

## **The Life of Jesus – Transfiguration**

**Luke 19:28-48**

### **Series Introduction**

Over the summer we are following a series based on the Life of Jesus. This is based on the theme of our Children's work though we may be going a little deeper. Next week we will be meeting together to see what we all remember from the series so you may want to pay particular attention to my summary this morning!

### **Introduction**

So far we have seen that Jesus fulfilled the ordinary responsibilities and duties of family life; that He was tempted in every way as we are yet without sin; we have considered what we can learn from His calling of disciples, His teaching, His performing miracles and from His transfiguration.

### **Exposition**

Today we look more deeply at another significant event in the Life of Jesus – the Triumphal entry. We will be asking the same four questions.

### ***Why has Luke included this episode?***

Luke begins brings to the fore the pressures, tensions and disagreements which will eventually lead to the Cross. On the one side chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders of the people. On the other Jesus. Who has authority and how will it be exercised? Jesus exercises His authority with justice and mercy, those who oppose Him do so with injustice and violence.

Jesus' timing (at the Passover), His method of entry (as a peaceful King), the disciples' shouts of praise (Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord) and Jesus' prophetic words and actions make this one of the most highly charged moments prior to His crucifixion. Jesus was entering Jerusalem in order to reclaim the temple and His rightful place as King of Israel. We began our series with Jesus listening and asking questions in the temple. 18 years later Jesus is teaching with authority beyond their comprehension.

There is a mismatch between the mood of the triumphal entry and Jesus' declarations of His forthcoming death. It is such a momentous event that people cannot help cry out in praise indeed Jesus' says it has to be so. Yet one cannot help thinking that the crowd of disciples are cheering for something that they have completely misunderstood.

Yes, it is the moment that all of creation has been waiting for; YHWH returning to His temple and ultimately fulfilling its meaning and purpose but this will only be achieved through Jesus own sacrificial death. There is a chasm of suffering and grief between this moment and that victory.

It is a tension we face every year on Palm Sunday and Good Friday. What should be the balance between profound respect and awe at the death of the Son of God and joyful celebration of His ultimate victory?

### ***What is the Good News?***

Jesus is the one with true authority. He wept over the city of Jerusalem although He knew its people would ultimately reject Him. Jesus response to those who were looking for a way to kill Him was to keep teaching the gospel. Jesus teaching in the temple courts was where we started our journey and what God always intended. This is what the temple was built for. From this point on Jesus replaces the chief priests, the teachers of the law, the temple, the sacrifices and the place of prayer. Those in Christ become the dwelling place of God.

The good news is that justice and mercy ultimately win over injustice and violence.

Zeal for the Lord consumed Jesus. He will not allow profit to come before salvation or permit people's selfishness and pride to prevent others them from entering God's presence. The cleansing of the temple followed by Jesus teaching there illustrates the way in which Jesus love embodies justice and mercy. Love is not just if it allows oppression to continue unchallenged.

Authority that is exercised in this way leads to rejection by the world but acceptance by God.

### ***So What?***

Jesus wants all to hear the invitation even those who will reject it. Jesus has true authority from God to declare His purpose and will. Jesus is concerned with justice and mercy. He cares about big companies dodging taxes and about migrants being trafficked and so must we. But we must not overestimate our role. Jesus said that all authority in Heaven and Earth had been given to Him and sent us with authority to make disciples, baptise them and teach them. Our authority then is to declare the Lordship of Jesus. We are not called to a military crusade but to prophetic action. We are called to take up our cross – that is to exercise authority with justice and mercy expressed as love.

Our role is like that of the disciples – to bring the donkey, keep out the way and cheer loudly.

## ***Now What?***

Whether it is in opposing oppression or clearing the way for people to meet with God we should recognise a donkey when we see one. What are the issues we need to be speaking out against today? What are the donkeys we might bring for Jesus to use? Petitions, letter writing, conversation, teaching, campaigns eg MacMillian Coffee Morning and Tearfund Harvest Service.

What can we do to remove the obstacles for people to come to God in prayer? eg Prayer Cards. As part of churches together we commit to praying for people in certain streets each month and deliver cards to invite people to request prayer.

Remember invitation is our responsibility – dealing with the response is God's responsibility. We must beware of putting barriers in the way which prevent people from coming to Jesus. Instead we need to provide stepping stones for them to come to Him.