

Discipleship: People

Luke 19:35-40

The Triumphal Entry, remembered on Palm Sunday, is when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey in royal procession. Jesus is recognized as the King when whole multitude shouts Psalm 118: “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” (v38). Consider what means to be part of this happy multitude.

Community

Jesus was constantly surrounded by crowds during His ministry, and the end is no different. The two greatest commandments go closely to together, the second like the first: love God, and love your neighbor (Matt. 22:36-40). Love is not primarily an emotion, but a verb, and a transitive one—it has an object. Right now “community” is trendy, but for Christians it has always been essential because God is the divine community of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We’re supposed to be together. Jesus came to find the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. 15:24), to gather them into “the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). So God is a community, and He brings *us* into that fellowship. Worshiping Him creates community (v40). Whenever someone in Scripture feels like a spiritual loner, God goes upside his spiritual head; Israel in decline still had seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal (1 Kgs. 19:18). We never worship alone, but are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses (Heb. 12:1).

Throwing Off Sin

Because we are surrounded by so many like-minded people, it’s tempting to think sin won’t be an issue among us, and we can just run the race. But we’re told, “let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely” (Heb. 12:1). Do you think anyone threw elbows for position at the Triumphal Entry parade? There’s a decent chance (e.g. Lk. 22:24ff.). People provide us occasion to sin, and they sin against us. The apostle Paul would not have known sin unless the law said, “You shall not covet”, and he would not have coveted unless someone had something he wanted (Rom. 7:7). We are called to live in community, to keep the second greatest commandment, and therefore to deal with our sins and the sins of others against us in that same community. What could go wrong? Everything (1 Corinthians). In fact, the more opportunity we take to love one another, the more occasions there will be to deal with sin. In God’s astounding grace, not only is this not a problem, it is His means of sanctifying us. But we need to be ready for it.

1. We have been and are continually forgiven an infinite debt against God, and therefore we can forgive others for much less (Matt. 18:21-35). This perspective is made possible by regular confession to God.
2. Love has two options when encountering sin, and the first one is to cover it (1 Pet. 4:8). If God brought every sin to our attention, we would be destroyed (Ps. 19:12). We are privileged to imitate Him.
3. The second option love chooses is to confront. This takes courage and wisdom, and Jesus commands it (Matt. 18:15). It must be done in a spirit of gentleness, Paul says, so that the one doing the confronting will not also be tempted (Gal. 6:1).
4. God gives us the options of covering or confronting, but never of complaining. The first two lead to forgiveness, which is a promise to not bring up the offense to others or yourself. This is how God forgives us (Ps. 103:12). Love gladly gives the right hand of fellowship, not the backhand of consequences.

The New Humanity

Sin never ruins people or churches, only unconfessed and unforgiven sin. When individuals keep short accounts with God, they are set free, and the grace of God overcomes (Rom. 5:20). Love for others simply flows out (1 Jn. 1:7). We do this because people bear God’s image, and the more they become like Him, renewed in the image of Christ, the more we enjoy them. When this captures a church, we exhibit the new humanity that Jesus ushered in. Be part of this graced people.

NOTES FOR LITTLE SAINTS

Today's Passage: Luke 19:35-40

35 And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. 36 And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. 37 As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, 38 saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” 39 And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.” 40 He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

1. Did a lot of people welcome Jesus into Jerusalem, and what were they doing?
2. How many persons are there in the Godhead, and can you name them? Since God is a community, what does this mean about how we should be?
3. The greatest commandment is love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. The second greatest is love your neighbor as _____ (Matthew 22:36-40). How does God forgive us, and how should we forgive others?
4. Draw a picture of your friends inviting other kids to hang out with them.

Memory Verse to Recite Next Week:

“Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” —Luke 19:38