

Palm Sunday 3/24/24 JESUS

Today is Palm Sunday, - the day we remember the Triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem at the beginning of the last week of His physical earthly life.

Jesus' birth, life, and death testimony on earth was God's way of establishing the precedence of obedience expected from Jesus' followers who were later called Christians as seen in **Acts 11:26** *And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.*

We see the testimony of that virtue of obedience in the book of **Philippians 2:8** *And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death- even death on a cross!* Followed with **Philippians 2:12-13** *Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed-not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence-continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.* Obedience to righteousness in the life of a Christian is a sure indicator of a growing and maturing faith pleasing to God and satisfying to self.

Let's review some events of that last week in chapters 11 and 12 of the gospel of Mark. The first is from **Mark 11:9-10**. *Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" 10 "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!" "Hosanna in the highest!* It is pretty much universally conceded that the adoring crowd most likely were cheering because they anticipated and fully expected an earthly warrior like David or Joshua to rid their homeland of the dominating Romans and all their influence. They expected Jesus to reinstate the Hebrew national kingdom on earth from which all populations would eventually be ruled. /// What that cheering crowd still had to learn through the events

2. of the upcoming fateful week was that God's plan and Man's perceived desires were then as now,- often in conflict. Isaiah had made that clear 750 years earlier! **Isaiah 55:8** *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.* For 750 years the Jews had studied and memorized the sacred writings of their Old Testament. From those scrolls they carefully interpreted them to meet their desires, social structure, and cultural traditions. And, in so doing did not comprehend Gods intent!!! They manipulated the revelation of the Holy One to meet the desires of their ways instead of God's ways. It is certainly a FAITH LESSON for our generation as well. "We" – meaning all the religious world today, are well advised to remind each other of the ever present danger of being deceived by satan in self-serving interpretation and application of our New Testament scripture, just like our first century Jewish counterparts were.

Jesus came and lived on earth as a mission that would change the destiny of mankind starting with His own Jewish heritage and to be extend to the whole world who would hear and obey. Again, emphasizing that little word "obey." Let's be reminded on this Palm Sunday that:

Jesus knew where he was going, and went anyway.

Jesus knew who he was going to encounter, and went anyway.

Jesus knew what was going to happen at Calvary, and went anyway.

Jesus knew hope for mankind was based on His obedience, and He obeyed anyway. UNCONDITIONAL OBEDIENCE is the example and clarion call of the Triumphal entry.

Our story continues in verse **Mark 11:11** *And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.* After Jesus surveyed the temple area it was late in the day and Jesus and the 12 walked a little less than two miles to Bethany to spend the night. Bethany was where his friends Simon, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus lived. A place with people who most understood His divine mission. The quiet atmosphere of the

3. small village would lend itself to rest much better than the bustling city of Jerusalem bursting with Pentecostal Feast visitors.

Mark 11:12-14 *Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. 13 And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. 14 In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again."* Then next morning on the way back to the temple Jesus was hungry and seeing a fig tree He investigated. But it was not the season for ripe figs and He cursed it. We shall examine possible lessons available from that episode in verses 20-24. But first -

Look at **Mark 11:15-19** *So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. 16 And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. 17 Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of thieves.' "* **18** *And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching. 19 When evening had come, He went out of the city.*

Arriving back at the temple area of Jerusalem, we are reminded that the perfect manifestation of love and mercy of God includes His righteous wrath against sin and corruption always being manifest in His timing and action. In this case it is a clear illustration of just how far that careless interpretation of the Mosaic scrolls interpreted by their leaders through the years and accepted by the population had degenerated.

A couple of things in this passage verse 17 *Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of thieves.'* As revealed over and over and over throughout the Old Testament and reestablished over and over and over in the New Testament the gospel message of salvation and heavens promised reward is for all nations. But repeatedly

4. over and over and over *But you have made it a 'den of thieves.* Then just what we would anticipate from corrupted leadership when confronted: **18** *And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching.*

satan was fixing to take a mortal hit when he planted the seeds of what he anticipated would be as a victory in a few more days, namely the crucifixion of Jesus. Finally getting rid of Jesus who for 1500 years had been confounding the stanic effort in diluting and debilitating the Moses parchments.

Back to out story - Jesus left Jerusalem for another night.

Look at **Mark 11:20-21** *Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. 21 And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away."* The illustration for the Apostles was twofold I think: 1. A description of the condition of the Jewish nation – appearing as a bountiful source of spiritual blessing and enlightenment, but not bearing any fruitful results.. 2. A visual for the apostles to gain understanding that they and the message they bore was to be THE condition intended to stimulate their Jewish heritage to reinvigorate the fruitful tree of the righteous message of Moses. Their mission and message was to become the season of ripe fruit forever available to the worlds populations. All to overcome the traditional legalism that had become the Jewish organized religion as ineffectual illustrated by the cursing of the tree itself.

The intent of the illustration is given in **Mark 11:22-24** *So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. 23 For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. 24 Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.*

5. Those three verses I believe describe the potential of faith that Jesus had modeled. I have never heard of any of those things being done apart from Jesus. But that only indicates no one has ever attained the perfect faith relationship with the Almighty Creator God - like Jesus. ///Now we go to **Mark 12:28-31** *One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" 29 "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."*

The Jewish teachers may have thought they could discredit Jesus or confuse Him with asking which of their 613 laws was greatest, expecting to elicit a further debate. Or perhaps even to think they could force Jesus to declare His plan for military occupation and elimination of Roman and other foreign influences in their homeland. But what was not expected was an answer of a power greater than all military forces ever assembled or even conceived. An answer so gentle it might have been from a mother to a long awaited, cherished baby. An answer from the one who had earlier displayed wrath in the cleansing of the money changers from the temple and curse of the fig tree. The questionnaires and assembled partisans wanted an answer tempered with thunder and lightening and angelic forces covering the mountains and valleys. The amazing thing is they would receive everything they had ask for but nothing they thought they wanted! They had very little mental example or life experience to process - much less apply such a profoundly opposite way of thinking or acting within their established society. Much less comprehending the definition of "love."

Their minds, just like ours had a variety of concepts what love might mean and their appropriate response. The Greek language used 4 words all translated by the word love into English: 1. storge' is like our love of stuff or things. 2. is eros from which the English word erotic originates. In our language it can have either a positive and

6. negative connotation depending on its specific usage. Positive in the marriage relationship - but mostly negatively because of media and pornography previsions. 3. Then probably the most clear use of love as translated into English is phileo' which means friendship with all of it's most positive attributes intended. 4. Finally is agape' – probably the most used and least understood of the four. In English it invariably carries some of each of the other 3 meanings and is often confused because the actual meaning is unclear or deliberately masked.

Here then is agape the most used meaning of love in the Bible:

Mark 12:30 *Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'* /// This ultimate power of the universe “love” is the very essence of God as extended from Himself to others with full revelation for them to respond to Him and overflow to others likewise. That is what God is making readily available to all as exemplified and documented in the unconditional obedience of the death and resurrection of Jesus. That is the essence of Palm Sunday Unconditional Obedience expresses in unconditional love resulting from agape faith.

Philippians 2:14-16 *Do everything without complaining or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe 16 as you hold out the word of life-*

Acts 11:26

Philippians 2:8

Philippians 2:12-13

Mark 11:9-10

Isaiah 55:8

Mark 11:11

Mark 11:12-14

Mark 11:15-19

Mark 11:20-21

Mark 11:22-24

Mark 12:28-31

Mark 12:30

Philippians 2:14-16