

“A Different Kind of King”

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When the people saw Jesus riding into Jerusalem that day, they knew that something exciting was happening. They knew that Jesus was riding in as the Messiah would because that's what the Scripture had said, and they thought they knew what that meant. They thought it meant they would be delivered. They thought it meant that Jesus was going to be their King.

So they got caught up in the excitement of the moment and celebrated, rejoicing at the picture forming in their mind's eye. A picture of a king who would save them. A picture of a nation reborn. A picture of a people who would be free to be a mighty nation again. The people expected a hero. The people expected a king. The people expected to be free again.

So on Palm Sunday, they shouted, “Hosanna!” But just a few days later on Good Friday, they shouted, “Crucify Him!” The picture they were developing in their minds wasn't the picture Jesus was painting for Himself! He was a different kind of King!

The dreams of that Palm Sunday were soon turned into the stark realities of the betrayal, the trial and the crucifixion. The reality of the situation was Jesus wasn't the kind of hero they hoped He'd be. He wasn't the kind of king to lead an earthly army. He wouldn't deliver them from the Romans.

Even as Jesus rode into Jerusalem, He wept for His beloved city. He knew their dreams and celebration of Palm Sunday would turn into the reality of pain, suffering, and death.

The crowds of Good Friday turned against Jesus for one reason. He didn't fulfill the dreams they of Him the Sunday before. Jesus had let them see the reality of who He was, and that's not what they expected He wasn't an earthly king, but a heavenly One. He wasn't a warrior who would come to destroy the Romans. But Jesus was a warrior who would come to destroy death.

Jesus' mission was to save. He sees our sins. He had seen the sins of all the world that began in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. He came to earth to deliver us from the power of the world, Satan, and even ourselves. He willingly came to earth to suffer in our place!

We need to understand that instead of a powerful earthly king, we get a Messiah who gives us power, but it's a whole new kind of power, it's the power of His suffering love! It's a power that looks you in the eye, and forgives your sins, fears, angers, and prejudices!

It's a power that loosens your grip on all of your expectations and even allows you to see Christ's face in the least and most lowly all round you! It's a power that's filled with grace, and invites you to join with Him in being one of His special grace givers!

He wants us to be His missionaries! Our mission is to praise Him in everything we say and do. The people around us should see the difference He has made in our lives. We've been redeemed with His precious blood and suffering and death for us!

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, *"God allows Himself to be edged out of the world and on to the cross, and that is the way, the only way, in which He can be with us and help us. Only a suffering God can help."*

The crowds that first Palm Sunday wanted a Warrior King, but Jesus wasn't a warrior king. Instead, Jesus was a suffering Messiah. Jesus came as One who would die on a cross for the sake of human kind. The crowd that Palm Sunday missed the point. The crowd thought they knew, but they didn't.

What about us? Do we get it? Is Jesus our suffering Messiah, or are we still looking for someone who'll turn the world upside down? Or do we see Jesus as the suffering Messiah who did turn the world upside down for our sake and continues to shape the world with His love and grace?

This Palm Sunday, a parade is gathering right here. Jesus is coming! But as you wave your palm branches, what are you celebrating? What kind of King do you see?