



Sermon – April 1, 2018

**Verses Covered**

*2 Corinthians 5:21*

So last week we saw Christ intentionally get on a donkey and ride into Jerusalem to prove that He was not a king, but the king. It was an intentional act on His part. He made sure the donkey was His. He rode in to fulfil Zechariah 9. He walks into Jerusalem, the iconic city in both the world and in the scripture. Closest city to God's heart. And He goes and spends the night with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus who, by the way, He's raised from the dead after being in the ground four days about a week earlier, maybe two weeks. Monday morning, he gets up, takes his disciples, they step into Jerusalem. On the way in they run into a fig tree that has leaves but no fruit. In Israel, fruit comes out before the leaves. So the fact that there's no fruit and yet leaves, the tree is barren. It's failing in its purpose. And so He does an unusual thing that will bookend with what will happens later this afternoon. But He curses the tree as a symbolic act of Israel. That they would never ever produce a spiritual fruit. And sure enough. That was 27 A.D. We're in 2,018. The most difficult thing when we go to Israel is to go to the Western Wall and watch people in certain garb and certain hats and certain hair and standing with the scripture, reading in the Hebrew, the Old Testament, and chanting and moving back and forth desperate to believe that their prayers would alter something when they have a God whose Messiah they have rejected for 2,000 years.

So His cursing was symbolic of what is still true. When He gets into Jerusalem, He did this at the beginning of ministry, but they're back. There are people selling and milking people for money and ripping them off. He comes in, takes the tables, physically overturns them, and says, "Get out of my Father's house! It's a house of prayer. You've made it a place of robbery." And then that afternoon with all this happening, he's made this pronouncement of barrenness and He's shown that they don't get what the temple's for. Some Greeks, Gentiles, come up to one of His disciples and said, "Sir, we'd like to see Jesus." Boy it's a great temptation, because Israel's going to reject Him. It's a great temptation to just head off, let them go, find some people that will surrender to Him, because sure enough, that's what's going to happen. That's why we have a packed house today. Because the gospel hit the Gentile world and left Israel.

But He doesn't do that because He makes this statement in response to an odd statement no one understands, but we understand today. He said, "No, can't do that unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it will not bear fruit." So He goes home Monday night, gets up Tuesday morning, this is the longest day of the week. It's a really, really rejection day from morning until

night. First thing He does as He steps into Jerusalem is He runs into the, some members from the Sanhedrin, the 70 guys that ruled Israel, and they come up to Him and they basically accost Him and say, "Look where do you get off saying what you say? Who gave you the authority to do all the stuff You do and say all the things You say?" He said, "I'll tell you what. I'll answer that question if you'll answer mine. John the Baptist, was his authority from heaven or from men?" Well they sit back and begin to discuss it and that's really one they can't answer. If they say, "John the Baptist was from men." The people will stone them. He's a martyr. He's been dead a couple years. He's a huge hero to Israel. But if they say, "Well He was from God." Then Jesus is going to say, "He testified about me. Why don't you believe him?" And so their response is, "Well we don't really have an answer." And He said, "I don't give you an answer either."

Next thing he runs into two groups that hate each other: the Pharisees and the Herodians. The Pharisees hated the Romans. The Herodians were a group of Jews that said the Romans have been beneficial. Let's just live under their rule. But on this day they joined together because they have the perfect question he can't possibly answer. They said, "Look we want to know, should we obey Caesar or God?" Well if He says, "God." Then the Herodians are going back to Pilate and saying, "We've got an insurrectionist. We need to kill him." If he says, "Well we ought to yield to Caesar." Then the Pharisees are going to go to the Jews and say, "Look, he's rejecting everything we stand for." So He looked at them and said, "You've got any money?" The Herodians always had money. They said, "Yeah." So they flipped Him a coin and He looks at it and He says, "Who's picture is on this?" You kind of see the grin coming up in the Pharisees. "Well it's Caesar's." "Good." Flips it back to them. He says, "You give to Caesar what is Caesar's and you give to God what is God's." They leave unhappy. Then you have the liberals of the day: the Sadducees. They don't believe in anything except the first five books of the Bible. They don't really buy into them. They don't believe in the resurrection. They don't believe in angels, demons, hell, heaven, nothing. So they come to Jesus and they always had a trump question for the Pharisees because what academics do is they sit around and argue. So they would sit around and argue with the Pharisees about the resurrection of the dead. And they always had a trump question the Pharisees never could answer because in Jewish law if a Jewish man and a woman were married and he died, the brother had to come in and marry her, the closest brother, so they could have children to continue the land being given to the family. So they said, "Look what happens if a guy and his wife are married and he dies and his brother marries her and he dies and his brother marries her and he dies, and you have all these guys dying and then she dies. So you've got five husbands that have had her. She goes to heaven. They go to heaven. In the resurrection who's her husband?" And they just think, "We have Him." I love Jesus. His most brutal response was here. "So let me tell you people something. You don't know the power of God and you don't even know the Bible. Number one, in the resurrection, we don't marry or are given in marriage. And number two, and then He quotes from one of their five books, right, he says, "Have you not read where God said, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Not I used to be, but I still am because they must be alive."

