

Today's Palm Sunday – the Sunday before Easter... And traditionally, on Palm Sunday, the Christian Church remembers the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem...

He rode a donkey into Jerusalem, because apparently that's what the great Kings of Israel had done... And they cheered Him on – He was their long awaited Messiah – the King who would set them free... Free from what? Well, they were thinking “Free from the Romans”...

They laid their coats down, and they stripped palm branches down, to make a carpet for Jesus to ride across, and they shouted, ^{Mark 11:(ESV) 9} ... “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!”

But, not everybody was so keen.. The Pharisees winged about the cheering crowds to Jesus, and He said, **“I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”**

But,,,,, it wasn't only a time of joy,, When Jesus got close enough to overlook the city, He stopped, and he wept. Why did Jesus cry? It's because He knew that there (in Jerusalem), He would be rejected and crucified.... But even so, He wasn't weeping for Himself – He wept for them, because He could see what was in their future... You see, to reject God, has consequences. And because they rejected Jesus, in AD70, a terrible judgment would befall them. And their enemies would besiege them; and starve them; and demolish the city...

Anyway, we marvel that it took less than a week, for the shouts of welcome and “Hosanna”, to morph into “Away with Him – Crucify Him!!!” ... The ultimate “buyer’s remorse”... But that path was being set, from the time that Jesus first entered the city and goes straight to His Temple...

Can you imagine what the Local Religious Authorities would’ve thought of Jesus??....

Here we have this young upstart from Galilee – a rural area, up in the North – The other side of those stinkin’ Samaritans... And this country bloke, comes into the Capital City – the Religious capital – God’s city... What would He know???

- He’s not a Levite – He can’t be a priest;
- He hasn’t been trained – He can’t be a Rabbi;
- What would this uneducated country hick know??? – who does He think He is???

You do know how the inner city elites like look down their noses at country folk... Not all, but in general...

And Jesus goes straight to the Temple: And there at the Temple, were all these stalls set up, traders, making their profits... And He drove them out: **“It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a den of robbers.”**

There they were: Trying to get rich. Charging people to worship God... How obscene.

BTW, where is God's temple today? No, it's not the local church building. It's the church – the people of God – Disciples of Jesus, together, are the Temple of God, because that's where God dwells... And we talked about hypocrisy last week – putting on a mask – pretending to be Godly... And as the Temple of the Holy Spirit, we must not be hypocrites – we are to be a house of prayer – not a den of robbers...

Are you with me??? Your life (and mine) should be filled with worship and prayer – not greed and theft and dishonesty...

Anyway, Jesus threw the traders out of the temple. And so, at this stage, there are 2 definite camps – the people are hanging on Jesus' every word, but then, there's the Chief Priests and the Scribes, and the "important people". And they were set on doing everything they can, to destroy Jesus....

So, they came up with a cunning plan... If they could catch Jesus, saying something "blasphemous" (**anything** blasphemous), then they would have legal grounds to kill Him...

And so, they asked Jesus a question:

"Who gave you the authority to do what You are doing???"

You see, they thought they had the Torah on their side – And by God’s Law, they were the religious authorities – they **were** the authority, and they hadn’t given Jesus authority... The priests were born into the tribe of Levi – That gave them authority. Jesus wasn’t born into the tribe of Levi... Where’s your authority?

But Jesus wasn’t going to fall into their trap. He knew that if He told them the truth –

*“Well, let me tell you about my authority. You may not have noticed this, but I am the Son of God, and My Father sent Me as your Messiah (This is **my** temple BTW) – **God** has given me the authority.”...*

That’s true, but Jesus knew that if He **told** the truth, they would use it as a charge of Blasphemy against Him, and He wasn’t going to fall into that trap...

And so, Jesus does what He often does – He answers a question with a question:

The Baptism of John the Baptist – was that a Godly thing? or is that a human thing???

And that put his opponents in a bit of a pickle, because, *If we say, “Yeah, that was a Godly thing”, then He’s going to ask, “Then why didn’t you believe Him”; But if we say “No, it wasn’t Godly”, then the people will have our guts for garters because they’re convinced that John was a prophet...*

So they said, *“Don’t know”...*

And so, Jesus said, *“Well, I won’t give you an answer either (about Who’s given me the authority I have.)”*

But then He told them a parable, that actually **did** give them the answer. It was a little story that revealed, “Who Jesus is”, and Whose authority He carries. **And** the parable also roundly condemned the current religious authorities.

“A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while.

¹⁰ When the time came, he sent a servant to the tenants, so that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

¹¹ And he sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed.

¹² And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out.

¹³ Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.’

14 But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.' **15** And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them?

