



2019 April Sermon Series: Beauty for Ashes

Message #2 – Let the Thirsty Find Water

Getting the Nod

Open with the Video: **Hosanna Palm Sunday #2**

THE GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS OF PALM SUNDAY: John and his friend George went golfing together one Saturday morning as they had for 24 years. They were fanatics about their golf game. Later that day, John returned home completely exhausted and plopped down in his easy chair. His wife was quite concerned since he was more exhausted than usual after his Saturday golf game. She asked him if something went wrong with the game. He replied, "No, hon, I had the best game in years! As a matter of fact, I started out the first three holes at 4 under par, including a hole-in-two on the 3rd."

"So why are you so worn out?" she asked. **He said it was good news and bad news. George had a heart attack and died on the 4th hole.** "What!? **Are you so exhausted from trying to save him?"** He said, "No, honey, his death was very quick and there was nothing anyone could've done. **BUT AFTER THAT, IT WAS JUST HIT THE BALL, DRAG GEORGE, HIT THE BALL, DRAG GEORGE...**"

The good and bad news on Palm Sunday... The good news was the big celebration! The bad news was Monday and what was going to happen to the next week. In a sense, the scene was about to shift from celebration to condemnation. SOURCE: Steve Shepherd in "Only One More Week:

Easter changes EVERYTHING. And Palm Sunday was the kickoff parade of Jesus... that would lead to His suffering and death. But there were 5 powerful themes that we get from that Sunday...

Connecting Us

Five Powerful Themes on Palm Sunday and Jesus:

- 1. Our Victory is on the way!** The palm branches were symbolic of the crowd's belief in His goodness and victory. It was an expression of trust from the people.
 - NKJV | 1 Timothy 4:10 **For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.**
 - The crowd believed that Jesus was headed into Jerusalem to be victorious against the Romans. Christ was victorious, but not in the way they expected... but more than 2,000 years later we are thankful that Jesus chose a much greater victory that has changed history and our future forever!
- 2. He intends to bring us peace.** The donkey was symbolic of a King bringing peace.
 - **Illustration of Ravi Zacharias in a Middle East Peace Conference** speaking to one of the key leaders of Hamas (Sheik Talal) who had lost some of his own children to suicide bombers. Ravi asked, "'Sheik, forgive me if I'm asking you the wrong question. Please tell me, what do you think of suicide bombing and sending your children out like that?'"
 - **After he finished his answer, I said, "Sheik, you and I may never see each other again,** so I want you to hear me. A little distance from here is a mountain upon which

Abraham went 5,000 years ago to offer his son. And as the axe was about to fall, God said, 'Stop.'" I said, "Do you know what God said after that?" He shook his head. I said, "God said, 'I myself will provide.'" He nodded his head. I said, "**Very close to where you and I are sitting, Sheik, is a hill. Two thousand years ago, God kept that promise and brought his own Son and the axe did not stop this time. He sacrificed his own Son.**"

- **He just stared at me.** The room was full of smoke with all of his security people. I said, "I may never see you again, Sheikh, but I want to leave this with you: Until you and I receive the Son that God has provided, we will be offering our own sons and daughters on the battlefields of this world for land and power and pride." I could just see the man's lips beginning to quiver; and then he came over to me and grabbed me by the shoulders, kissed me on both sides of the face, patted my face, and he said, "You're a good man, I hope I see you again someday." **Even a hardcore terrorist can be moved by the story.**
- NLT | Jn 14:27 **"I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid.**

3. **Our King will save us!** The word "Hosanna" was referring to Jesus as King and for Him to "Save us now!"

- NKJV | Mt 21:9 **Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' Hosanna in the highest!"**
- They believed that Jesus was the One who could save them from their bondage. And in our day... He can.

4. **He is broken over those in a mess and far from Him.** Weeping over Jerusalem showed His broken heart for His misguided People.

- NLT | Lk 19:41 **But as he came closer to Jerusalem and saw the city ahead, he began to weep.**
- **Illustration of the messy hotel room.** A family of a Christian author was staying at a hotel in Nigeria, West Africa, and heard a knock on the door. I opened it and found a smiling Nigerian gentleman ready to clean our room. I was so embarrassed! My family had travel bags, curling irons, and crumpled clothing sprawled across our unmade beds. Wet towels were all over the bathroom floor. I apologized profusely, but the young man replied graciously, **"No problem, sir. For this reason I have come, to put your things in order."** (Mike Silva, "Would You Like Fries With That?" (Word Publishing, 2005), p. 42; submitted by Delight Silva, Portland, Oregon)
- The Bible says this is exactly what Jesus Christ came to do for us. To put our lives in order! He doesn't demand that we first straighten up our mess. Instead, He offers to clean up for us.

5. **Heaven was behind this unstoppable celebration.** The stones had more potential for worship than the complaining Pharisees did.

- NLT | Lk 19:39-40 **But some of the Pharisees among the crowd said, "Teacher, rebuke your followers for saying things like that!" 40 He replied, "If they kept quiet, the stones along the road would burst into cheers!"**
- Just as the people celebrated Jesus riding into Jerusalem... heaven was rejoicing that the curse would soon be over and the future of mankind would be saved!!!