So they leave. A lawyer shows up. He says, "Well what's the greatest commandment?" Jesus said, "Well I'll tell you what everything hangs on. You love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. And you love your neighbor as yourself." So finally these guys pack out. He goes into the temple. A lot of people giving money and then He looks over and there's a little, older widow. She has a dollar. It's all she has for the week. She drops it in the basket. And

Jesus says, "I'm telling you I don't care how much money anybody's given. Nobody's given like her." He walks his disciples out across the Kidron Valley toward Gethsemane. He walks them out and begins to talk to them about what's going to happen because of Israel's rejection. And then number two, He talks about what's going to happen when He comes back and what the world will be like when He does come back. And then he goes to the home, that night, of Simon. They're in the home, had supper, everybody's milling about shooting the breeze. And all of a sudden, this massive odor, good, begins to just permeate the entire house. And so everybody comes walking in the living room and looks down and Mary, Lazarus' sister, she has in her hand, this rare thing of perfume. You can only use it once because it's totally sealed. It's worth in our day about \$70,000. And she takes it and she breaks it open and she uses it and she begins to wipe Jesus. Judas looks at Jesus and blisters him. He says, "Let me tell you something, sir. You have sinned. You are wrong. She should never have been allowed to do this. You should have stopped her before she ever broke this." Because once you broke it, you couldn't use it again. "You should have stopped her because what should have happened is this should have been sold and given to the poor. Who do you think you are?" Jesus busts him. He says, "Judas let me tell you something. You're always going to have the poor. But you're not always going to have me. She did this for my burial. And I'll tell you how important it is. Every place the gospel is preached this story goes with me." Well he's embarrassed and he's furious. So he leaves the house. Goes into town. Finds some of the Sanhedrin and says, "Listen, I'll get Him to you." "When?" "Well I don't know, but I'll get Him to you." "How much?" "I don't know. Slave price. 30 pieces of silver." He could have milked them for a lot more than that. He didn't care anything about the money. He just wanted to hurt Jesus.

We don't know anything that happens on Wednesday and I think the reason is, Christ knew He had to rest because when He awakens on Thursday morning, He will never sleep again. We come to Thursday night. They do the Passover meal. And you've got to understand something OK. Leonardo Da Vinci did not know what he was painting. It's not some long table with a halo. There were large kind of pillows that three people could lean on. The top part with the Rabbi and two people and then everybody else here. You lay on your left side and you ate with your right hand. That's why the Greek word, *anaklinó*, it's actually the word for recline in the New Testament. So you lay on your left side and you eat with your right hand. Because of the conversation we understand Judas is on Jesus' left which is the left which is the place of honor. Why? Because if a man's laying on his left, his face is in the chest of the one on the left. It is the place of honor. The other two things you do to bring honor is you reach over, take a piece of meat or bread, you dip in something, and you offer it to whomever you want to honor. He puts Judas on the left and gives him an honor to fulfill what he said. The Son of man goes as it is written of Him, but woe to the man through whom He is betrayed. Judas rejects it. Jesus says, "What you have to do, do quickly." And to get up he has to literally take Jesus' face and move it to get up and go do what he has to do.