16 He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others."

- God, is the owner of the vineyard (which represents Israel);
- And God wanted His people (Israel) to be bearing fruit, but they were not;
- And so, God sent His prophets;
- But they despised the prophets.
Some they beat; Some they killed;
Pretty-much all of them, they ignored...
- But now, God has sent His one and only beloved Son, and the Religious Authorities, who were **supposed** to be responsible for God's people, were now looking to kill The Son, and throw Him out of His Temple....
- And thus, the warning:

The owner of the vineyard **will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others."**

God's people (Israel) ultimately rejected Jesus. So, who are the "others" whom God is going to bring into His Kingdom? The Gentiles (non-Jews)...

At our Men's Bible Study at the moment, we're studying Ephesians. And the last couple of weeks, we've been hearing about this mystery – something that once was hidden, has now been revealed, and that is, through Christ Jesus, God's plan of the ages, to bring the Gentiles (non-Jews) into His fold, has now been revealed...

And you and I, are so blessed, that this has happened. You see, at one time, we were excluded. In Ephesians 2, Paul is talking to some Gentiles who have become Christians, and he says:

Ephesians 2:(ESV) 12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. (What a dreadful predicament. And that was our predicament) ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

And that's what this parable is about – new tenants allowed to have access to the vineyard...

At one time, the Jews were God's chosen people, and non-Jews (us) didn't have access... But now He's brought the 2

groups together and Jew and Gentile together (in Christ), are now God's people...

Anyway when Jesus told them that parable, they said, "Surely not!" ¹⁷ But he looked directly at them and said, "What then is this that is written:

" 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone'?"

¹⁸ Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him."

Let me explain that:

When a builder is building a house out of stone, each rock has to be inspected.

- size;
- shape;
- how it's going to fit together with the other stones;
- what it's made of;
- its integrity

Is it strong? Is it going to last?, or is it weathered and chalky, and going to crumble???

But, the most important stone, is what's called "The Cornerstone"... It gets laid first. It is strong; It is true; It is

square;,,,,, And the rest of the building, builds on to it.
Another name for it, might be the “foundation stone”...

And Israel, utterly rejected Jesus.... But He became the
cornerstone. He became the foundation...

Salvation comes through Christ Jesus, and through Him alone.
There is no other way to be saved. The stone that was
rejected, has become the cornerstone.

When God the Son, came to His temple, their religion was so
perverted, it couldn't handle Him.

The Apostle Peter, spoke about this in:

1 Peter 2:6-9 (ESV)

⁶ For it stands in Scripture:

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious,
and whoever believes in him will not be put to
shame.”

⁷ So the honour is for you who believe,
but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,”

⁸ and

“A stone of stumbling,
and a rock of offense.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Wow...

When a person is faced with Jesus, they cannot remain the same... Nor can they be neutral in how they respond...

For those who believe, Jesus is:

- the delight of our lives
- He's our everything;
- He's the foundation of our hope;
- Our Lord
- And we praise Him and Honour Him, with every fibre of our being...

But for others, He's the stone they trip over – He's the rock of offense...

The Greek word used there, is “scandallon” – He is an offence – it's a scandalous offence....

And this is so very visible in our world today, isn't it – how Jesus, the Son of God, is rejected by so many... And for many, it's not just a personal rejection of Jesus – To them, Jesus is scandalous – He causes them a great offence, and they cannot stand Him, and they will not stand for anyone who follows Him....

*I personally find it a really hard to understand, how a person can be so offended by someone whom they claim, doesn't even exists.... For some, their whole life's mission and what drives them, is to be **against** Jesus Christ, for all they're worth...*

Oh how terrible it is for them...

What will be the outcome??? I'm going to be really blunt:
It's a bit like "Kangaroo meets roadtrain" ...

For many of you, you may have never driven in a roadtrain at night... But when the roos are thick, you can't swerve to avoid them, and you hardly feel it: boomp; boomp....

V¹⁸ Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him."
– think: Kangaroo meets roadtrain.

God will not be mocked. In their immense pride, some will reject Jesus; others will curse Him; and others will ridicule and deride those who follow Jesus....

And in this day and age of Social Media pile-on's, the keyboard warriors of wokeness get their jollies out of mocking Jesus and deriding His disciples... But, The Day of Judgment is coming, and woe for them on that day...

When we start digging into the final week of Jesus' life, and hear the things that Jesus was saying, and consider parables like this one ,, it gets a bit easier to understand, why His opponents wanted to have Him murdered.

As I said before, The Son of God came to His Temple, and they couldn't handle Him...

But Jesus Christ, has become for us, our Lord... The cornerstone; our foundation.

And as we approach Good Friday, let's be aware of God's plan and purpose – the mystery that is being revealed... The Rock, is being thrown on the rubbish heap,,,, But Jesus will be glorified... The resurrected Jesus Christ becomes the cornerstone – the foundation of the new temple that God is building...

And we're not just saved (by the skin of our teeth) – The Disciples of Jesus become the new Royal Priesthood – a people belonging to Him...

Praise be to God,
Amen.

Sentence: Jesus - the stone rejected, that becomes the cornerstone...

Scripture: Luke 19:45-20:18

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Bush Disciples