

G'Day Church Family

Please have your Bibles opened up to firstly Matthew 21 and then secondly at John chapter 19. There's an outline to take notes if that helps you concentrate. Let's ask God for His help in the understanding of His Holy Word, this morning. Let's pray...

Intro

As I compared the 2 Bible passages we read this morning.

The first thing that struck me is how the chain of events can go from Matthew 21 - that very first Palm Sunday - as Jesus rides into Jerusalem and the people shout Hosanna! Hosanna! to their King!

And then less than a week later - the people in Jerusalem (whether it's the same people or a different bunch of people - and there's enough evidence in the Gospel to suggest some of them were the same people) - how can they go from Hosanna Hosanna to Crucify Him! Crucify Him - in less than a week!

[Powerpoint 1-Intro-cheers to jeers]

How can they go from cheers to jeers?

(pause)

And it has a lot to do with the influence of certain people in the story - and a lot to do with certain personalities in the story. People and personalities **that try to influence others** and people and personalities that try to **please others instead of pleasing God!**

(pause)

Before we look at the 2 passages though

Think about this - the next time you feel pressure to please someone or to please a group of people rather than fearing and pleasing God. Picture yourself standing before God - undergoing a life review with God.

And the conversation goes something like this:

God says: "*So, Paul, why didn't you take that opportunity to teach Scripture at school on Tuesday mornings, that I presented to you?*"

Paul says: "*I really wanted to teach Scripture and I knew it was your will for my life, but you know how upset **Charlie** would have got if we didn't play golf on Tuesday mornings like we always do. If I accepted your opportunity God, to teach Scripture, **Charlie** would have gone on and on about it for weeks and called me a religious freak, it would have been terrible!*"

I wonder if we do that some-times? We're frightened to upset **Charlie** - but what about **God**?

(pause)

We'll come back to that later...

1. Hosanna! Hosanna! (Matthew 21:1-11)

So please turn to Matthew 21, verses 1 to 11

As Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey

Let's see what these verses have to say about Jesus

[Powerpoint 2-Jesus]

What does this say about Jesus?

- These verses tell us that Jesus is All knowing - He knows the donkey and colt are there and that they will be made available to Him
- It tells us - He is in control of all things - there is no question that the donkey will be released for His use
- It tell us - He has authority - He only has to send word for the donkey and it will be His
- Jesus' words and actions also fulfil prophecies from Isaiah 62:11 & Zechariah 9 - which both say that a Saviour from God will come. Zechariah even mentions a donkey!
- God's Word is always pointing to Jesus and is always True! Because Jesus is the Word of God in flesh form
- As Jesus rides in to Jerusalem on a donkey (and in Luke's Gospel it says the donkey has never been ridden (19:30)) - the donkey is a sign of peace and humility - Jesus has come in peace - not as a warrior king who would come riding in on a stallion!

What does this say about the people?

As the people greet Jesus - they actions and words tell us what they think about Jesus

[Powerpoint 3-the people]

- They think Jesus is a King - they place cloaks and palms (John 12:13) - just like they treated Kings in the OT (2 Kings 9:13)

- Their words Hosanna! (which mean save us! save us!) - are also words of praise - like we would say hip-hip hooray! Their words - Son of David - show they believe Jesus is the Promised Messiah from OT - the one God promised to send to save His people
- The people are excited - they seen or heard about his miracles, his healings and his teaching
- By their words and actions - They see Jesus as a King, their Lord, the Messiah and Saviour - and they acknowledge He is a Prophet (verse 11)
- But their profile of the Messiah is different to God's - they are thinking - of Jesus saving them from the Romans who rule over Israel at that time- they are thinking of a political and military saviour - but God has sent Jesus as a spiritual saviour - to bring peace between God and humans - by fixing the broken relationship between God and humans - because of human's sin and rebellion against God

2. Crucify Him! Crucify Him (John 19:1-16)

Less than a week later, events take a turn for the worst.

Jesus is arrested and brought before the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate.

We pick up the story from John 19 - verses 1 to 16 - please turn your Bibles to John 19

What does this say about Jesus?

What do these verses tell us about Jesus...

