

LOVE NEVER FAILS! Our Lord Jesus proved that to us in Holy Week.

Around the world devoted followers of Jesus Christ will immerse themselves in the events of what is often called "Holy Week"

In the events of Holy week I see and hear the passionate love of Jesus to me and to each of you. More than that, I see a picture of the Christian Life. Your life, my life.

Prayer

Most of these events are in all three synoptic gospels. We will follow them primarily in Matthew's. Turn to Mt. 21. The first event is the one we celebrate today.

I. The Triumphal Entry - Mt. 21:1-11

This date can be roughly pin pointed from the Daniel 9 prophesy with the number of days from the decree of Atraxerxes. Daniel 9:25 - "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks..."

1. Preparation is made (1-6)

Jesus tells two disciples to go find a donkey that fulfills Zechariah's prophesy (9:9) written 500 years earlier!

Zech. 9:9 - "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.

Preparation is made for the entry of King Jesus.

Did you know preparation was made for Jesus entry into your life? God knew you from the foundation of the world. He predestined you to be called by His Spirit. He prepared your heart to receive Him!

And every day we still need to prepare our hearts for His entry!

And then... how does he come?

King Jesus comes gently. (5)

2. A Gentle King

Lowly - Heb "Anah" - poor, afflicted, humble - used over and over in the OT for leaving food in the field for the needy and the poor.

Amazing! This is the CREATOR dealing Gently with His creation! Now there is day coming when He will not come gently! The Great and Terrible Day of the Lord. Rev. 6:16,17 - "Fall on us and save us from the wrath of the Lamb for the great Day of His wrath has come and who can stand?"

Have you experienced the gentle coming of King Jesus to your heart's door?

Rev. 3:20 - "Behold, I stand at the door and knock!"

So, Jesus prepares the way and comes to us gently. What then?

3. There is Rejoicing! (8,9) Hosanna!! Same in GK and HEB.

Hosanna - org. a cry for help! "Oh, Save!" It became a cry of ... happiness!

God has come! Rejoice! Help has arrived! SALVATION!!

Do you remember rejoicing when Jesus came to you?

ILL: junior high kid receives Christ with me in the woods.

Preparation, a gentle coming, rejoicing - then what?

4. A CHANGED LIFE. If your life is not changed you can be certain you have not experienced the coming of your gentle King!

People see a change! "Who is THIS?" (10,11)

Has Jesus triumphantly entered your life? Then you will be able to answer that question.

"Who is Jesus to you?" Licensing question.

As we continue now into Holy Week we see the very next thing the Holy Spirit of Jesus will do in a life:

II. Jesus at the Temple

I. Jesus Attacks Sin (12,13)

Jesus is love and light and holiness. He will not live along side greed, selfishness and sin.

Listen now - He comes gently, but He deals ruthlessly with sin!

Holy week reminds me to see what tables are set up in the holy place of my heart. What sin still needs to be turned over?

Jesus wants you to be HIS TEMPLE ... of PRAYER.

1 Cor. 6:19,20 - "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

What used to be natural in your life must now be destroyed and rooted out so that you become a place for the Holy to dwell.

2. ILL: "MY Heart, Christ's Home" by Robert Munger -

Jesus goes on to talk with him about the food he eats in the dining room, meeting with Him regularly in the Living Room, what he was producing in the work room, what he did for leisure in the rec room, and finally let Jesus into the terrible and putrid hall closet. Realizing he had been treating Jesus as a guest, he finds the deed to the property of his life and signs it over to Jesus, making Him Lord of all!

The Hall Closet - One day I found Him waiting for me at the door. An arresting look was in His eye. As I entered, He said to me, "There is a peculiar odor in the house. There is something dead around here. It's upstairs. I think it is in the hall closet." As soon as He said this, I knew what He was talking about. Yes, there was a small closet up there on the landing, just a few feet square, and in that closet, behind lock and key, I had one or two little personal things that I did not want anyone to know about and certainly I did not want Christ to see them. I knew they were dead and rotting things left over from the old life. And yet I loved them, and I wanted them so for myself that I was afraid to admit they were there. Reluctantly, I went up with Him, and as we mounted the stairs the odor became stronger and

stronger. He pointed at the door. "It's in there! Some dead thing!" I was angry. That's the only way I can put it. I had given Him access to the library, the dining room, the living room, the workroom, the playroom, and now He was asking me about a little two-by-four closet. I said to myself, "This is too much. I am not going to give Him the key." "Well," He said, reading my thoughts, "if you think I'm going to stay up here on the second floor with this odor, you are mistaken. I will take my bed out on the back porch. I'm certainly not going to put up with that." Then I saw Him start down the stairs.

When you have come to know and love Christ, the worst thing that can happen is to sense His fellowship retreating from you. I had to surrender. "I'll give You the key," I said sadly, "but You'll have to open the closet and clean it out. I haven't the strength to do it." "I know," He said. "I know you haven't. Just give me the key. Just authorize me to take care of that closet and I will." So with trembling fingers I passed the key to Him. He took it from my hand, walked over to the door, opened it, entered it, took out all the putrefying stuff that was rotting there, and threw it away. The He cleaned the closet and painted it, fixed it up, doing it all in a moment's time. Oh, what victory and release to have that dead thing out of my life!

Jesus comes to the temple of your life. But know this - He comes to be Lord! Holy week reminds us to renew the Lordship of Christ in our lives. That leads us to the next event in Holy Week.

