

Jesus, Our Champion

Sunday, March 25, 2012

Philippians 2:5-11

Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, **he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human!** Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death--and the worst kind of death at that: a crucifixion. Because of that obedience, God lifted him high and honored him far beyond anyone or anything, ever, so that all created beings in heaven and on earth--even those long ago dead and buried--will bow in worship before this Jesus Christ, and call out in praise that he is the Master of all, to the glorious honor of God the Father.

Examine His final week, recognizing that what He did, He did as a man – respond again in praise and adoration for our wonderful Savior. **He is not pathetic. He is heroic!** (John 10:17-18 No one takes my life from me. Right to lay down my life. Right to take it up again.)

He had to discover who He was (a boy of twelve in the Temple confounding the scholars)

Luke 4:18-21

The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. And the eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on Him. He began by saying to them, "Today as you listen, this Scripture has been fulfilled."

Realizing He WAS the Lamb of God (which Passover would He lay down His life?) – the prophecy of Daniel 9:25

Luke 9:28-31

About eight days after these words, He took along Peter, John, and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. As He was praying, the appearance of His face changed, and His clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly, two men were talking with Him--Moses and Elijah. They appeared in glory and were speaking of His death, which He was about to accomplish in Jerusalem.

He knows He has an appointment with the Father in Jerusalem – He prophesies His own destiny – He speaks the Word into reality

Luke 9:44

"Let these words sink in: the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men."

There is a relentlessness to His pursuit of His Father's will

Luke 9:51-53 Sets His face toward Jerusalem

Luke 9:62 "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

The Final Week

Sunday – Selection Day (first day of the week after the Sabbath)

Setting: *Jerusalem - center of pilgrimage, throngs of Jews from everywhere-Mesopotamia, North Africa, Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy-came to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. The population swelled from 30,000 or so to over 300,000. Then the Roman prefect would bring more troops to the city. Soldiers patrolled the roofs of the colonnades that surrounded the enormous temple complex.*

Five days before Passover, every family in Israel was required to choose a lamb, according to the instructions given by God to Moses in Exodus 12:3-6

Each man to take a lamb for his household, a year-old male without defect
Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when they will be slaughtered at twilight (around 3 pm)

Jewish historians record that the lambs were brought from the fields of Bethlehem to the south up to Jerusalem through the "Sheep's Gate". These sheep were owned by the Sadducees. Only these could be sacrificed on Passover – thereby filling their coffers

The lambs were chosen the afternoon of the 9th so that they would be with the family from the 10th through the 14th

On this day, the Lamb of God, born among the flocks of Bethlehem, entered the city through the Sheep's Gate, just as the lambs for Passover had done for generations.

Matthew 21:1-11

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." This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

"Say to the Daughter of Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"

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.

Palm Branch - symbol not allowed within Jerusalem, associated with the zealots who wanted to overthrow Rome.

- *Symbol of freedom and defiance. (Simon Maccabeus)*
- *Zealot war cry was "(God) Save Us!" chanted over and over again. In Hebrew, "Ho-sha-NAH", which we pronounce today Hosanna.*
- *This comes from Psalm 118:25-26, at the end of the Psalms of Jewish blessings (Psalms 113-118) called the hallel, sung during Jewish holidays.*
 - *LORD, save us; O LORD, grant us success. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you.*

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."

This was the day He officially became the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world, 483 years to the day from the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, spoken of by Daniel the Prophet. (**Daniel 9:25**)

The religious leaders were threatened because of fear of what Rome would do –

Luke 19:39-40 Some Pharisees from the crowd told him, "Teacher, get your disciples under control!" But He said, "If they kept quiet, the stones would do it for them, shouting praise." (Romans 8:19-22 Creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.)

Intersection of human history and eternity about to meet on the cross – the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world (Rev 13:8) (eternity) about to become the man Jesus crucified on earth (history)

After the officials spoke with Him, He condemned Jerusalem to utter destruction because they did not recognize the day of His visitation. (**Luke 19:41-44**)

The next three days were filled with the most aggressive debate and confrontation with the Jewish religious officials in His entire ministry, beginning with the Temple Cleansing.

He was being inspected for any doctrinal spot or blemish that would disqualify Him as the Lamb of God. **They found NONE!**

In order to fulfill His Father's plan, He had to overcome the cowardice of the Jewish religious leaders and their fear of the crowds.

Matthew 26:4,5 and Mark 14:1,2

They agreed it should **not** be done during Passover Week.

Jesus knew it **had** to happen during this Passover Week! He begins to paint them into a corner, leaving them no choice but to act. There in the Temple complex before the crowds and the Jewish religious leaders, and under the gaze of the Roman troops, He tells a very pointed parable...

Matthew 21:33-46

"Here's another story. **Listen closely.** There was once a man, a wealthy farmer, who planted a vineyard. He fenced it, dug a winepress, put up a watchtower, then turned it over to the farmhands and went off on a trip. When it was time to harvest the grapes, he sent his servants back to collect his profits. "The farmhands grabbed the first servant and beat him up. The next one they murdered. They threw stones at the third but he got away. The owner tried again, sending more servants. They got the same treatment. The owner was at the end of his rope. He decided to send his son. 'Surely,' he thought, 'they will respect my son.' "But when the farmhands saw the son arrive, they rubbed their hands in greed. 'This is the heir! Let's kill him and have it all for ourselves.' They grabbed him, threw him out, and killed him. "Now, when the owner of the vineyard arrives home from his trip, what do you think he will do to the farmhands?"

"He'll kill them--a rotten bunch, and good riddance," **they** answered. "Then he'll assign the vineyard to farmhands who will hand over the profits when it's time."

Jesus said, "Right--and you can read it for yourselves in your Bibles: The stone the masons threw out is now the cornerstone. This is God's work; we rub our eyes, we can hardly believe it! "This is the way it is with you. God's kingdom will be taken back from you and handed over to a people who will live out a kingdom life. Whoever stumbles on this Stone gets shattered; whoever the Stone falls on gets smashed."

When the religious leaders heard this story, they knew it was aimed at them. They wanted to arrest Jesus and put him in jail, but, intimidated by public opinion, they held back. Most people held him to be a prophet of God.

He provokes them to take action against Him in spite of their own fear of the situation getting out of control.

Wrestling in the Garden (Skydiving seems like a great idea when you're standing on the ground) - The final battle before ultimate victory – not with the devil, but with His own self-will

Luke 22:40

When they arrived at the place, he said, "Pray that you don't give in to temptation."

Luke 22:42-44

"Father, remove this cup from me. But please, not what I want. What do you want?"
At once an angel from heaven was at his side, strengthening him. He prayed on all the harder. Sweat, wrung from him like drops of blood, poured off his face.

John 18:11

Jesus ordered Peter, "Put back your sword. Do you think for a minute I'm not going to drink this cup the Father gave me?"

Hebrews 4:15

We don't have a priest who is out of touch with our reality. He's been through weakness and testing, experienced it all--all but the sin.