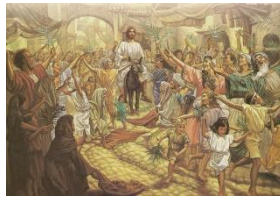


Luke 19:29-44
“Keep Praying”
Lord’s Prayer Series
Palm Sunday April 10th, 2022

Today in our story we see Jesus making a specific claim to be the Messiah. He had taught and preached and prayed and produced signs and miracles for 3 years and yet many still didn’t believe. Some REFUSED to believe out of personal self-interest and greed. They were hungry for position, power, and money; so, they refused to acknowledge who Jesus was. It was too inconvenient for them.

So, Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9, “Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

He himself became an object lesson a living children’s moment for all to see and understand. He, by riding a donkey, claimed to be the Messiah, the Christ.



He rode in from the East of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. The Jews believed that the Messiah would come from the east. He will come down the Mount of Olives to enter Jerusalem and the Temple Mount through the Golden Gate.



This is the rebuilt Eastern Gate or “Golden Gate” by which Jesus, would have entered Jerusalem.

This is what it looks like from the Mount of Olives across the Kidron Valley.



The golden gate was rebuilt and sealed in 1542 by the Muslim Sultan Suleiman. He rebuilt the walls of the city and sealed the gate in the belief that by doing so it would stop the Jewish Messiah from entering that gate. A graveyard was also put into place there by the Muslims, because they believed a Jewish Messiah would not cross a graveyard. He was trying to block the return of the Christ!

Some believe this gate is to remain permanently shut because of a prophetic verse from Ezekiel 44:2, The Lord said to me, **“This gate is to remain shut. It must not be opened; no one may enter through it. It is to remain shut because the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered through it.”**

They believe it will remain shut until Jesus the Messiah returns.



Now to this day if you visit Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives you will see that the western side of the Mount of Olives is covered with the tombs of faithful Jews awaiting the coming of the Messiah and the resurrection of the dead. We as Christians are waiting for the return of that same Messiah, and when he returns it will be from above.

From the Mount of Olives, you can see all of Jerusalem. As Jesus descended the hill, he could see all of Jerusalem and wept over it. God wept over the city because God knew the hardness of heart and selfish self-interest of the leaders of the Jewish people.

The courtyard that Jesus cleared of the money changers and animal sellers was known as the “Booths of Annas”, because they and the income from them were the property of the family of the High Priest” . The Gospel of Luke Barkley p. 287 The High Priest took a cut of all the money made there.

Everyone was taking their cut and the worshipers were being exploited as they came to worship God.

And Jesus wept for he knew what was coming.



by James Tissot

Their blindness to see and know who stood before them was the same blindness to see that their actions towards the Romans would lead to the utter destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70AD.



The Romans knew the power the Temple held in the minds and faith of the Jews; so, under the Roman general Titus, who later became the Roman Emperor, the city was utterly destroyed, and the Temple torn down to the very dirt on which it stood. The Romans thought that would break and destroy the power of the Jews.



This event is immortalized on the Arch of Triumph of Titus and Vespasian that stands in the City of Rome to this day. In it you can see the victorious Romans carrying off the gold Minora and other Temple artifacts.



The coins that were struck in Jerusalem from 64AD to the destruction in 70AD show the growing desperation of the situation.

The engraving on the coins from year 1 of the revolt say, "Freedom of Zion", which was a statement of great confidence and faith. Those from year 4 say, "To the Redemption of Zion". You can feel the desperation.

The destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem lead to a great spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For the most part Christians were as happy as clams in the mud in Jerusalem after Jesus was raised from the dead. Oh, there was persecution, there was trouble as Jesus promised, but those at the source of Christianity had to be forcefully spread out over the Roman world shortly before and after the destruction of Jerusalem in order for the Christian faith to grow.

In the O T Joseph says to his brothers, when they were truly in fear of what he would do to them, because they had sold him into slavery, and now their father was dead, and Joseph held all the power of Egypt. So Joseph addressed their fear and said, **"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."** *Genesis 50:20*

God took the evil of Joseph's brothers and turned it into good. God took the evil of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple and turned it into good, the spread of the Gospel. As Jesus said, **"Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."** *John 12:24* This saying indeed applied to him and to many others that died the death of martyrs, a hard saying, yet true, which Jesus lived.

I titled this message, "Keep Praying", because that is what Jesus did to his last breath when he declared to God and the world, **"It is finished"**. The price for sin was paid. The redemption of the world paid for.

Keep praying is what Jesus asked his disciples to do and asks us to do the same today. To keep praying the prayer he taught, to keep praying for the coming of the Kingdom of God.