While he's gone, Jesus pulls out the Lord's supper. He takes the wine and the bread here and He incorporates it and He says, "Look, this bread is the broken body I'm about to show. This wine is my blood of the new covenant. You won't do it anymore after today." So he takes them out and he walks them from the upper room, across the Kidron Valley, to the Garden of Gethsemane. On the way, you know what he says. We have John 14, 15, 16, 17. 14 he tells them, "I'm leaving you, but I'm going to prepare a place for you." 15 He says, "You need to stay in Me. I'm the

vine, you're the branches." 16 he talks about the coming of the Holy Spirit. He is conviction in the world and His power source for them. 17 He stops and He prays for Himself, for them, and for us. And he steps to the garden. This is always the hard part. I remember as a kid when I would read this story, I really had trouble buying it. It didn't make sense to me. Jesus takes his guy and he takes, Judas is gone on the way back, He takes eight of them and he says, "You guys stay here for a second." And then he takes Peter, James, and John, pulls them over, the only place in the New Testament where He asks something personal from them. He pulls them aside and says, "Guys, look. I need you to pray for me." Why does he do that? Because every demon in the universe is circling this garden because Satan has got to stop Him from the cross. He never wanted Him to go to the cross. Because if Jesus goes to the cross, Jesus said, then he will be judged. And so he doesn't want Him going to the cross. He's going to do everything he can to prevent that. So he and his demons are circling fixing to put every bit of attack they can possibly bring on Jesus Christ. And so He asks Peter, James, and John, "Look please pray with me." He goes over three times. He asked God what I struggle with as a child, "Father let this cup pass from me. But I'll do whatever you want." Why does he do that? Three reasons. Number one, the physical pain would be intense. Now let me tell you something about the physical. That's all we emphasize most of the with the cross. We don't get it. The physical was the easiest. Most men live several days on the cross. Just kept them hydrated and they can keep pushing themselves up and not drowning. The pain was intense and it was horrific, but most guys lasted two or three days. Jesus is going to hang there for six hours, from 9 to 3. It's horrific, but that's not the hardest part. It's really the easiest if they call that easy.

Second part though, was that every person He loves is going to reject Him. When he dies, not a single person is there. The only person in the universe that buys into him is a thief. He dies basically for one man. So He knows that he's going to get this emotional rejection. As a matter of fact, there's a passage in the Psalm that says, the heel of my best friend has betrayed me. But then the real aspect, I can understand the physical, I can understand being rejected, we've all gone through that, but the one thing none of us have ever gone through is being absolutely holy and becoming absolute sin. 2 Corinthians 5:21

[21who did not know sin, was made sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.](#)

He's going to take every bit of shame, guilt, filth, horrible, dog stuff on us and drink it and eat it for six hours. That's the one that made him pray here. Pretty intense. The capillaries in his sweat glands burst and blood came out. Then finally after the third time he came back and said, "Alright boys, let's go." And about that time, Judas shows up. Walks up to Jesus, walks over to him, and in the Greek, he gives him a slobbering emotional kiss. He loved the moment. And Jesus recoils and He says, "You betray me with a kiss?" So they go to take him, it's one of my favorite places in the scripture, and all of a sudden for some reason, they all fall down. It was God's way of saying. "You're not taking my Son; I'm giving Him to you." So they're allowed to take Him. They take him to Anas, who is the father-in-law of Caiaphus. He was the former chief priest and they're trying to get the Sanhedrin together, these 70 guys, so they can have a trial. They're trying to get everybody together. It's hard because they don't have e-mail or texting in this day. So they've got to go door-to-door and canvas and get people awake and get them down here.

While they're doing that, they take Jesus and they put him in a hole. And when you go to Israel, you actually walk into the hole where they put Him. It's pitch black. Can't see your hand. You're down in this pit. You can hear voices. And so he's alone in this pit. Pitch black. Can't see His hand. But he can hear the mirth and the glee and the applause that they finally got this sorry piece of dirt and now they can kill him.

While they're doing all this, of course, Simon Peter, right, twelve disciples, ten have gone, two stay all night long. Two stay: Judas and Peter. Peter, of course, will deny him all through the night. And so they finally pull Jesus up and they get the Sanhedrin there and they start, you know, they paid guys to come in, but they can't find anything wrong with him because He wasn't a sinner. It wouldn't take but four minutes to find something wrong with me. But they can't find anything wrong with Him because He's not a sinner. So finally they look at Him and said, "What about You, what do You say about Yourself?" He said, "I'll tell you what. After this you'll see the Son of Man coming on clouds with power." They said, "That's all we need to hear buddy." They rip their clothes, they throw them down, and they jump on Him and they just start busting Him with a little mockery. They hit him. And remember there's 70 guys taking turns just busting Him. And they hit Him and they'd say, "Hey! Who hit you?" Just great fun. So the fury wore off. They've still got a little bit of time because these guys were holy and they can't take Him before Pilate until after dawn because their law says so and these guys certainly are law abiding people.

