



## Reaching our Neighbors Pt 1: The Determination of Jesus Palm Sunday, April 5, 2020

Good morning and welcome to a beautiful, if unprecedented Palm Sunday 2020!

Many, if not most of you are familiar with the significance of this day. This is the day we commemorate the beginning of our LORD's Passion: His very rightly celebrated arrival in Jerusalem for the final time followed by a week of conflict and very strong prophetic, polemic preaching including what we know as the Olivet Discourse. Indeed, for our LORD, it was a week of turmoil, agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, arrest, trials, beating and mocking, and crucifixion and death (Good Friday) for our sake.

Palm Sunday was a time of celebration, albeit brief:

- **Luke 19:36-40 (KJV)** *And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way. 37 And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; 38 Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. 39 And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. 40 And he answered and said unto them, *I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.**
- **Matthew 21:8-11 (KJV)** *And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. 9 And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. 10 And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? 11 And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.*

So our LORD has finally arrived in Jerusalem. **He did so, however, for a purpose...** a purpose that began in the Garden of Eden, was typified throughout the Old Testament building structures, ceremonies, and Laws, was proclaimed by the prophets up through John the Baptist, and about which Jesus declared when He began His three-year ministry in His home-town synagogue in Nazareth:

- **Luke 4:18-19 (KJV)** *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.*

From that time until Palm Sunday and for a short while after, the LORD Jesus relentlessly pursued His earthly, redemptive mission. It is that determination I'd like to both highlight today, AND offer as a model for every believer as we attempt, by God's grace, to Reach our Neighbors with the Gospel...

### Holy Texts: Luke 9:18-26, 44, 51-53

- **Luke 9:18-26 (KJV)** *And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, *Whom say the people that I am?* 19 They answering said,*

John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again. **20** He said unto them, *But whom say ye that I am?* Peter answering said, The Christ of God. **21** And he straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing; **22** Saying, **The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.** **23** And he said to them all, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.* **24** For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. **25** For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? **26** For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.

- **Luke 9:44 (KJV)** *Let these sayings sink down into your ears: **for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.***
- **Luke 9:51-53 (KJV)** *And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, **he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,** **52** And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. **53** And they did not receive him, **because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.***

### **The Determination of Jesus!**

1. The word determination is defined in part as “firm resolution; a settled purpose.” (Webster 1828) Therefore, to be determined is to be resolute; it is to have a fixed, steady course in life.
2. Generally speaking, those who are the most determined and the most resolute or single-minded—those who live with the greatest perseverance and devotion—tend to accomplish the most.
3. Our LORD is the ultimate example of this. I love this from the Biblical Illustrator:

“Every step of the Lord Jesus Christ left a footprint for His followers to study. This incident, too often overlooked as unimportant, has some suggestive lessons for the Christian.

1. It teaches that we should never shrink from a path of duty, however many may be the obstacles we encounter.
2. Such an uncompromising religion must not expect any help or hospitality from the world. Jesus found Himself on hostile soil as soon as He set foot in Samaria.
3. It was probably about the time of His repulse by the Samaritans that Jesus delivered those solemn injunctions to His followers about taking up their cross daily if they would be His disciples. He drew a sharp line, and made a clean issue. It is a religion of this fibre that the times demand. Such living brings happy dying.”
4. **Here is our Point: Knowing that He would suffer and die, He nevertheless set His face to go to Jerusalem. Knowing that He would be lifted up, He challenged all who would follow Him to be willing to do the same, for the same fixed, resolute purpose:**

**preaching the Gospel, healing the broken hearted, preaching deliverance to the captives, the recovery of sight to the blind, and the setting at liberty those that are bruised.**

5. Scripture says Jesus came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many (Matt 20:28). Our LORD asks for the same determination of us. The Apostle John wrote, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren." **1 John 3:16 (KJV) This should be our "determination" too!**