From the time of the prophecy of Zechariah to when Jesus fulfilled it by entering the East Gate of Jerusalem 500 years had passed. 500 years of prayers, worship, and waiting. 500 years of people gathering together to worship God and hearing the ancient prophecies read again and again to bring courage to wavering hearts and minds as they suffered through the trouble of many ages.

Jesus was consistent in prayer and life. He prayed and lived what he taught. In our Gospel lesson we see He reached **UP** to God in prayer, **IN** to his disciples, and **OUT** to the world.

In the Garden he prayed so fervently UP to God he sweat blood. He reached IN to his friends by inviting his disciples to be with him and pray with him. He told them twice in the passage from the garden to **“Pray that you will not fall into temptation.”** He wanted them to keep praying!

Jesus reached OUT to the world when he healed the ear of servant of the High priest who one of his followers had lopped off.

Jesus asked them to do what he taught them to do in the Lord’s Prayer... to pray, **“Lead us not into hard testing, or temptation.”** He asked them to pray it knowing full well they would be tested in their faith and commitment that night and that all of them, literally all of them would fail.

But still Jesus asked them to pray. We today are also asked to pray even though we know times of trouble are here for many and are coming for others and will wind up for all in our laps.

We are called to pray to escape trials and temptations even when God says **“NO”**, so that we can grow in our faith knowing he speaks.

We can rejoice knowing that we are worthy of suffering for our faith, and through our faithfulness in suffering we are witnesses to our faith. 1 Peter 4:12-14 says,

“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.”

Jesus was consistent with his teaching putting it into practice. In his prayer to God in the garden, he included many of the 6 phrases we have been studying in His prayer.

Verse 42 reads, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”

I spoke to you about how the phrases in the Lord’s Prayer are like shelves in a shelving unit. On different shelves different prayers are inspired and lie.

Note the parts of the Lord’s Prayer present in this verse:

In the Garden

“Father,”
“If you are willing.”
“take this cup from me.”
“Yet not my will.”

His prayer

“Our Father”
“Who art in heaven”
“Lead us not into hard testing.”
“Thy kingdom come, thy will be done”

Note, Jesus did not pray the 3rd phrase, “Give us this day the things we need”. Nor did he pray to forgive our trespasses as those who trespass against us. Nor did he pray “deliver us from evil and the evil one.” He saved those parts of his prayer for the cross.

On the cross he promised a crucified, penitent thief, “Today you will be with me in Paradise.” He gave that man that day what he needed most.

He forgave all our trespasses when he said to God, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.”

He delivered us all from evil and the evil one when in complete faith in God he said, “Into your hands I commit my spirit” and breathed his last.

So, keep praying, my friends, keep praying that you will not fall into temptation and hard testing. Keep praying that when you do, (Not if you will) but when you fall into hard testing you will keep your faith to the end like Jesus did.

This pandemic we are exiting has been a tremendous test of many peoples’ faith. Many have despaired of God. Many have despaired of the church and wandered away. Many have succumbed to the cares, and worries, and riches of this world.

But are we not alive? Are we not here still worshipping the Lord and waiting for the return of the Messiah? Yes we are we are called to connect and grow this year.

Yes, we are, and we will be as we pray daily to be delivered from temptation and testing, but whatever happens, nevertheless we will still pray, and we will still be faithful.

As the 6th verse of Amazing Grace says, “When we’ve been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we’ve no less days to sing God’s praise than when we first begun.”

I want to close now showing how the 5th and 6th phrases of the Lord’s Prayer are intimately connected.

We pray “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”. I always wondered why it didn’t say “Lead us not into temptation AND deliver us from evil.”

Well, the reason is that God often leads us into times of Hard testing. Let that sink in. It is in the hard testing that we are the most profound witnesses of our faith.

And the circumstances of life, and the evil that is in this world, leads us into trouble, hard testing, and the temptation to walk away from our faith in God.

That's why I most often pray the 5th, and 6th phrases as you see it in the bulletin: **Lead us not into a time of trial or hard testing, but if you do lead us into such a time, let us not do evil by abandoning our faith."**

This also ties it directly to the 1st phrase because when we pray it, we are also asking that we don't do anything that would bring shame to the name of the Lord. Let us do the right thing so that people will see the good works we do and bring Glory to God in heaven.

You can jump around in the prayer then praying for what needs to be prayed most for that day. Often times, especially recently with the economic chaos in America and the war in Ukraine, I get no further than "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done" and I start remembering before God all the places in the world I want to call his attention to so that he can fix .

So, pray my friends. Keep praying, like Jesus told his disciples to pray. Pray that temptation and testing do not come, and pray to be faithful no matter what.

What is God saying to you and what are you going to do?