True-ish

# (Luke 19:28-44)

I want to thank you for joining us this morning in worship and in praise of our Savior Jesus Christ. Today in homes around the world, connecting to one another through the Internet, we’re remembering Palm Sunday and Jesus’ last week of ministry before his death and resurrection. The idea behind today’s message is based upon a conversation that Jesus had with Pontius Pilate as he was determining what to do with Jesus. And honestly, it’s a question that all of us must answer, each of us have to figure it out for ourselves, you know, what we’re going to do with Jesus.

The title of today’s message is “True-ish” and it comes from a question that Pilate asked Jesus, “What is truth?” And it’s a very important question because there is just so much that is unanswered today, we’re facing a very serious situation in our world with all that is happening out there with this virus; but even more importantly, how you answer that question determines what happens to you after this life and for eternity. And so, this is a very important question, and I found that I had to remind myself of the gravity of this moment, because out there all this stuff is happening, but in here I’m preaching and there’s just a few, there’s the technical team, and a bunch of empty seats. It feels like I’m preaching to an empty room, and it’s true, it’s not that many, but what I see is deceptive; because what’s going on over the internet, what God is doing on the other side of screens everywhere is so much more than what I see with my eyes.

I want to speak this word to you today because I believe that God is positioning you to see and understand things that have been hidden. Just like I feel like I’m preaching to a bunch of empty chairs, it’s only a few of us, but what I see and what I’m experiencing is only “True-ish”. You see, it’s hidden and isn’t that true of so much of life, when God is doing the most, we often see the least. And so, the reality is that what God is doing is so important, because there’s someone that’s discouraged, depressed, fearful and on the edge, and yet I get the preach the Word of God, encouraging you, building you up and strengthening you in your faith.

And so, I don’t want to miss what God may have me say to you this morning, in these few moments that I have. In a time when so many people are struggling, we all have questions, each of us are experiencing a spectrum of human emotions, and yet the reality is that there’s something even greater going on behind-the-scenes. Just like in our Scripture reading today, as we turn to the Word of God in Luke chapter 19, there’s something going on that we can’t see. You see, God wants to break the vacuum of fear because it’s strangely silent, there’s only a few cars on the road, and everything is shut down because of a microscopic virus. So many are captivated by the idea that there is no hope, that all is lost, and it’s in that context that we find Jesus on his way to Jerusalem. He’s going up, he’s ascending, and as he was approaching, the Bible says in verse 29, that he said to two of his disciples,

*“Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here.” (Luke 19:29-30).*

All of this was done quietly, Jesus was doing something, those of faith were about to break the silence on that first Palm Sunday. It had been really quiet, but there was a sense of expectation among the people and Jesus was setting the stage to break that silence with the sound of praise marking the arrival of their King. Verse 32 tells us that…

*“Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them” (Luke 19:32).*

Everything was ready for Jesus, the owner of the colt was prepared, it was just as he told them, they’d been waiting, they didn’t know for what, but they knew that things had to change. And like so many of us, they were in a time of great difficulty, they were just trying to figure out what to do, because this was real, life was happening, and some of you can feel that because you’ve still got a family to feed and bills to pay in spite of all that was going on out there. And so, the Bible says,

*“They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road” (Luke 19:35-36).*

These were people who had been fearful, struggling under the weight of religious and political oppression, and wrestling with the emotional and spiritual stress of their day. Now hearing that Jesus was coming, their Messiah was coming, they spread their cloaks on the road in anticipation. They didn’t understand everything, but they recognized that this was the fulfillment of prophecy, this is what the Bible said concerning the coming of the Messiah.

*“See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Matthew 21:5).*

Now, I know it takes a lot of faith not to doubt God in the midst of a crisis, but we need to recognize that he’s coming, the promise remains and if we don’t have an anchor outside of ourselves we could lose our minds. And so, we need to remember that God is God, he doesn’t change based on our circumstances, and his praise and glory are not dependent upon was happening on earth. And there are some of you who need to get to God right now, spreading your cloak on the ground, praising him and praying in the Spirit, because he’s coming, the time is short, and if you don’t, number one, even the stones will cry out.