[Powerpoint 4-Jesus]

- His flogging and punishment are prophesied in Isa 50:6 & Isa 53:5 - in fact all of scripture points to Him
- It is clear that He is innocent of any crime - because He is God - and therefore perfect and sinless - yet He the innocent one will take the punishment of the guilty ones
- Pontius Pilate even asks Jesus where He comes from (v9) - what a great question - a question that all of humankind needs to be asking themselves - where is Jesus from? Because if He is from Heaven where He says He's from - it's vital that people believe that - to be forgiven of their sins
- Jesus doesn't need to answer (v9) - He is in control - He is doing His Father's will - He could save Himself if He wanted to - He could defend Himself if He wanted to - but the rescue mission must be completed
- Remember - He is a Heavenly and peaceful king - not a warrior King

What does this say about the people?

As we look at how Jesus is treated, in these verses, we learn a lot about the people involved too

[Powerpoint 5-People]

- The Roman soldiers mock him with a crown of thorns and purple robe - and laughingly call him the "King of the Jews" - but they are ignorant - because Jesus IS a King - in fact the King of Kings
- Pilate can't find any basis for charging Jesus - but He's a people pleaser - even His wife in Matt 27:19 warned him not to punish Jesus - but Pilate is too afraid of the people - that they might rebel if he releases Jesus
- The chief priests and officials want Jesus dead - whatever it takes - He is threatening their status and lifestyle - we learn from Mark 15:11 and Matt 27:20 - that the chief priests stirred up the people - getting the mob of people into a frenzy - they stir up the people to ask Pilate to release Barabbas and crucify Jesus. Barabbas is a rebel and a violent man - and more likely to rebel against the Romans than peaceful Jesus will - the people are fickle enough to go along with the chief priests and officials - because they too want to please the officials - they're afraid to have their own opinion - so they please the officials rather than God
- The Jews claim Jesus has broken Jewish law - Lev 24:16 - the charge is blasphemy because Jesus claims to be the Son of God - the punishment is stoning in Jewish law - but technically the Jews don't have authority to execute anyone - they are under Roman rule - so the Romans must execute people - the Roman execution method is crucifixion - this also fulfils Jesus' prophecy that He Himself said He would be lifted up (John 12:32). The Jews think they are off the hook of killing Jesus - if they pass Him on to the Romans to execute Him

- Pilate is afraid (v8) when he hears that Jesus' crime is claiming to be the Son of God - in those times there was a superstition about divine men - that they also had divine powers - and Pilate's afraid - 'What if Jesus really is - who He says He is?'
- Pilate thinks he has power to crucify Jesus or release him - but Jesus reminds him that God is in control of all things - and God is allowing all of this to happen - to rescue humankind from sin. It's all part of God's plan - not the Jews' or Pilate's plan
- In v11 - Jesus says the one who handed Jesus over to Pilate - the high priest Caiaphas is not off the hook either - in fact Caiaphas is more accountable - the Caiaphas even knowing who Jesus is - still wanted rid of him and abused his authority
- The people are manipulative - they argue with Pilate - that claiming to be a king as Jesus does - would be offensive to Caesar - the people are basically threatening Pilate - if you let Jesus go and he claims to be a king - you're offending your emperor - and we can get you in a lot of trouble for doing that - so Pilate is afraid to do the right thing and let Jesus go
- Ironically - Pilate sits on the Judgement seat - to pass his judgement on Jesus - Yet who is Pilate judging? He's judging Jesus who IS the supreme judge of everyone!
- The crowd is also hypocritical - they hate the Romans and want to be saved from them - but their hatred of Jesus is more intense - and so they say they have no king but Caesar - what hypocrites

- It's also ironic that they say they have no king but Caesar - but they do have a King - God is their King - not Caesar
- The charge against Jesus is blasphemy (an action or speech sacrilegiously about God - insulting or showing contempt or lack of reverence to God) - yet the people are guilty of blasphemy themselves - they are blaspheming by claiming Caesar is their king - and not God! The people are the one's blaspheming - not Jesus

3. Applications

So what can we talk up as a lesson this morning?

[Powerpoint 6a-Applications]

A) Firstly we have a choice that we all have to make - Jesus came to bring peace between God and humankind by dying for our sin and rebellion against God- He's a different saviour - a spiritual saviour - not a political or military one - so the choice we have is this:

- Are we accepting Him and asking ourselves where He comes from (Heaven) - accepting He came to die for sin to be forgiven - and to rise to bring eternal life - Is Jesus your Messiah - your Saviour - your personal saviour
- Or are we outright rejecting Him - like many of the Jews did - if you are rejecting Him right now - please come and see me after the service and we'll talk and pray together