Palm Sunday was about believing in Victory; finding peace; a God who will save us; a God who loves the messy and broken; and for us... celebrating the truth of it all.

And every one of these themes are longed for in lives that are ruined and sitting in ashes...

- Lives that have been ruined long for a win... a victory instead of loss and defeat.
- Every life that has seen the bottom longs for peace of mind and heart.
- They long to be rescued... a second chance out of the mess into new beauty.
- They want nothing more than to celebrate life rather than to suffer life.

Transitional Statement: There's someone who fits that description in John 4. She was the worst woman from the worst town in the worst country... but she was about to meet Jesus.

God's Take

NKJV | Jn 4:11-15a **The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? 12 Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?" 13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." 15 The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water..."**

Background:

- This well was the Starbucks of Sychar. Women gathered there each morning not only to retrieve water, but to talk, laugh, and probably gossip about the immoral woman who lived in their village.
- Only average to poor women came to the well. People with means had servants do this task.
- This woman was front-page tabloid material – married five times and now living with a man who was not married to her.
- This is probably why the woman was coming by herself in the heat of the day to get water. It was the only time she could escape the condemning glares and spiteful whispers of her neighbors.
- The town she was from was Sychar. The name literally means "Town of Drunkards". And this was Samaria... the people the Jews would refuse to acknowledge.
- So, once again, she is the worst woman from the worst town in the worst country was about to meet Jesus.

This Story is a Journey by Water: If you've ever felt rejected, de-valued, or forgotten... this story is for you. If sin has taken you farther than you ever thought you could go... this story might be one like yours. And if you feel all dried up inside and you're dying for a drink of water that will quench your emotional and spiritual thirst... listen to these things...

1. **Jesus makes divine appointments with the broken.**

- NKJV | Jn 4:4-7 **But He needed to go through Samaria. 5 So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus, therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. 7 A woman of Samaria came to draw water.**

- Jesus knew this moment with the Samaritan women was coming. He even orchestrated it. He knew her story and also her potential.
- **Bottom Line:** And God is still orchestrating divine appointments! He knows our story. He knows our potential. And He has what we need to take us from ashes to beauty.

2. Jesus still walks the rejected roads.

- **But He needed to go through Samaria.**
- This truly was the shortest route, but most Jews took a longer route just to avoid Samaria.
- **Background:** The nation of Israel was divided into two nations in the days of Rehoboam (1 Kings 12). Israel was composed of the ten tribes to the north, and Judah was made up of Judah and Benjamin. Immediately after the division, Jeroboam changed the worship of the Israelites in 1 Kings 12:25-33. No longer did the inhabitants of the north travel to Jerusalem to offer sacrifice and worship (cf Deuteronomy 12:5-14). Instead, Jeroboam set up idols in Dan and Bethel.
- Later, after Israel's fall to the Assyrians, they began to intermarry with the Assyrians, contrary to Deuteronomy 7:3-5. This is why the Jews hated the Samaritans as "dogs," or "half-breeds."
- **Bottom Line:** Jesus travels the roads that so many won't. He loves every race. He died for those we are uncomfortable with. And He wants to transform the unlovely and the unloved.

3. In Jesus, there is the gift of value and acceptance.

- NLT | Jn 4:10 **Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water."**
- Jesus let's this wayward woman know that she is just as worthy to receive this living water as anyone else. All she had to do was ask! And no matter the past failures or sins... everyone is valuable to Jesus and He died for each of us!

4. Jesus lets her know that all of us need this water.

- NLT | Jn 4:13-14 **Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. 14 But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life."**
- She's not the only one in this desperate place of ruin. So were those back in the town of drunkards! She was not worse than the others... all of them were in need.

5. This Living Water is the answer to ruin, restoration, and your ransom.

- NLT | Jn 4:28-30 **The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, 29 "Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?" 30 So the people came streaming from the village to see him.**
- **Bottom Line:** The worst woman from the worst town in the worst country left her water pots and created a thirst in them to drink as well! **Jesus is the answer to ruin. He is the restorer of lives. He is the only eternal rescuer known to man.**

Transitional Statement:

Our Response

Are you living a life of ruin... ashamed of something you've done? Do you need a second chance... do you want to become a new creation? Do you want rescued from your sin and judgment? Then let your thirst soul drink of His living water!!!

Transitional Statement: Let me close with this...

Drawing the Net

Illustration of a Bird Trapped in a Church Sanctuary: Bob Russell shared an interesting illustration about darkness and light several years back with the Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, KY. He said:

"Every once in a while, we get a bird inside this sanctuary (Seats over 5,000). He doesn't really want to be in here, but he's trapped. We don't want him in here because he can be messy and disruptive in worship. Do you know how the facilities department gets a bird out of this huge room? They don't put out poison birdseed or take a shotgun to him. The goal is not to destroy but to release.

The solution is simple. They turn out all the lights until it's pitch black and then turn on a bright light on an exit hallway and the bird instinctively flies to the light.

Like that bright light that leads the way out to freedom... the living water of Jesus will lead you to freedom and wholeness.

Giving your life to Jesus and finding his forgiveness and freedom is as easy as A-B-C...