## 1. The Stones Will Cry Out

You see, wherever you are, whoever you are, and whatever you’re going through, you still owe him some praise. And so, whatever it takes, I need some people to start praising God, right there in your house, just blessing his name. Standing up in front of your TV, running around your house, whatever you have to do but give him some praise. This is what we see happening in our Scripture. The Bible says in verse 37,

*“When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen” (Luke 19:37)*

Now, what they had anticipated, what they’d expected was being realized. You see, things had been quiet too long, there had been this heaviness, this fear like today when people are wondering, did I touch the wrong thing, did I shake the wrong hand, did I breathe something that might hurt me later. And so, there’d been a prolonged silence, but hundreds of years of silence gave way to praise with the arrival of their King. In verse 38, the people shouted,

*"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest" (Luke 19:38).*

Praise was breaking out on the streets, people were celebrating all over, young and old alike were giving God praise. The people were worshiping, praising God, and declaring that Jesus was coming as the King. But some of the Pharisees were offended, and they said to Jesus,

*"Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" (Luke 19:39).*

And so, the people were making a lot of noise, they were shouting and worshiping, breaking the silence that had existed for hundreds of years just waiting for this moment. And I can almost imagine Jesus smiling as he replied in verse 40,

*“I tell you, if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out” (Luke 19:40).*

In other words, Jesus was saying, that those who’ve recognized his coming, if they were to remain silent, the law and the prophets would shout out, because they’re fulfilled in him. Even nature will cry out because their King had come, this is what the apostle Paul said in Romans chapter 8,

*“The whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons and daughters, the redemption of our bodies” (Romans 8:22-23).*

And so, if you’ve received the grace of God, if you’re groaning inwardly, waiting eagerly, don’t let the stones cry out for you. Give God some praise. In fact, they’ve been showing maps of where the virus is breaking out, but I wish we had a map that shows where worship is breaking out right now. We need a praise map this morning showing where people are thanking God for his mercy and his grace.

And I know for some of you it’s a dark and fearful time, I know it’s hard to see the end, we don’t know how this is going to work out, but we can’t stop praising God. You see, I believe that God wants his church to bless him until it breaks, breaking the silence, breaking the fear, and praising him until it breaks. There’s just so much that we don’t know, number two, because there are some things that are just hidden from our eyes, but we’re going to praise him because we live by faith and not by sight.

## 2. Hidden from Your Eyes

This is important because sometimes what we can’t see is more important than what we can see. Just like right now, our nation has been transformed in a significant way because of an invisible virus, because of something that we can’t even see. And in the same way, I’m standing here preaching to an empty room, and yet what’s happening on the other side of the camera, on the other side of what I can see is so significant. You’re hidden from my eyes, I can’t see all of you, and yet you’re so much more important than what I can see, then these empty seats, because you’re being transformed and encouraged because you have faith in the Word of God.

Continuing in verse 41, the Bible says that as Jesus approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said,

*“If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace — but now it is hidden from your eyes” (Luke 19:41-42).*

It was hidden, the one who would bring them peace, the Christ had been hidden from their eyes, but now, even now God is trying to show us some things. You see, we’re in a place, we are in a season as believers, that we get to prove what God showed us in the light is true in the darkness. That what he showed us on the mountaintop is just as true when we’re going through the valley. And so, it’s all just a matter of perspective, you know, what you see, because if the enemy can keep you from seeing, if it remains hidden from your sight, he can keep you stuck in a place of fear. Kind of like that little virus, it can block your vision of something so much bigger, but it’s all a matter of perspective.

And it’s in a time like this, that there are some scriptures that really make sense, because when I don’t see it, feel it, or know it, I don’t need to be afraid because the Bible says,

*“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12).*

And so, some things are hidden from our eyes, it’s an alternate reality, because there are things in the spiritual realm that we can’t see in the physical realm. Just like we can’t see a microscopic virus, we can’t see what is invisible, and so sometimes we need to look again, we’ve got to go back to the Word that God has spoken over us. We need to remember that God is good, he is with us and he will never leave us, and he is bigger than any crisis. In fact, I believe that there is something so much bigger, something so much greater on the other side of this. I believe that we’re coming to a time when everything that can be shaken will be shaken, so that as the Bible says,

*“What cannot be shaken may remain” (Hebrews 12:27).*

Today, you and I need to open our eyes, we need to focus, we need to get a new perspective on our circumstances. We need to look through faith so that we can see that God has been there the whole time. He’s with you right now and maybe you’re scared because of whatever’s going on out there, but the only way to stop being afraid is to change what you’re focused on.

