

IT'S PERSONAL

MY KING

PART 1

Whose king?

READ MATTHEW 21:1-10

INTRODUCTION

This portion of Scripture is so important because it shows us the start of the end of Jesus' time here on earth until He comes again on the day of the Lord. We can often read over these verses and get lost in the build up of Easter and the holiday but, it is important that we slow down and look at what was happening in the city of David on this day. Jesus, up to this point was teaching and performing miracles among the people and there were a couple of times that they wanted to force Him to be their king but, the time hadn't yet come and so He denied them that opportunity. This day came, and He allowed them to herald Him as the king.

Jesus knew that His time had come and that He was entering into Jerusalem for the last time until after His death. He knew that in a few days He would be nailed to a cross and would be killed to pay for sins that He never committed. He took this opportunity to show us how a king should act in a humble and yet noble manner. Everything about the entry of a king into his city was designed to bring pomp and circumstance to the king and here Jesus shows that a king can be a ruler and yet, be meek and mild in his attitude towards the people.

Being a king means that the people were committing their lives to Jesus. The strange part about that is that in just a few short days, the same people who proclaimed Him as king would be demanding for His life via crucifixion. We desire Christ to be our king and that is a good thing. We must give up our personal desires and put Him on the throne in our lives if we are to truly glorify Him as the King in our hearts. This is the only way that we can glorify Him in our hearts in fact.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your understanding of kingship? How does that differ from what the people here were desiring? What made them proclaim Christ as king in this moment?
2. Read Daniel 9:24-27. This passage deals directly with the day that Jesus would enter into Jerusalem. What else do you see in this passage that is interesting? Why?
3. How do you think Jesus felt during the ride into town? What would be your emotions knowing that you were entering into your death? Why didn't Jesus say something or do something about it?
4. Is it encouraging to know that Jesus is humble even in His claim to the throne? Why or why not?
5. How can you better allow Jesus to rule in your heart? What are the ways that you have tried to be the "king"? How can you change that?

WRAP UP

Jesus desires all of us and not just bits and pieces. He desires to rule in your life and to be the King over everything in your life. He is a gentleman and does not force you into submission but allows you to try and reign in your life if you think you can do better. His hope is that you will understand that there is no better king to have than God because He is the One that knows the beginning from the end. He knows how to deal with anything. He knows how to save us.

IT'S PERSONAL

MY ASSURANCE

PART 2

The forgiveness of sin

READ 1 JOHN 1:8-10

INTRODUCTION

There are many people who fear that they may not have received the forgiveness of sins. They live under constant stress relating to whether or not they have truly been forgiven or whether God could actually forgive them for their sins. This comes largely from a misunderstanding of who God is and His desire to forgive so freely when human nature is not so forgiving. We read in 1 John 1 that we need not fear whether or not forgiveness has been offered. Instead we should have confidence knowing that Christ's sacrifice is capable of covering all sins and that His blood did, in fact, cover everyone's sins past, present and future.

Romans 10:9 is a great verse that confirms this standing that we can have through Christ's death on the cross as well. It also gets us away from thinking that we must perform certain acts to receive forgiveness. There is nothing that you can do to solidify your forgiveness or to earn it. God has chosen how He would forgive the sins of man and His forgiveness has nothing to do with the actions of anyone outside of Jesus Christ. That is His plan and His way of forgiveness and there are many people that have a hard time accepting that because we are taught that we must earn things like trust, love and forgiveness.

When you fall into the trap of thinking that you have to earn your salvation, your salvation becomes about your works and not His. It also causes you to have faith in your own abilities and not God's. Jesus' death on the cross becomes secondary to what you can do to bring about righteousness in your own heart and that is impossible for any man to do. Jesus died on the cross once for all and the free gift of salvation is one that we can cling to as long as we confess and believe. This is the hardest part because it requires us to admit that we are at fault and to trust that He is capable of forgiving those sins and presenting us holy and blameless to God the Father.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you struggled (either in the past or presently) with the thought that maybe your sins were not truly forgiven? What brought that thought on? How can you combat those kinds of thoughts?
2. How can you encourage others to have a complete faith that their sins have been forgiven? Why is it important to have the assurance that we have been forgiven of all sins?
3. How does confession work? Who should we confess our sins to? What is the benefit of confessing to other believers the sins that we struggle with?
4. What are some of the tendencies we have to try and “earn” our salvation? How does that make Jesus feel knowing that He completed the work? Is the attempt to earn our salvation a sin? Why or why not?
5. Why is it so hard to accept a free gift? What makes us think that we must earn it? How can we break that cycle in our lives and help others to break free from that line of thinking?

WRAP UP

Sin is bad. There is no other way to say it. We are sinners that deserve death and punishment. Jesus chose to come down to earth and live a perfect life and die on a cross to forgive the sins of man. Sins that He never committed. He gave us this gift of life everlasting so that we could spend eternity with Him in the presence of the Father because He loves us. We did not earn it, we don't deserve it, but He gives it to us anyway. That is indeed, good news.

IT'S PERSONAL

HOPE

PART 4

Hope for the day

READ JOHN 16:1-15

INTRODUCTION

In this passage, we see Jesus discussing something very difficult with His disciples: His departure from them. The disciples had spent the last three + years of their lives following Christ as He ministered to the nation of Israel but also to them personally. He was their brother and their friend. He was their Savior and they did not want to lose Him. There was the thought in their minds that He was going to establish His Kingdom while He was with them and they desired to see that and experience it. There were so many emotions that it must have been difficult to think of a time when they wouldn't have Jesus with them in person.

Jesus knew that this would be difficult and so He promised them the "Helper". This is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is referenced as our "Comforter" as well as our Helper and it is important to see that it is through our worries, He is there with us. We do not need to worry or be anxious (Philippians 4:6-7) because the Spirit is with us. That passage in Philippians also tells us to give thanks in everything and that peace will be given to us. No matter the problem or the trial that we find ourselves in, the Spirit is able to give us peace when we give thanks to God for everything.

The peace that surpasses all understanding comes when we trust that God is sovereign over all and that He knows, and is in control of, all things. This should change how we view the Spirit. It certainly gave the disciples hope and comfort knowing that even though Jesus was no longer going to be with them, there would be a comforter and a helper that would offer them peace that surpasses all understanding. We have access to that same Spirit and can have that same peace when we trust in God and His will for our lives. When we thank Him, praise Him and glorify Him, He blessed us by giving us His Spirit to be our helper and our comforter. Without the Spirit, this life has the potential to overwhelm and destroy, but with Him, we are given strength to continue on in the battle.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why would it have been difficult to hear Jesus speak of His departure? Why do you think that Jesus held back some of the information from the disciples at this time? (16:12)
2. How would you have felt if you were one of the disciples? Why? What encouragement can we take away from what Jesus had to say?
3. Read Philippians 4:6-7. What do these verses encourage us to do in times of anxiety? What does it mean to give thanks in all things?
4. What does peace that surpasses all understanding look like? Is it ignorance? Is it denial? How can we share the peace with others who are struggling?
5. What does it mean for God to be sovereign over all things? Why is that important?
6. What are the things in life that you need to hand over to the Spirit so that He can be your comforter? Why is it hard?

WRAP UP

Comfort can be sought from a lot of different sources. There is only one source that can offer peace through the trials. The Holy Spirit is there to offer us hope that we will be taken care of ultimately if we trust in God and His will for our lives. It can be difficult to trust the Spirit because we cannot see Him but it is so important for us to place our trust in Him and be thankful in all things so that He can guide us, correct us, and give us peace.