

THE KING WHO COMES CLOSE

Luke 19:28-40

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

- Today is Palm Sunday—a special day that marks the beginning of the week that changed everything forever.
- On this day, Jesus entered Jerusalem, welcomed by the worship of the crowds—who waved palm branches to honor him as king.
- But in the week that followed, he was betrayed, tried, and denied; crucified, dead, and buried—only to rise again, conquering death to save us all.
- Our services this week will walk us through the events of that week:
 - Invite a friend—offer to pick them up, sit together, get lunch after.
 - If you're able, come to the 6:30 or 8:00am services—we had 5,000 people last year and we want to make space for them all.
- But for today, let's reflect on how the week that changed everything forever began.

[Read. Pray.]

INTRODUCTION

- Jesus is the King who comes close.
- That's what I would like to talk with you about today.

CONTENT

- As we join him in this passage, Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem for the final time—and the first thing we see is that he is in complete **control**.
 - He and his disciples are approaching the suburbs, when he gives two of them an enigmatic command:

³⁰ “Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘The Lord has need of it.’”

- Can you imagine the disciples exchanging a confused glance?
 - It seems a little random, doesn't it?
 - We're to... steal someone's donkey?
 - Should we leave a note?
 - And the explanation they're to give doesn't exactly clear things up.

- If anyone asks, we're just to say you need it?
 - How is that going to work?
- But they've followed him enough to know:
 - Do what he asks, even if it doesn't make sense.
 - There's a profound lesson in that for all of us.
- And sure enough, off they go, and things unfold exactly as Jesus said:
 - **V32:** They find the donkey.
 - **V33:** They take it, and they're asked about it.
 - **V34:** They give their explanation, and it works.
- The reality is that none of this is random:
 - Jesus is fulfilling a prophecy made some 500 years before—**Zec 9:9:**

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!
 Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!
 See, your king comes to you,
 righteous and victorious,
lowly and riding on a donkey,
 on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

- According to this prophecy, Israel's true king would not come with pomp and ceremony, but in humility—not on a warhorse or in a chariot but on a humble donkey.
 - It's a striking reversal of typical royal imagery—an intentional sign that this king would not rule by force, but with righteousness and peace.
- This kind of kingship invites a comparison to the way earthly power often works...
 - Be wary of leaders who glorify power with an iron fist.
 - That is not the way of Jesus—and it is not the way of his cross.
- And that **cross** is really what this passage is about:
 - Jesus is using his **control**—and issuing commands—that he might move closer to it.
 - He is not getting swept up in the crowd, helplessly carried toward danger—he's deliberately moving toward it. WHY?
- Because that was the only way he could move closer to **us**.
 - The Bible teaches that our sin separated us from him.
 - Think of a close friendship that gets damaged—by a lie, betrayal, or just neglect over time.
 - When that happens, there's distance.
 - The relationship is still *there*, but it's not *right*.
 - That's what our sin does to our relationship with God—so Jesus comes to bring us back into a right relationship through him.

- That's the gospel that we celebrate together—
 - Jesus used his power and control to close in on Jerusalem...
 - So he could close in on the cross...
 - So he could close in on his people and save us.

Jesus is the King who comes close.

[Transition]

- As I thought about this truth this week, a couple of convictions stirred in my heart...
- First, some of you might need to be reminded today...

[CONSEQUENCE]

1. He's still coming close—for you.

- His drawing near wasn't just a one-time event thousands of years ago that enables you to be close to him in heaven when you die.
- Instead, he's still coming—like a parent entering a child's room in the middle of a nightmare—not to scold, but to comfort.
 - To our 6th graders and all our Communicants:
 - This King comes close to *you*.
 - He sees you in the crowd—and he's near.
 - To all of us:
 - This King comes close to *you*.
 - He's still riding into our lives—he's drawing near.

[Illustrate]: Is there somewhere in your life where you need this reminder?

- Over spring break, our family had the opportunity to go back to Scotland.
 - One of the sweetest moments was visiting my grandmother. She has severe dementia, and we suspect this will have been the last time we'll see her this side of heaven.
 - We visited her on a Sunday morning—we sang hymns to her, read Scripture over her, and prayed for her.
- And as we sat together, I couldn't help but remember a moment Jesus came especially close to her.
 - When my grandfather died, my grandmother was in an earlier stage of dementia. She could understand what was going on in the moment—but would forget it soon after.
 - This brought a very real concern:
 - Will we have to tell her again and again that the love of her life has died?
 - Will it be like a thousand deaths for her—each one holding the same measure of shock and grief?

- The night he died, my grandmother was already asleep, we stayed up late trying to figure out the best way to handle all this. We didn't reach a good conclusion, so unsure what to do, we prayed and fell into bed.
- The next morning—before anyone had the opportunity to say anything to her—my grandmother appeared and said, “He’s gone, isn’t he?”
 - Somehow, she knew.
 - And somehow, she never forgot.
- We still don’t fully understand what happened that night. But we know this: Jesus ministered to her in a way only he could.
 - He came close to her in her confusion and frailty—with gentleness, with clarity, with peace.
 - Because that’s what he does.

Jesus is the King who comes close.

[Apply]

- Where do you need him to come close to you?
 - Might be in your marriage or a situation with your kids.
 - Help you put down an addiction or enable you to forgive.
 - Help you in a hard season at work or some stress or grief.
- Pray and ask him to come close—in ways we don’t always understand, he does.

[Transition]

- That’s the first thing, and here’s the second thing that stirred in my heart...
- Not only is Jesus coming *for you*...

2. He’s still coming close—*through you*.

- Yes, sometimes Jesus draws near in mysterious, supernatural ways.
- But more often, he draws near through his people, through the church—through us.
- That’s why the Bible calls us the body of Christ.
 - We get to be his hands and feet here on earth.
 - We are how his love moves into the lives of others.
- You carry his presence with you:
 - Not perfectly, but really.
 - When you go *somewhere* you bring *someone* with you—namely, Jesus.

[Illustrate]

- This week, we hosted a lunch for a special group in our church family—our caregivers.
 - These are the men and women who are giving their lives—quietly and faithfully, unrecognized and behind the scenes—to care for those they love.
 - Some are walking alongside aging parents.
 - Some are raising children with special needs.
 - Some are caring for spouses wracked with dementia or Alzheimer’s.

- It's hard, unglamorous work—
 - The kind that comes when life deals you a bitter hand...
 - But these folks have refused to give up.
- One of our members, who's in her 70s, shared that her husband has been sleeping in a recliner after major surgery.
 - She wants to be there to care for him—even in the middle of the night.
 - So, she's sleeping on the couch beside him, just in case.
- That's what love does—love comes close.

[Apply]

- Is there someone in your life who needs that this week?
 - Maybe it's in the normal stuff of life:
 - A family that's hurting and needs a meal.
 - A friend who feels forgotten and needs a text or call.
 - A colleague who needs a listening ear.
 - Or maybe it's harder than that: Maybe you have a broken relationship, and though it's not primarily your fault—you could still take that first step.
 - Or maybe it's happier: You have a classmate or a neighbor who needs an invitation to Easter.
- What would it look like for you to bring Jesus close?
 - Not with all the answers or a perfect plan, but with a quiet prayer and an open heart—don't underestimate the power of that.
 - Jesus will go with you—he will come close through you.

CONCLUSION

- Jesus is the king who comes close:
 - He closed in on Jerusalem...
 - So he could close in on the cross...
 - So he could close in on his people and save us.
- Today, he's still closing in:
 - *For you*—ask him into the broken places where you need him close.
 - And *through you*—be the kind of Christian who sleeps on the couch.