

Lifelines

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Topic: Jesus the Polarizer

In Which Camp Do You Live?

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The Sunday before Easter is commonly called “Palm Sunday.” It celebrates the day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey to the shouts and praises of the crowds proclaiming Him their King and Messiah, the One for whom they had waited for centuries. People laid their cloaks and palm branches on the road in front of Jesus, depicting His royalty and kingship. Crowds were everywhere, packing into every standing space shoulder to shoulder, as they shouted (Mark 11:9–10 (NASB95): “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Blessed *is* the coming kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the highest!”

The triumphal entry of Jesus separated people into one of two camps: those who wanted to crown Jesus as their King and establish God’s joyful kingdom of light, love, and life, or those who rebelled against God ruling over them, and thereby chose the evil kingdom of darkness, hatred and death. The camp of love and life was embodied by Jesus and His followers. The camp of hatred and death was led by Satan and embodied by the powerbrokers of the religious and political power of Israel, who rejected Jesus in order to keep their power and control over the people.

Palm Sunday presents us with a visual picture of the power struggle that is going on everyday in our world, in our country, in our society, in our churches, families, and personal lives. You see, every one of us has a physical life, and an inner spiritual life. Our personhood is comprised of our body, our mind, our will, i.e., our volitional decision-making capability, plus our emotions, and our soul. Our soul or spirit is the inner spiritual nature and capacities which were created in the image of God, and provides humans with the God-given capability within us to communicate and live with God. In essence our soul is the internal part of us which encompasses all the other characteristics and abilities that we possess. It is what makes us distinctly unique and gives us the ability to not merely react to stimuli, but also to proactively initiate plans and activities.

Jesus spent approximately thirty-three years among humans, teaching them, healing them, and re-connecting them to God and life in the Kingdom of God. Humans (i.e. Adam and Eve) were created in the image of God, with the purpose of interacting with God and being God’s hands and feet to care for this beautiful planet He created, and all its life and resources. We were created to live in daily interaction with God. When Satan tempted Adam and Eve to sin, and they chose to give in to Satan, so their unhindered relationship with God was ruptured. This effected their entire lives and the entire planet.

But God still loves each of us, and desires for us to be born-again, i.e. to receive a new spiritual capacity to once again live in camaraderie with God. Jesus came to live a sinless life, then die on the cross to pay the death penalty that entered the world through human sin (rebellion against God). Jesus came to restore the “Kingdom of God,” meaning right relations between God and humans. When we receive Jesus, we receive Him as our new King, our Lord, the One who we ask to lead, guide, and empower us with His indwelling presence. This returns us to a love relationship with God and a desire and power to daily live in ways that well represent God and His values in our lives, our goals, our

values, and our relationships. When Jesus comes to live within a person, the life of God, i.e., eternal life, takes up residence within us. Our values have changed from hatred to love, from anger to peace, from selfishness to generosity. We receive life that will never end, thus connected to God forever.

Those who reject God ruling within them, choose a life in antagonism against God, which leads to deception, destructive attitudes, actions and attitudes. Those who reject God, reject life as it was intended to be, and live in the realm of destructiveness and death.

This is the imagery portrayed in Palm Sunday's triumphal entry. The Sadducees, scribes, and Pharisees who rejected Jesus and refused to have Him rule over them, condemned themselves and their nation. They were filled with hatred and bitter poison and would rather die than receive Jesus as King over them.

The multitudes who acknowledged Jesus as their King entered into life, love, abundant living. Jesus not only gives us life, Jesus said: "I am the Way, the Truth, and THE Life ... no one comes unto the Father but by me!" (John 14:6). So many people today are filled with hatred and poison. Don't be one of them. Choose Jesus, life, and love!

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