter what because He is always worthy of praise. I will praise the Lord because Jesus taught me that God has ordained praise to be our strength! As long as I'm praising, I'm strong in the Lord. Praise silences the enemy and releases the power of God to work on our behalf. Praise invites Jesus to show up!

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown into a fiery furnace because they refused to bow to an idol. The fire was so hot that the men who threw them in were killed! Yet they were not because Jesus showed up! He was seen in the fire with them and they came out unharmed.

So, when you are in a fiery trial, remember that when Jesus shows up He will get you through it unharmed and you will not even smell like smoke!

The disciples were caught in a storm on a lake and they thought they were going to drown. But they didn't because Jesus showed up! He calmed the storm by saying, "Peace be still!"

So, when you are caught in a storm and you feel like you're going under, remember that when Jesus shows up, He will calm your storm and give you peace!

A widow in the town of Nain had one son, and he died. They were having a funeral procession to bury the son when Jesus showed up and raised him back to life.

So, when you are in a time where it feels something important to you has died, remember that when Jesus shows up, He can raise it back to life!

What's the point?

No matter what you are going through – keep looking for Jesus to show up!

Keep looking unto Jesus – the author and finisher of our faith.

Keep looking to Jesus because when He shows up – everything changes!