- Or are we like Pilate - we're not sure who Jesus is - Pilate sits on the fence and gets splinters on his bottom - Are we like Pilate - not sure - but He does seem to be who He says He is - please pray about this - because Jesus doesn't give you the option of "not sure" - "not sure" led Pilate to kill Him and so reject Him - "not sure" led some people in the crowd to go along with the chief priests and have Jesus crucified and so reject Him

[Powerpoint 6b-Application]

- B) Secondly, do we treat Jesus like a 'genie in the bottle' - when we want something from Jesus - we rub our bottle labelled Jesus - and it's like we're calling out Hosanna! Hosanna! Come and give us what we want Jesus! But when we don't get what we want - because Jesus only gives us what we need - which is forgiveness - we start complaining about him that he's not giving us what we want and He's not helping us. When we are complaining about Him like that - it's like we're in that crowd in Jerusalem - calling out crucify him! Jesus came to fix a spiritual problem we all have - sin - He didn't come to necessarily give us physical or practical help every time we want it - and He didn't come to give us a cruzzie life either. Have we got the wrong idea of Jesus? Following Jesus is hard - it costs us - it means suffering - but the benefits are literally out of this world!
- C) Thirdly, in our passage this morning we have people pleasers and hypocrites. [a person who acts in contradiction to his or her stated beliefs or feelings]. Being a people pleaser often leads to being a

hypocrite. For example, in the passage - Pilate knows Jesus is innocent - he says so - even his wife knows. Yet he's afraid of the Jews more. So he goes along with executing Jesus - even though he tries to wash his hands of the whole thing - he can't - he's the leader, the governor - he can't walk away from the decision. So he kills someone who's innocent. He's a hypocrite - acting in a way that contradicts what he believes. The people in the crowd are convinced by the chief priests to call for Barabbas to be released and Jesus to be crucified. The people are afraid of the chief priests and want to please them - so they go along with it. Even though they know Jesus doesn't deserve to be killed. They even go as far as claiming Caesar as their King - how would God feel about that? It's blasphemy. But being a people pleaser leads to being a hypocrite - because you eventually have to act or say something which contradicts what you really believe!

Are we like that - do we please people ahead of God - we give in to people's ideas - even when they go against God's word - because we don't want to offend someone - but we don't mind offending God?

Do we cave in to peer pressure - and do or say things which bring dishonour to God?

Do we fuss about the little things in life and in church and in the process miss and fail to follow Jesus' teachings of love and forgiveness and service?

Hatred got the better of the Jews - and in that mob frenzied state - they forgot all reason, all proportion, any idea of mercy and justice - they forget all their principles - they even forgot God!

Are we crucifying Jesus with our sinful actions and words - so that we keep in with people? We need to repent of this?

Becoming obsessed with what pleases PEOPLE is the quickest way to forget what pleases GOD.

We can't please EVERYONE but we can please GOD.

Some characteristics of being a people pleaser might be:

Saying: "I must be liked by everyone."

Or saying: "I mustn't do anything to upset others."

Or taking most criticism personally.

Or having an extraordinary fear of rejection.

Or finding it hard to express their true feelings.

Or having a hard time saying, "No."

People pleasing is a form of IDOLATRY. It says: "I care more about what others think than what God thinks."

Earlier in John - John 12:42-43 - it says

Many even among the leaders believed in [Jesus]. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved praise from men more than praise from God

In Proverbs 29:25 it says:

Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe

2. The fear of GOD is the best cure for the fear of PEOPLE.

The Apostle Paul puts it this way in 1 Thes 2:4,6:

We speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts.... We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else

So are we living for the applause of people or the approval of God?

(pause)

Conclusion

To finish off then - remember that conversation I started to have with God at the beginning - where God had offered me the opportunity to teach Scripture but I didn't want to upset **Charlie** and let him down for golf on Tuesdays?

Here's the rest of the conversation:

God says: "You're right Paul, Charlie would have gone through the roof and would have been so upset with you for weeks". God continues: "I have a meeting with Charlie later ... in exactly three years, two months, six days, seven hours and thirty three minutes. At that time, I'll be talking to Charlie about his tendency to get mad at people when they did not please him. I will take care of that issue. But

that is **Charlie's** life, not yours **Paul**, You are responsible for your own choices. You are responsible for your own decisions and **Charlie** is responsible for how he responded to you ... That will be his problem. But **Paul**, the fact that you chose to give in to him is your problem, and now I want to show you what you missed out on in Scripture on Tuesdays, all because you did what **Charlie** wanted. Watch that screen over there - Then you'll see what could have been if only you had not tried to live your life to please others instead of first pleasing God.

Let's pray...