

## SERMON THOUGHTS ABRIDGED

**JOHN 12:12-19****HIS ARRIVAL --- THEIR EMOTION**

*The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast [Passover], when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! The King of Israel!"*

*Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: "Fear not, daughter of Zion. Behold, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt." His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him.*

*Therefore, the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, "You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!"*

It's true, isn't it? When someone is coming to visit you, whether it's for a day or two, or for an hour or two, two opposite emotions can be involved. There is joy if Grandpa and Grandma are coming, or your friends. There's reluctance and maybe even unhappiness if it's nosy neighbors, or rude "friends." When Jesus came to Jerusalem for Passover, there were likewise two very different emotions at hand.

Emotions had been running high between Jesus and His opponents. Going back a few months to the Feast of Dedication (December) emotions were already spiking. At that feast Jesus had said to the leaders of the Jews, "I and the Father are one." They took offense, called His words blasphemy, and took up stones to stone Him. He slipped out of their hands. Jesus left Jerusalem and stayed on the other side of the Jordan River, in more desolate country, away from the rankled nerves of the leaders. Yet even on the other side of the Jordan, many people came to Him, and believed in Him as their Savior sent from God.

It was about three or four months until Passover. During that time Jesus made a trip to Bethany, located very near Jerusalem on the ridge called the Mount of Olives. He went to the home of his friends Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. However, Lazarus was dead and in the grave already four days. There was great emotion, great sorrow, a feeling of great loss. Mary wept, the people wept. Jesus wept. But remember what happened. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead with His powerful and loving words, "Lazarus come out!" Tears of sorrow turned to tears of joy! Word went to nearby Jerusalem. The incensed chief priests and Pharisees openly began plotting to kill Jesus. Again Jesus left the area and stayed in a town near the wilderness—away from the emotions of the enemies.

Passover was drawing near (March/April). Jesus again made a trip to Bethany to the home of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. There a special supper was held for Him. Many from Jerusalem came—whether before or after the banquet, we don't know—to see both Jesus and Lazarus whom He had raised. They believed in Jesus. At the supper Mary's positive emotions led her to pour onto Jesus' head and feet a jar of very expensive, fragrant oil (or lotion) spikenard, from the blossoms of the nard plant, found in India, about a pound, that is about 1 to 2 cups, worth 300 days wages!, perhaps \$20,000 - \$30,000 in our money. She poured it on Jesus in preparation for His burial. In simple faith, she had a sense of what was coming. Her actions roused the negative emotions of Judas Iscariot who loved money and criticized her "waste." Jesus defended Mary's faith. Judas, apparently miffed, went to the chief priests and Pharisees to betray Jesus to them—for money! Judas loved money.

Passover was now only five days away. Attending Passover at Jerusalem was part of Jewish life. It was a religious holiday commemorating God's miraculous sparing of the first born Israelite sons in Egypt, when the 10<sup>th</sup> Plague ravaged the land. God had been merciful and kind to them. Passover also became a national patriotic holiday. This was the day Israel received its independence and freedom from slavery! Emotions ran high. Jesus would go to Jerusalem. He knew His time was near. People already had gathered at Bethany and more were coming

from Jerusalem. They escorted Jesus into the city as the long-awaited King from David's family line, the long-awaited Messiah and Savior. Jesus Himself had sent two of His disciples to get a donkey's colt on which no one had ever ridden. The disciples placed their cloaks on the beast, others laid their cloaks on the road, still others cut palm branches and put them on the road--all to honor and welcome Jesus on His ride down the Mt. of Olives into Jerusalem. A donkey was a beast of peace and humble burden, not a spirited steed of war. Jesus came to be our King of Peace and to bear the burden for our sins. Palm branches were signs of the rest, refreshment, and peace such as the palm trees meant in the dry climate of the area. Jesus came to be our Peace and Rest.

The crowds praised Him with joy! *Hosanna*—Come save us now! *O Son of David, O King of Israel, who comes in the name of the Lord*—the rescuer God long ago promised to send! They sought peace from the sins that burdened their consciences, peace from physical oppression of the day. They sought His love and justice. Excited!

Does this scene remind you of the joy and happiness of Christmas? The two have many similarities! Jesus, true man, being born of the virgin Mary. Jesus, true man, came being carried on a new, unused beast. Jesus coming in humility, wrapped in swaddling clothes, placed in a manger--a feed box for animals. Jesus coming in humility sitting on a stable-animal used for burdens, bedecked with cloaks of people. Jesus coming with acclaim to Bethlehem, the city of David, as the angel announced, *Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord*. Jesus coming with acclaim to Jerusalem, also the city of David, as announced by the crowds. *Come, SAVE us now, O promised Son of David, You who come in the name of the Lord*. The shepherds with joy going to see Jesus, the crowds with joy escorting Jesus. The shepherds making known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. The crowds telling everyone that this was Jesus, the Promised King.

Really today and this week, there is Christmas Joy for your hearts--because you know how the story ends. Jesus dies for us, but Jesus rises in victory!. Our sin and guilt sent away! Hosanna! Come save us now! How much Christian Christmas celebration would there be if Jesus had come to earth and not succeeded as our Savior. If there were no victory and resurrection from the grave for Him on Easter, Christmas would be a bust. Palm Sunday would be a bust. Not much joy there. Just a bleep on the radar of history and that's all. Not so! We know how it ends and what it means--forgiveness of sins, life, eternal life, and salvation. I pray your emotions run high this week! As positive as they can get. God has kept His promise as He always does. In Jesus Satan's grip has been broken. You live now and forever. In Jesus you win!

Emotions are a wonderful gift of God. They are the color for life. Joy, happiness, contentment, security, well-being, love, friendship. But dear friends, realize that emotions are feelings. And your salvation is not based on feelings. Your salvation, your love from God is not based on feelings, but on FACTS. Feelings are the result of your salvation. Beware saying, God loves me because I feel it. I'm going to have a good day, because I feel it. No, it's based on facts. Jesus came to save you. Jesus died for you. Jesus rose in victory for you. Those are facts! The feelings are based on the facts, not the facts on the feelings. Imagine a child who feels unloved, because he or she was just told No. You can't play with that butcher knife, with that gun, you can't take the car today in this snow. The child feels unloved. But the facts are that the child is dearly loved. Indeed we are filled with emotions today, and at Easter, and at Christmas. But it's because of the FACTS.

Then there's also the emotion of the enemies. With regret and chagrin and anger, *"You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!"* The fact that nothing can defeat Jesus, that not even Satan can overpower Christ is a downer for the forces against Him. They can rant and rave and rage all they want. They can try every trick in the book and then some, but Jesus wins. They correctly observed, *All the world has gone after Him*. God so loved the WORLD that He gave His only begotten Son. Do you realize what this means? You are safe in Jesus arms. As much as sin opposes you, as much as the devil seeks to destroy your relationship with the Father, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, you are safe in Jesus' arms. As much as this sinful world in its downward spiral and its continued unraveling--whether here in our own nation or abroad--seems to mean only your undoing, you are safe in Jesus. As much as Satan wants to tear apart Christianity, you are safe in Jesus. As much as your own sinful flesh wants to deceive you and lead you into great shame and vice, cling to Jesus. You are safe.

Today we celebrate His ADVENT into Jerusalem to be our Savior. We also celebrate His Advent into our hearts through His Word. Receive Him with Joy. Let your emotions run high! Hosanna! Come save us now! O promised Son of God and Savior!

So be it! Amen!

Pastor Kanzenbach