III. Jesus' Authority is Established (18-27)

Odd that Jesus would curse and wither a tree! He used it to show his men that Israel was like the tree - fruitless. It was the time of harvest and the tree SHOULD have had much fruit.

Folks, Jesus hates fruitlessness! (18,19)

Call upon Him to bear fruit! (20-22)

Fruitfulness is not a matter of producing so much as... - a matter of yielding!

Do not question Jesus' authority in your life! (23-27) In these verses the Pharisees come on the scene in the temple courts and challenge the authority of Jesus - "by what authority are you doing these things?" (23)

Does Jesus have authority over all that concerns you?

Now Jesus has come into the prepared heart. He cleanses sin and establishes His authority in your life. What happens next? ...

IV. Jesus Teaches

Now you are ready to receive His teaching. Jesus has come to you. You rejoice at His salvation! You deal with sin and clean out the temple. You recognize His sovereign authority. Now, you are TEACHABLE!

What lessons are important?

- Obedience (28-31) (two sons)
- That He will be mistreated and killed (33-46) (Tenants)
- That ALL are invited (22:1-14) (Wedding Banquet)
- That all that is God's must be given to God (22:15-22) taxes
- That there IS a resurrection! (23-33) marriage @ the res.
- The Great Commandment (34-40) Love God and Neighbor
- That HE is LORD (41-46) David called him Lord
- Beware of Hypocrisy (23)
- His Second Coming (24-25:13) The order of events
- Use Your Talents for God (25:14-30) while you wait

- Christ followers care for the needy - Sheep/Goats (25:31-46)
Your actions do matter!

Are you hearing the lessons Jesus has for you?

Holy week reminds us to hear God's lessons

V. Jesus is Anointed (26:1-13)

Show picture

There are four accounts of Jesus anointing that represent at least two occasions. By combining the synoptic gospel accounts we see Jesus at the home of Simon the Pharisee when a sinful woman - probably a prostitute who had expensive perfume that would have been used on Jesus' head, but she wept and loved him and cried on his extended feet and wiped His feet with her hair. Mary did the same thing in Bethany, anointing Jesus' feet and wiping them with her hair.

It is not enough to be saved, cleansed and taught - There comes a time to pour out heart felt love on Jesus!

Men - don't miss this emotion! Don't let it be something female!

How are you pouring out your love to Jesus this week?

Holy week reminds us to give Him our heart of devotion.

VI. The Plot against Jesus (26:14-16)

You are learning and loving Jesus - the enemy will PLOT!

Notice - you are saved, cleansed, receiving God's teaching, pouring out your love to God... and then...

The enemy WATCHES FOR AN OPPORTUNITY. (16)

This life in Jesus is one of being on guard for enemy attacks. He may even use the very kiss of a friend.

Holy week reminds us to be on guard.

He may speak through someone you know to betray your love for God - to go back on your commitment to Christ. To tempt you to return to your old life!

When that happens - May I make a Holy Week suggestion? Go to dinner with Jesus.

VII. Dining with Jesus - The Last Supper (26:17-30)

Jesus comes very close - perhaps you lay your head against His chest - knowing even His beating heart - and tells you of His death - the breaking of His Body and the spilling of His blood for you. More than ever you sense a deep deep love for the deep deep love given to you.

You say, 'Oh, Lord - because of this passionate love you have shown to me, **I will always follow you!**' Jesus tells you gently that you will fail - even today. But we hear in John's gospel how Jesus will lovingly and passionately provide His Spirit to comfort and guide.

In this intimate meal time with Jesus we hear that we must abide in Him. That it is, in fact, not about what we can do, but about what He did and what He will do through us.

So we turn our focus, not on us, but on what Jesus did for us.

VIII. The Passionate Love of Jesus - LOVE THAT NEVER FAILS

Millions of times today, people will say... "I Love You". But words only carry meaning in as much as they reflect reality.

John puts it this way - "Jesus knew that the time had come for Him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved His own who were in the world, He now showed them the full extent of His love." (Jn. 13:1)

And you know the true story...

- Gethsemane

First Gethsemane - A complete and absolute submission to the Will of the Father. Watching His best friends sleep while He perspired drops of blood.

- Arrest and Trial

Then - Arrest and Trial - Hours of agony - false accusations. The sheep scattering as the Shepherd was stricken.

Brutal scourging. Pugilism. Painful spikes of thorny crown.

- Crucifixion and Death

Then... Crucifixion and death. Carrying MY cross! Being pierced with MY nails. Experiencing MY SIN DEBT suffocating for a last breath of air.

Forgiving enemies. Caring for His mother. Granting eternal life to a repentant thief.

Finishing - It is Finished - Finishing the great race set before Him, enduring the cross, scorning the shame - all for us and the joy set before Him.

What Joy? - *You and me in heaven with Him.*

Finishing - the greatest substitution of all time. My sin for His Holiness. My shame for His glory. My filthy rags for His abundant life. My eternal damnation for eternal life.

- Burial

The burial in a rich man's tomb. Again prophesied 600 years earlier.

At the Name of Jesus every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ IS LORD to the glory of the Father. Amen!

We will have a joyful celebration of Jesus' resurrection next Sunday - but today - this week - see the passionate love of Jesus and let it sink into your soul.

All of Holy Week is about His relationship with you. He wants to come gently, to attack sin, for you to be on guard against enemy attacks, and have made Him Lord in your heart, to teach you to live for Him as you pour out love toward Him. To know and remember His Sacrifice.

That is the story of Holy Week - THAT IS YOUR STORY! A 'LOVE NEVER FAILS' STORY!

Prayer