



## James 1:12 Pt 2: A Crown of Life!

Palm Sunday, March 29, 2015

### **Text: James 1:12**

*Jas 1:12 KJV **Blessed** is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*

- In the last two weeks as we've studied this verse, we've hopefully been encouraged as to the meaning of true blessings (including the blessing of remaining steadfast under trial) and with some practical steps to walk in that steadfastness.
- Today, we want to look at the promise of the Lord to those who do remain steadfast...**A Crown of Life!**
- But first...a few Palm Sunday thought and prayers....

### **From the Gospel According the Matthew:**

*Mat 21:1-17 ESV* Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, (2) saying to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. (3) If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once." (4) This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, (5) "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'" (6) The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. (7) They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. (8) Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. (9) And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" (10) And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?" (11) And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee." (12) And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. (13) He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you make it a den of robbers." (14) And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. (15) But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant, (16) and they said to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read, "'Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise'?" (17) And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there.

- Let us be willing to "**untie**" anything we own and give it to Jesus...at once. ☺
- The laying down of branches upon the road in antiquity was done to give honor to a returning, conquering general or ruler. It was an indication of both praise and **submission** by the people.
- The title "Son of David" and the shout of "Save now!" (Hosanna) indicates the people saw Jesus, at least at this point, as the messiah, the prophet and King foretold by the Scriptures. Many of course, went on to "flip" in just a few days. May we be aware of the possible disloyalties of our hearts and continually "examine ourselves."
- There are both acceptable and non-acceptable ways of **worship**. May we be careful to do what He has commanded us.

### **From the Gospel According to John**

*Joh 12:12-19 ESV* The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. (13) So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" (14) And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, (15) "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!" (16) His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him. (17) The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. (18) The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. (19) So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him."

- May we “go to see” Jesus for more than signs; may we seek Him for who He is and for His **salvation**.
- And may the enemies of our Lord continue to be frustrated, as His Name and fame spread continually throughout the earth!
- May we, His disciples, follow His instructions:

*Mat 28:18-20 ESV And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (19) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

### **A Crown of Life!**

1. Palm Sunday marks the beginning of our Lord’s “**Passion** Week.”
  - After his triumphal entry into Jerusalem some 2000 years ago, our Lord would teach quite a bit about the close of the age (The Olivet Discourse), institute the Lord’s supper, be betrayed by Judas, be arrested, abandoned by His disciples, taken before Caiaphas and the religious leaders, be falsely accused and terribly abused, delivered to Pilate, be sentenced to death by crucifixion, be scourged by roman soldiers, and finally crucified.
2. Of course, the story wasn’t over then! ☺ See next Sunday! A fair question might be: “Why did our Lord go through all this?”
  - Think about it. All the pain, betrayal, false accusations? All He did was keep the Law perfectly, love, teach, heal, and provide for His people!
3. The short answer is He did it because it was part of the **redemption** of the elect; He did it so that someday His church might be with Him in glory.
4. Friends, this is the essence of the Gospel:
  - “Jesus Christ, the Son of God and God the Son, came to this earth through the virgin Mary, revealed the truths of God, lived the perfect life in our place, died on the cross to pay the penalty of sin that we might be forgiven and brought into relationship with God, rose again on the third day, and gives eternal life to those He has called who believe in Him by His grace and through faith. Those who reject Him will spend eternity apart from Him in Hell. At a future date, He will return to complete the restoration of God’s creation.”
  - *1Co 15:1-6 ESV Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, (2) and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. (3) For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, (4) that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, (5) and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. (6) Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.*
5. The Gospel, at its core, is God’s merciful redemption of **sinners**! It reflects His heart to call and choose a people for Himself to be with Him!
  - *Deu 7:6 ESV "For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.*
  - *Tit 2:11-14 ESV For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, (12) training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, (13) waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, (14) who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.*
  - *1Pe 2:4-5 ESV As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, (5) you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*
6. **In other words, the whole point is that one day, the redeemed, by His grace, would be dressed in white robes and be forever with Him! Hallelujah!**
  - *Rev 7:9-12 ESV After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, (10) and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (11) And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, (12) saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power*

and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

- Note what is in their hands: palm branches! Yes!
- One day, the scene of those "palm-wavers" who eventually rejected Him in favor of Barabbas will be finally replaced by a new scene! ☺

7. This heavenly raiment will also include...and this just blows me away...a **crown!**

- **2Ti 4:8 ESV** Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.
- **1Pe 5:4 ESV** And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.
- **Rev 2:10 ESV** *Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.*
- **Rev 3:11 ESV** *I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.*

8. **The imagery of a crown is simply staggering! Astonishing! Overwhelming! Why?**

- Let us be honest. We are such sinners! ☺
- We are such rebels!
- We are so quick to dismiss what He has commanded, even after we are saved!
- We are owed nothing; we merit nothing; we bring nothing.
- We are poor, pitiful, blind and naked!
- We are chief sinners; stiff-necked; too-smart for simple obedience!
- Instead of a crown we deserve a cross! Instead on honor we deserve hell!
- We would have been a palm-branch waving flipper! ☺
- AND YET our Lord is giving us a crown? Of righteousness? Cue shout. ;)

9. Is it an actual crown on our heads?

- I think so, but I cannot say for certain. I do know that the 24 elders cast theirs down...(Rev 4:10)
- Whether literal or metaphorical, the image is one of an athlete's wreath. John Gill writes:

"...eternal happiness, called a "crown", because of the glory of it, which will be both upon the bodies and souls of believers to all eternity; and as suitable to their character, they being kings, and having a kingdom and thrones prepared for them; and in allusion to the crown that was given to the conquerors in the Olympic games: and it is called a "crown of life", because it is for life, which an earthly crown is not always; and because it lies in eternal life, and is an everlasting crown; it is a crown of glory that fadeth not away, an incorruptible one; and differs from the corruptible crown given to the victors in the above mentioned games, which were made of fading herbs, and leaves of trees: and now the man that bears up under afflictions, and holds out unto the end, shall have this crown put upon him, and he shall "receive it"; not as merited by him, by his works or sufferings, for neither of them are worthy to be compared or mentioned with this crown of life and glory; but as the free gift of God, as it will be given him by the righteous Judge, as a reward of grace..."

- Hallelujah! Oh the mercy and love of the Lord towards us! ☺

Final Thoughts:

Friends, our Lord entered Jerusalem, went to the cross, and suffered and died for our sins. HE DIED FOR OUR SINS. He, because of a kind of love and mercy that is hard to fathom, has promised His true people a crown of life. I say to you therefore: STAND. Stand the tests. What we will receive in eternity is worth all we might and must suffer now...

**2Ti 2:11-13 ESV** *The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; (12) if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; (13) if we are faithless, he remains faithful-- for he cannot deny himself.*

**Rom 8:18 ESV** *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*

God has promised us a crown. He is not a man that He should lie. Amen!