So dawn comes, he's been beaten so badly, His eyes are half shut, He can barely see. When he walks out there's two disciples left, right. He walks out and at dawn, Peter curses His name for the third time and the rooster crows. Peter hears it, Luke 22 one of the most amazing verses in the Bible, Jesus is beaten, bloody, and the Bible says He stops, He turns, and He looks at Peter. Peter sees his eyes and he weeps. Judas meant to stick it to him, but he had no idea they were going to kill Him. And when he saw that, he runs back into the temple to these fine establishment people. He says, "I've sinned. Betrayed innocent blood." "That's not our problem." He goes out and hangs himself. One man misses God for an eternity. One man preaches a first sermon ever because repentance makes a massive difference. So they take him to Pilate. It's early. Pilate hates the Jews. He doesn't want to jack with Him. It's early in the morning. He hasn't had His coffee. Looks down and he looks at him and finally it dawns on him; He's from Nazareth. He's up in Galilea. Herod's in town. So he ships him over to Herod. Herod's been wanting to see Him. Gets Him in there hoping for a miracle, mocks Him, hoping He'll do something, puts a robe on Him. Finally says, "I'll send Him back." So he sent him back to Pilate. Pilate's, for some reason, bothered by this. He's scared of Him. And so at some point they had this conversation where they get in and Pilate says, "Do you not, are you like not with it? Do you not hear how many people are going nuts about you out there?" Doesn't say anything and Pilate begins to mouth him. Jesus said, "Let me tell you something. You have no authority over me except what my Father gives. If I wanted to right now, I could call down a legion of angels." Which is four or five thousand angels. One angel, in the Old Testament, killed 186,000 people in one night. He said, "If I want to I can call them down." You've got nothing. And then he gets nervous. So he gets him out there and he thinks, "Wait a minute. I'll make a deal." He charged on his guard. He said, "Go get Barabbas. Get the worst guy in the prison." So they go and bring Barabbas up and he thinks, "OK, I'll offer them Barabbas or Jesus. They'll take Barabbas and let Jesus go. This is a simple deal. I'm fine." All of a sudden one of the guys comes over to him and goes, "Got a note." Opens up the note, it's from his wife who's at home, who is not even seeing what's going on. And she

writes him and she says, “Don’t you have anything to do with that righteous man. I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him.” Now he’s nervous. But it’s OK. So he stands up before the crowd and says, “Listen. Barabbas or Jesus. What do you want to do?” “Well, we want you to let Barabbas go. Kill Jesus. Crucify Him.” “Whoa, whoa, whoa. He hasn’t done anything wrong. This guy,” And they go nuts. So finally Pilate realizes he can’t stop anything. And then he does a really stupid thing. He says, “Bring me some water.” He puts his hands in the water. And he says, “I’m washing my hands of the blood of this man.” The only thing that could have forgiven him for what he’s about to do, is the blood he washed off his hands.

So they take Him, they scourge Him, He carries the one piece of the cross. He gets to Golgotha, they drop it on, they crucify Him. First thing out of Jesus’ mouth. “Father,” You better be glad he didn’t stutter here. Every angel in heaven has been watching this. The Bible says they don’t understand. All they know is the one they adore, they’ve worshiped, they’ve revered, they treasured emotionally, they’re looking at the Father and they’re watching Him being abused and they don’t understand and they’ve got drawn swords. If Jesus had just made a mistake and said, “Father kill them.” If He’d just gotten that little bit out of His mouth, this planet would have been wiped out in four seconds. But they stay because of the first thing He said. “Father forgive them. They have no idea what they’re doing.” The Father holds them back while they watch the horror. John and his mother are at the foot of the cross. He looks down and he says, it’s a Greek word, *guné*, for woman, *météer*, for mother. He looks down at his mother and he says, “*Guné*, woman behold your son. Son behold you behold your mother.” And the Bible says John took her home from that moment. He disowned His mother because He wanted her to understand she was no different than anybody else. She’s got to come through his blood just like every other person in the universe.