You see, this whole crowd of disciples, joyfully praising God, thought Jesus was coming to take control, they thought he was going to overthrow the Romans, and that he would be their King, but the truth was hidden from their eyes. They didn’t understand the true biblical teaching about the Messiah, they didn’t see that the Messiah would first suffer before he would reign, that before there would be a throne there would be a cross. They missed that part, but number three, something was about to break because of their praise.

## 3. Something’s About to Break

Now, at this point Jesus was a wanted man, he had a price on his head, there were posters all around town, and so Jesus wasn’t coming as a helpless victim unaware of what was ahead, he was coming as a victorious warrior returning from battle. The people went out to meet him shouting,

*"Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the King of Israel” (John 12:13).*

I can’t help but think that the 12 disciples must have been elated, because they knew that Jesus was the Christ, but now everybody else was recognizing it. And so, they’re leaping with joy, there’s all this celebration, the thrill of this triumphant entry, but there was a sadness. The crowd is whipped into a frenzy, there celebrating, and Jesus was weeping in bitter anguish. He’s riding this donkey through the crowded streets, they’re oblivious to the fact that he’s openly sobbing and weeping, when he announces in verse 43,

*“The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you” (Luke 19:43-44).*

The text doesn’t say, but there must’ve been an ominous hush that fell over the crowd, because something was about to break. At this point, Jesus ministry on earth was almost over, he’d healed the sick, raised the dead, cleansed the lepers, fed the hungry, and forgiven their sins. But the people didn’t understand why he came, it remained hidden from their eyes, they didn’t recognize the time of God coming to them.

However, Jesus knew… he knew what was ahead of him, it was only a matter of days until one of his own disciples would betray him and turn him over to the authorities. And so, he’s weeping as he’s surrounded by all this revelry, but it wasn’t rooted in the truth.

In a few days, he’s turned over to Caiaphas and then ultimately to Pontius Pilate because they needed permission in order to crucify Jesus. Now, Jesus is no longer weeping, because he’d set his face like flint. He’d been interrogated by the religious leaders and now he stood before Pilate who asked him,

*“Are you the king of the Jews?" "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?" (John 18:33-34).*

*Pilate replied to Jesus, "It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?" (John 18:35).*

*Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place" (John 18:36).*

*"You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me” (John 18:37).*

*Pilate replied, "What is truth?” (John 18:38).*

You see, what Pilate failed to understand is that we don’t get to make the Scriptures fit our standards, it’s not our truth, it’s God’s truth. Truth is not subjective. Truth is an unmovable reality, it’s not a concept, truth is found in a man, and his name is Jesus Christ. He’s not just the idea of a man, he’s a historical figure, he’s God in the flesh and he actually lives. And so, just like Pilate asked, “What is truth?” we can investigate who he is.

Jesus said, I am truth, I came to testify to the truth, you’re looking at truth, you can’t twist it, you can’t manipulate it, because…

*“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).*

And so, the truth is important, it’s a major detail. Jesus is a major detail, the cross is a major detail, and the empty tomb is a major detail. Today I want to assure you if you will examine him yourself, looking at his life, seeking to know the truth, and pursuing him, something is about to break in your life. He will no longer be hidden from your eyes. If you seek him with all your heart you will find him.

*“Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32).*

Jesus can absolutely and completely set you free from any true-ish belief. He can set you free from fear, uncertainty, and pain and bring you into a relationship with God. Somewhere in the middle of all this stuff going on in the world today, hidden on a hill far away, is an old rugged cross. There on that cross Jesus died, he took all our sins upon himself, they died with him and he rose again, because he is the truth and the truth will set you free. Let’s pray together.

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