

Behold the Lamb

A message delivered to
MAYER COMMUNITY CHURCH

March 28, 1999

TITLE: Behold the Lamb

TEXT: John 12:1-15

THEME: Jesus as He is

THRUST: How do you see Jesus?

INTRODUCTION:

Palm Sunday Tradition:

For over 1000 years, Christians have celebrated Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on the Sunday before Easter — *Palm Sunday*. So designated, because on that momentous occasion people from all walks of life prepared the way for their King by cutting branches from palm trees and spreading them in the way; others, reacting on the spur-of-the-moment, spread their coats before Jesus.

That was an act of homage.

In our modern era, we honor dignitaries by “rolling out the carpet” or giving them “red carpet treatment.” No less then. The simplicity and spontaneity of these actions and reactions seemingly added to the splendor of that moment.

What preparation have you made for your King this morning? What act of homage signifies the splendor of your King?

All four Gospels record this event. An Old Testament Prophet named Zechariah, who prophesied to Israel after they returned from captivity in Babylon, foretold this event.

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, your king comes to you: He is just and has salvation; lowly, and riding upon a donkey, upon a colt the foal of a donkey.”

John 12:1-15

- The *Preparation* for the King
- The *Presentation* of the King

I. PREPARATION FOR THE KING

It was customary for both Kings and Priests
to be anointed for service.

Anointing was a symbol of recognition
that an individual was set apart for service.

We believe and behave much the same today,
we characterize an individuals service as being anointed.

- Mary's Sacrifice:

In this particular instance, Mary anoints the feet of Jesus
with a very costly perfume. It was so expensive,

that Judas complained about the waste.

I don't want to go to deeply into that this morning,

but if you are in service to Jesus,
your *best* is not a waste — regardless
of what those around you may think!

This act of worship on Mary's part was a *sacrifice*.

We are not able to anoint the feet of Jesus
with a costly perfume, but we can offer sacrifices.

We sang a song,

*“Jesus is King, and I will extol Him,
give Him the glory and honor His name.*

Hebrews 13:15 tells us to offer this sacrifice of praise continually, the fruit of our lips.

True sacrifice *always* results
in the place being filled with a sweet fragrance;
we may not know it, but God does.

“The next day....”

• *The People's Sacrifice & Song:*

“Hosanna, Blessed is He that comes
in the name of the Lord.”

“Hosanna” = “Save us now, we pray.”

The people were thrilled that their savior was manifested.

They were not disappointed that He came on a colt.

They were not disillusioned as to who He was.

They believed their Bible.

Their prophet Zechariah had prophesied
that their *King* would come in that manner.

Yes, they had made preparation *for* their king,
but it was not a preparation of *personal sacrifice*,
rather it was spur of the moment ...

David said, “I will not offer to the Lord
that which costs me nothing!”

Their preparation was not so much from the heart,
but because they were caught up in the moment.

They were easily swayed.

They displayed a typical mob mentality.

They were not personally convinced
that Jesus as King, was their savior.

They got caught up in the excitement of the moment,
and forgot what the Angel had said to Joseph,

“You shall call His name Jesus, for
He shall save His people from their *s-I-n-s*.”

If we are looking for any other *type of salvation*
then we have bought into a mob mentality!

Later, when that excitement wore off,

they were saying something completely different;
both times they were displaying
purely emotional responses.

The question before us this morning is:

What on earth are we doing in preparation for the King?

Repeatedly, we are told in scripture
that the King is coming,
the Church has had almost 2000 years
to prepare for that coming,
and in many ways it appears as hasty
and ill-organized as a quick cut of a palm branch!
Are we offering a true sacrifice,
and the fragrance of that sacrifice fills this place?
Are we offering a spur of the moment acknowledgment
that *Jesus* is King — and living as though *we* are?

Jesus is King!

As King, he deserves your best — He's worth the cost!

II. THE PRESENTATION OF THE KING

Six days after Mary's Sacrifice

Five days after the People's Song,

Jesus has been arrested and brought before Pilate.
In order for the High Priests to put Jesus to death,
the kind of death they had in mind,
they *needed* Rome's collaboration!

If they had just wanted to execute Him
they could have stoned Him, as they did others.

What they wanted was a state sanctioned execution
because that was the most highly visible.

They were set on Jesus being proclaimed
an enemy of the state,
and they wanted the most exposure they could get.

So, they brought Jesus to Pilate — the Roman Governor.

• What Pilate said:

☞ John 19:5 "Behold the man!"

Pilate is a stand-in here for all of humanity.

The first time we Behold Jesus is as "The Man!"

Jesus, The Man!