Two thieves, right. One of them mocking Him. Both of them for a while. And then somehow, this is one of those things I don’t understand in scripture, it doesn’t matter. At some point, one of these guys figured out He didn’t deserve to be there. So he stops his buddy. He says, “You better shut up. Listen. This guy doesn’t deserve to be here. We do.” And he looks at Jesus and says, “Lord will you remember me when You come into Your kingdom?” And Jesus says, “Listen today you will be with me in paradise.” He says, “I thirst.” And then the shift. First thing he says, first words are Father. The last sentence he’s going to say will start with Father, but in the middle of the six hours, it’s not Father. “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” He’s feeling the enormity of my filth. Finally says, one Greek word, *tetelestai*, “It is finished. Father in your hands I commit my spirit.” And he goes home. He’s dead. Later on that afternoon, they break the legs of the other two so they can get them off the crosses. But they come and they take Jesus and they’re very precise, right. They wrap Him all the way around. They wrap the head differently and then they lay him in Joseph Arimathea, one of the Pharisees, they lay Him in his tomb. Nobody’s ever been in there. And they lay Him carefully and they shut the stone which nobody can move and they go home.

The Pharisees, greatest day of their life, they kill this guy. The Disciples, they gave their life up, their careers up for this guy and He’s dead. So Saturday they’re confused. They’re struggling. The Pharisees are applauding. It’s interesting, the Pharisees believed what Jesus said more than the disciples did because they said, “Look, we heard He said He was going to raise again. We need you to put a couple guards, Pilate, by His tomb so that somebody can’t come and steal it.

Now the Roman soldiers hated the Jews. My bet is the Roman soldiers were hoping that some of the Jews would come and they could pop their heads. They hated them. So they're hoping somebody will come and try to steal Him. So each time they make a shift change, two guys are going, "Man I hope it's on my watch because I want these guys badly." And they're hoping to jack with them.

Sunday morning comes. There's a little movement and these soldiers turn around and look and there's two angels standing there. "Hi." Now I'm reading in the text here, OK, but my bet is these angels had the same attitude toward these soldiers that the soldiers had toward the Jews. One the way down, they're going, "I hope they mess with us." So they get by the tomb, "Hi." They faint. It's interesting what the text says. Remember Jesus said He came not to be served, but to serve. Remember? Talking about His death on the cross. He does not roll the stone back, the angels do. They roll it back. Why? Because now He's King of Kings and Lord of Lords and now we serve Him out of His service to us. They roll it back, he comes out alive, clear, holy, and without question to no one there. They just don't buy it. But they run that afternoon and when they come into the tomb, John beats Peter, and when they get into the tomb, Peter gets in and he looks and what he saw made him believe in the resurrection. What he saw was, if you just steal a body out of a bunch of wrappings, you can't rewrap air. So it's just going to be all messed up. When he comes in, the wrappings are still intact. The head piece by itself because Jesus wasn't unwrapped. His body dissolved and a new body came out of that tomb. He's resurrected.

Well what's the big deal and how do you know it's true? Number one the big deal is that if He goes into the ground and doesn't come out of the ground, He went in there because of His sin and we're doomed. But he came out of the ground because He went in because of my sin, not because of what He did. Therefore, God resurrected Him. You say, "Well He resurrected Lazarus." Yeah, but he went back in and he stayed in. And when you and I die, we will stay in because we died because of our sin. But he was resurrected because he didn't die because of His sin, He died because of mine. How do I know it's true? Because Peter cursed him the night before out of fear. 50 days later he stands up to the same people that he was terrified in front of and he looks at them, in Acts 2, and he says, "I want you people to know something. You killed him, but God raised Him from the dead." There's a fierce faith in the man because He saw a resurrected Jesus.

So it's a good day. 2,000 years ago He came out and because of that, if you believe what the Holy Spirit tells you about the shed blood of Jesus Christ, He will wash your sin away, put His Holy Spirit in you, guarantee you a destiny, and take you home when you die. And nothing can stop any of those from happening because he's the king of kings.

Let's pray.

Father, every time I tell this story it's just mindboggling. All that you did to bring me back home. And Father if there's a single person in this room today that is not home with you, let your Holy Spirit speak to them. Let them sense that, feel that, and be transformed this morning. Thank you for who you are and what you've done and make that difference today. In Jesus Christ name.