### **Some thoughts on the Text**

1. As we look to our Text, many will find it familiar; and therein Jesus asked the most important question there is: "Whom say ye that I am?"
2. Peter gets the answer correct: "The Christ of God."
3. Jesus is the Messiah, the anointed one. He is the Son of God and God the Son. He is the second member of the triune Godhead, which eternally exists in three divine Persons, yet one in Essence. He is the *Theanthropos* (fully God and fully man); in Him was the *Hypostatic Union*, the uniting of both the divine and human nature in the one Person of Christ!
4. And this Jesus, came to earth to do what we could not; to be born in sinless perfection, to live perfectly and keep the Law of God perfectly, and to die as our atoning sacrifice in order to satisfy the wrath of God, who hates sin and despises iniquity. "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world.*" **1 John 2:2 (KJV)**
5. And in verse 22 of Luke 9, He tells His disciples that He would go to Jerusalem, "suffer many things and be rejected" by the religious leaders. He tells them He would "be slain and be raised the third day."
6. He later tells them again that He would be delivered into the hands of men (v44). Yet He "steadfastly" set His face toward His mission (v51)...so much so, that the Samaritans, traditional enemies of the Jews, rejected Him despite His sending messengers before Him. Why? Because He was going to Jerusalem.
7. *There will often be those who won't accept you, regardless of your obvious love and care for them, because you are focused on your God-given mission.*
8. Despite His rejection, our LORD was **determined**; He pressed on. Why? Because He loves us! Praise His Name!
9. **Again the point: He knew He would be killed, yet pressed His way towards His death anyway! Why? To provide the means of the Good News!**
10. Then, again, He tells those who would come after Him to be willing to do the same, even unto the losing the "whole world" for His sake. He tells them to not be ashamed of Him and His words! (vv23-26)

### **Some Serious Questions:**

1. Is Jesus' *determination* our *determination*? Is there any sense of such single-minded devotion to His mission present in our lives? Just how badly do we want to *Reach our Neighbors*? To the point of cross-carrying? Suffering? Rejection? Dying?
2. Jesus often said things that demonstrated His determination:
  - "And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth." **Mark 1:38 (KJV)**
  - "And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent." **Luke 4:43 (KJV)**

- "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." **John 4:34 (KJV)**
- "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." **John 9:4 (KJV)**

3. Following after Him has a cost; are we willing to pay it to reach our neighbors?

- **Luke 18:31-34 (KJV)** Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. **32** For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: **33** And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. **34** And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.

4. Being a Bible-believing, Gospel-sharing, humble and holy Christian these days isn't popular. Jesus told the disciples:

*"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also."* **John 15:18-20 (KJV)**

Are you willing to endure for the sake of the elect?

5. He commanded His disciples:

- "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" **Matthew 28:19 (KJV)**
- "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." **Mark 16:15 (KJV)**
- "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." **Luke 24:47 (KJV)**
- "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." **John 20:21 (KJV)**

### **Final Thoughts:**

In His book, *God Has a Wonderful Plan for Your Life*, Ray Comfort said:

“The reality is that every 24 hours, 150,000 people around the world die and enter eternity—most without the Savior. According to the World Health Organization, cancer dragged 7.9 million victims to their graves in 2007, and heart disease killed 7.2 million. Each year 1.27 million people die in traffic accidents. Worldwide

annual deaths from the flu are estimated to be between 250,000 and 500,000, and in the U.S. alone, each year around 100,000 are helped out of here through hospital- related infections. If dirty hospitals don't kill people, in- competence may—between 40,000 and 100,000 people die annually due to doctors' mistakes.”

How many of these are our family members, friends, and neighbors?

With the current situation with COVID-19, many people have had no choice but to examine their mortality. Are you, precious friend, “ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear?” (1 Pet 3:15)

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we thank you for your son Jesus. LORD Jesus, from the foundation of the world, from the garden of Eden, and even now, You are determined to save your people.

LORD, help us grow in such resolution. Help us to be passionate about sharing your Gospel with our neighbors and be your hands and feet in their lives.

Master, anoint us and calm our fears. Help us to reach out in love and truth. Much is at stake, for time and for eternity.

In Jesus' mighty Name,  
Amen.