

The King's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

John 12:1-19

Just before the triumphal ride into the city of Jerusalem by the Lord Jesus Christ, he was found at the home of the sisters Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus, who Jesus had raised from the dead. The Lord was the honored guest at dinner.

Martha served the meal while Lazarus was among those who reclined at table with him. It was their custom to lie around a low table and those places were for the invited guests. Other people could come into the house and be spectators at the feast and that is what happened when word got out that Jesus was there. Many of them wanted to see him, and many wanted to see Lazarus, now famous after being raised from the dead.

Mary took this occasion to anoint the feet of the Lord with a very expensive ointment made from pure nard. Those standing by in the room must have been amazed as she applied the ointment, and wiped the Lord's feet with her own hair. Only Judas, who would betray the Lord, complained. Such a precious ointment could have been sold and the proceeds given to the poor. Judas did not care for the needy. He was a thief and had charge of the moneybag. The proceeds would have come to him as treasurer of the disciples. He then could have taken some or all for himself.

The Lord told him to leave Mary alone. She would keep some of the ointment for the day of his burial. In this we see the close connection between the "enthronement" of the rightful heir of David, and his death on the cross.

The next day the Lord Jesus would present himself to the inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem by mounting a young donkey, in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9. The crowd, holding branches of palm trees would go out to meet him crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!"

What does it mean to say that Christ is King? And, what do we not mean by it? Christ's kingdom is not by might as we know it. The powerful of this world exercise might by military force, and by political schemes. But the kingdom of God was established in perfection by the death of the king on a Roman cross. And it is by the work of the Holy Spirit, and by the word of God, that God's kingdom moves forward in the world. Isaiah 55:11 reads, "So is my word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire, and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." And, the kingdom of God is not a materialistic kingdom. It is not about hoarding money and acquiring houses and lands.

The kingdom of God is a realm where absolute perfection is required of the citizens. "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Matthew 5:48

God's servants find that perfection by grace. They discover themselves to be sinners deserving judgment and hell. But they, by repenting of sin and putting faith in

Christ, discover that perfect righteousness is theirs, as the undeserved gift of God. Christ was perfectly obedient to the will of God. He went to the cross, willingly taking the place of his people, becoming sin for them. He took the judgment of God that we deserved on himself. Wrath has been turned away, and we stand before the Lord clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

The Lord also taught his disciples that his kingdom is one in which the servants of the King must never fight among themselves for places of honor. We are to consider others as better than ourselves and humble ourselves before each other. We are to be willing to take the lowliest position, and the most menial task, without complaining that we are being asked to do things that are beneath us!

The greatest person in the kingdom is Christ. He laid down his life for us when we were absolutely undeserving. We may only achieve greatness in God's kingdom by following his example. We must sacrifice our resources and energy in order to serve others for the sake of our master and Lord. It was he who humbled himself and washed his own disciples feet. We are called to do the same.

by Joe Nesom