Jesus, the Son of God, incarnate in the form of Man

Jesus, the Suffering Servant suffering as and for Man

Jesus, the Savior of Man as The Man!

"Behold The Man!"

Not a derogatory remark
like that of the mocking soldiers
but a display of deep respect: The Man!

■ What the Priests said:

In reply to Pilate's "Behold the Man"

they were quick to point out that *this man*
called himself the son of God
thus making himself equal to God.

Pilate was deeply moved by that revelation.

The pieces of the puzzle
were beginning to fall into place.

If this man were indeed a *god*
then, because of Rome's beliefs about the gods,
Pilate would be able to set him free.

Jesus was profoundly silent to Pilate's question,
"Whence art thou?"

Jesus would not allow Himself to be set free
on the basis of Rome's *misunderstanding*
about the nature and character of God.

Once again Pilate introduces Jesus to them;

the scene is an outdoor throne room, open to the public.

☞ John 19:14 "Behold your King!"

Just as Pilate first viewed Him as The Man,
now, he views Him as King of the Jews.

Pilate never fully accepted Jesus
as The Man of sorrows,

and consequently did not own Him as *his* King.

He could not, his position and prestige were at stake!

When Jesus comes again, it will not be as "The Man"

but, as The King;

and, the Bibles states that every eye *will* behold Him.

— What the People said:

"Away with Him, away with Him, **Crucify Him.**"

■ In reply to Pilate's question, "Shall I crucify your King"

the High Priest's parroted

the politically correct statement of the day,

"We have no king but Caesar!"

Picture the scene:

The crowd is around the outskirts of this courtyard;

Pilate is sitting on his throne with Jesus off to one side,

The Chief Priests are facing Pilate and Jesus.

The contrast between Jesus and the Chief Priests

is stark and compelling.

Here stand *the Priests* after the order of Aaron:

White linen robes trimmed in gold.

White crowns upon their heads

in the center a gold diadem signifying their *temporary*
priestly position as mediators between God and man.

A position they refused to relinquish to God's Man.

A position they steadfastly maintained

in spite of numerous revelations
as to the superiority of the Man, Christ Jesus ...

The King who had come with meekness &
in fulfillment of so many prophecies

There stands *That King*

weariness written all over His features.

There stands *That Priest*

made forever after the order of Melchizadek;

who had endured a false arrest,

who had experienced the sacrilege

of a "holy" legal proceeding, and

numerous excruciating beatings throughout the night.

That King who stood

with the mocked symbols of *His* authority

a purple robe to cover His nakedness

and a crown of cruel thorns!

That King

stood there in absolute silence as the Word of God.

That Kingly Priest

stood in perfect humility

as a lamb waiting to be slaughtered.

That Priest

stood as God's mediator

for a better covenant

than that represented by *those priests*!

In spite of that glaring contrast,

In spite of the inward convictions of his own spirit,

Pilate, in collaboration with *those priests*,

turned Jesus over to *them*

and *they* led Him away to be crucified.

Now, our tendency here is to become indignant

over this travesty of justice.

Should that become our focus,

then we will have missed the crucial point

of why God has recorded this for us.
God took great care to set this record before us.

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John *all* give the details of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, His trial, His conviction, His crucifixion, His burial and His resurrection.

Those days began with an *anointing*
and ended with an *announcement*,

“He is not here, He is risen, *as He said.*”

The picture that God has presented for us to see is that

it was not Pilate's personal quest for power,
as persistent as that was ...

it was not the People's passing passions,
as precarious as that is ...

it was not the Priest's pursuit of their own plans ...
as perjurious as that was ...

it was not any of those things by itself ...

it was all of those things together!

It was the *root* of all that is *rotten*,

it was caused by all that is wrong with humanity.

It was *s-I-n*.

He, the Creator of the universe
stood there in pervasive poverty ...

“**He** was *rich* yet for our sakes **He** became poor.”

He, Perfect God

stood there in my place ...

“**He** who knew no sin, became *s-I-n* for us
in order that we might become
the righteousness of through Him.”

“**He** bore our sins in **His** own body, on the tree....”

In presenting Jesus to the people

His cousin John said,

“**Behold the *Lamb of God***
who takes away the *s-I-n* of the world”

Not:

Behold *the Man* — great as He is!

Behold *your King* — assuredly He is!

But:

Behold the Lamb!

Behold the Lamb!

“He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet He opened not His mouth.”

Behold the Lamb!

“He is brought as a *lamb* to the slaughter...”

Behold the Lamb!

“As a sheep before his shearers is dumb,
so He opened not His mouth.”

Behold the Lamb!

Have *you* beheld the Lamb?

CONCLUSION: *Behold the Lamb*