

# Jesus is Victorious

Today we celebrate Palm Sunday with Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. We continue our series of "Jesus Is" as we discuss Jesus is Victorious.

## Introduction

Oh the sweet smell of victory! If you have been part of a sports team that has pushed all season to make it into a championship game and continued to strain, play your best, and come out on top, victory is so sweet.

How about pushing and trying so hard to complete a task? You have given your heart and soul to a paper, a project, an idea, or an experiment. And once the deadline takes place and you receive accolades for a job well done, victory is sweet. Whether it is playing a sport, being a student, or working towards a goal, there is a lot of effort behind victory.

Today as we celebrate Palm Sunday, we are going to discuss how Jesus is victorious. We will read the Triumphal Entry in the book of Luke and we will see that 1) Struggle comes before the victory, 2) Celebrating the small wins along the way is important, and 3) Prayer is instrumental.

Let's begin with the story of Jesus coming into Jerusalem the week before he is crucified on the cross.

Luke 19:28-44 says:

## Luke 19:28-44

(28) After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. (29) As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, (30) "Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. (31) If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' say, 'The Lord needs it.'" (32) Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. (33) As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" (34) They replied, "The Lord needs it." (35) They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. (36) As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road. (37) When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: (38) "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" (39) Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" (40) "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out." (41) As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it (42) and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. (43) The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. (44) They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."



In John's account, he states that they took palm branches when they came out to meet Jesus as he entered the city. People had recognized that Jesus was sent by God and were welcoming him to their city.

We read here that Jesus and his disciples were coming into the city for the Passover celebration. Jesus had asked the disciples to find a colt that had never been ridden before, one that they put their cloaks on so Jesus could sit on top of it.

### There Must Be a Struggle Before There is a Victory

People came from their houses, markets, and job sites to place their own cloaks on the ground for the donkey to walk on as they waved palm branches. This was their way of rolling out the red carpet. This was the King, the one who came to take away the sins of the world. Some of the people recognized him as King and praised him. In some ways, this was the pre-celebration, foreseeing of what was to come. This small illustration of a king coming into Jerusalem was the foreshadow of the King of Kings coming to redeem mankind.

But first, there needed to be a struggle. This triumphal entry did not last long, it was one afternoon: a glimpse of time. For the people knew who Jesus was, this was their long-awaited king. But this did not last long. This was not the traditional multi-day Jewish celebration, for in a few days, Jesus would face the most difficult time of his life. In less than a week, he would be falsely accused, arrested, unfairly tried, and executed for being the son of God.

The struggle was coming but for today, Jesus rode the donkey, Jesus celebrated with the people. Jesus accepted their graciousness and their worship. The ultimate victory was coming but only after the struggle.

### Celebrating Along the Way

It is important that during the struggle, small victories are celebrated. The sports team that needs to get back to the fundamentals, can celebrate over caught balls or good defense. The student who struggles to concentrate during class can celebrate over a passing grade. The worker who has struggled to get along with co-workers can celebrate over the friendly smile they receive. The road to victory can be long and draining but we must stay focused by celebrating the battles won along the way.

Verse 37 says, - When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen.

The people who considered themselves followers of Jesus joyfully praised God for all the miracles they had seen. They had been with him as he preached, as he healed people, and as he cast out demons.

Were they still occupied by the Romans? Yes.

Did they still not have the same rights as others? Yes

Were they still waiting for their promised Messiah? Yes

But they still celebrated because they recognized God at work. They saw the miracles Jesus performed, how he healed the sick, raised the dead, brought strength to the weak. They witnessed the power and authority in the way Jesus spoke. They heard the wisdom he used and the love he shown to the



unlovable and downtrodden. So, they celebrated. They showed honor by placing their cloaks on the ground and waving palm branches. Despite the circumstances, they chose joy, and they chose to celebrate.

### Prayer is Instrumental

To gain victory, 1 - there will be struggles along the way but 2 - we must celebrate the small victories, and 3 - prayer is instrumental in gaining the victory. There is no better prayer warrior than the example Jesus set for us. Jesus was constantly in prayer. We read throughout his ministry that he would go to a quiet place and pray. We read how he prayed for his friends, his disciples, and his enemies.

Here, we read how he wept and prayed over the city in Luke 19:41-44.

#### Luke 19:41-44

(41) As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it (42) and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. (43) The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. (44) They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."

We hear Jesus' heart for people and how he has compassion on the people of Jerusalem. When we are in the battle, it is hard to pray for others because we get caught up in our circumstance.

A few months ago I met with a widow whose husband was murdered. The circumstances around the tragedy were indescribable and hideous. This woman, whose foundation was in the Lord, wasn't concerned with justice for the man who took her husband's life, but instead, she wanted to pray for everyone who witnessed or was affected by the tragedy. She was in the midst of a tremendous battle but didn't pity herself, instead, she focused on everyone else.

In the midst of battle, it is hard not focus on how we are feeling or how we are being treated. It is difficult to put our focus on others and pray for others when we are feeling beat down. But that is exactly what Jesus did. He even prayed for you while he was dying on the cross. In spite of his pain and suffering, he knew the victory was coming, he just had to endure the battle.

### Conclusion

Today, if you are facing a battle of your own, look to Jesus and follow his lead. Know that there must be struggle before the victory. Jesus is there for you. Do not forget to celebrate along the way. When we are striving for something and giving our all, it is important to not be discouraged and to celebrate the small things. Also, know that prayer is paramount. It is instrumental in winning the war. Pray for others, pray for the circumstance, pray that God will change you to be more like Jesus and help you be victorious.

