

Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.

Series: The Benefits Of Salvation

## A Stirring, a Sorrow, a Savior Preparing to Sacrifice Himself

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Dr. Mary Craig



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Rev. Jim Craig's last sermon was on a Palm Sunday in 2017. It has been five years now since his passing into glory June 1, 2017. Our message today comes from Rev. Jim Craig's Palm Sunday message given April 1, 2012. It has been partially edited due to its length. It reflects the depth of Pastor Jim's love for the truth and his desire "to have us feel what it was like, to handle it in our minds, to get a sense of the real moment when the true contrasts of the scene come together."

**30Going on from there, they passed through Galilee. But Jesus did not want anyone to know, 31because He was teaching His disciples. He told them, "The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill Him, and after three days He will rise."...Mark 9:30-32 Berean Study Bible**

From this point on, Jesus wanted the disciples to understand plainly what was going to happen to Him. This was just after Caesarea Philippi when Peter gave his confession of faith. They left from there and were on their way to Jerusalem. Between the time of Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi and their arrival in Jerusalem, Jesus told His disciples five times that He would be killed and raised from the dead.

Palm Sunday was an appointed point in time when God met with the world to make manifest His divine intervention into the affairs of mankind in a highly public manner. This may have been the most public time of Jesus' ministry. There were people coming for the Passover from everywhere around. Pilgrims were coming down from the Galilee area, up from the South, from all over the place, in addition to the people that lived in the city to begin with. The city grew almost instantly during this time. Security was on high alert. Everything was stirred up and then Jesus entered the city and stirred up things even all the more. God moved that Palm Sunday, and I mean He "moved." Listen to how Pastor Jim described it.

"In Matt 21:10-11 we find that when Jesus had come to Jerusalem, all the city was **moved**, saying "Who is this?" So, the multitudes said, "this is Jesus the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee." The idea is... All the city was **moved**. It's an action verb being **moved** but it's used in a passive tense so that they were **moved** and here the same word is being used to describe the motions generated by an earthquake. I thought that was rather curious. The same word used to describe the stirring was the same as the word used to describe an earthquake so that must have been some stirring. So, they had been moved in this way. I'm not going to spend much time on this, but the city was being moved upon or stirred by an outside force which was beyond their control. When something acts upon you, it's outside your control. This is exactly what's happening to

them. And they sensed it greatly. Sometimes you can picture being in that old city and if you can picture yourself being in there in that kind of environment and you see even to this day there are guards practically on every major intersection within the web-work and network of the city to keep the peace.” (Rev. Jim Craig, Palm Sunday Message April 1, 2012)

This was kind of a spiritual earthquake if you will. It was taking place in the dramatic arrival of Jesus causing a great commotion in the city. All the commotion provoked the question, "Who is this?" The provocation was from the appearance of Jesus entering into the city. "What is going on?" Who *did* know what was going on that day? Many thought they knew. But their expectations did not correspond to all that God had in mind over the next four days. We read in scripture that Jesus entered the city and then He went into the temple as though it was one contiguous movement. But by the time He got into the city it was already late and from what I can gather, it wasn't until the next day that He entered the temple and cleansed the temple. This was the second time that He would have cleansed the temple. Also, He continued teaching in that area for a couple of days after that. So, there were about 4 days before a lot of these events occurred which we tend to lump in our mind as all happening in one day. But it didn't. It was strung out over several days.

**32 Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going on before them; and they were **amazed**. And as they followed, they were **afraid**. Mark 10:32.**

The disciples were both amazed and afraid for themselves. "They were afraid" here is in the middle voice. Now what you know about the middle voice is that it's coming back. So, their fear was not externalized, it was fear FOR themselves. This is quite helpful to get a sense about what was going on at these moments. So, it indicated that their fear was for themselves rather than for Jesus. And for what they would anticipate happening when they got into Jerusalem. They were afraid for themselves.

Then Jesus took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him. **Mark 10:33, 34: "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; 34 and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again."**

This is a second time Jesus tells the disciples what is going to be happening to Him as they journeyed into Jerusalem. But it wasn't the only time. Jesus prepared His disciples, referring to His death and resurrection. Mark 10:33, 34 gives us the fifth time out of the five recorded times that Jesus would announce His death and resurrection. Since this is the LAST time, we find it augmented with great detail compared to the previous announcements. For example, consider the details of being betrayed. It wasn't merely being betrayed into the hands of men, it was into the hands of the chief priests and the scribes, being condemned to death, delivered to the Gentiles, mocked, scourged, spat upon, killed, and then rise again.

**FIVE TIMES JESUS ANNOUNCES HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION:**

**The first time.** The first time was after Peter's confession of faith in Caesarea Philippi. That comes from Matthew 16:21. **21 From that time Jesus began to show to His**

disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

**The second time** was after the transfiguration. **9** Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead." Matthew 17:9.

**The third time** occurred after the healing of the epileptic.

**44** "Let these words sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men." Luke 9:44

**The fourth time** then was while passing through Galilee. This was on the way to Jerusalem, having come from Caesarea Philippi. **22** Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, **23** and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up." And they were exceedingly sorrowful. Matthew 17:22-23,

**The fifth time**, again, was the most explicit. And it was here on the way near to Jerusalem that He spoke these words. I'll repeat them again. **33** "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; **34** and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again." Mark 10:33-34

So, what really happened on that first Palm Sunday? Jesus prepared to enter into Jerusalem and the disciples welcomed Him as their long-awaited King and Messiah. They brought the colt and its mother to Jesus, and they threw their garments on the colt. They put Jesus on it and as they were going, they were spreading their garments on the road. As He was now approaching near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles that they had seen. But the Pharisees were greatly shaken. There was a stirring there too. They were shaken by this, by the political and personal upheaval this demonstration would cause for them.

Now keep in mind that the Jews were continually hoping the Messiah would come to Jerusalem, the capital of Israel. But down through the years, the focus of that hope moved more and more toward restoration of Israel and Israel's glory rather than the need for a Savior. They were more concerned about the nation any personal need for a salvation of individual souls. They didn't see that they had a need for a Savior except to save them from the Romans. That was a great need. That's the kind of Savior they were looking for.

Now what the disciples had in mind was that the one who was able to raise Lazarus from the dead would defeat the Romans! So, they may have bowed their knees under the heavy hand of Rome, but their hearts were filled with the picture of a Warrior-King with the same spirit as that of King David some 1,000 years earlier when David destroyed the Philistines. The "Son of David" arrives and defeats the enemy in our presence, in our midst.

Save us, save now, Hosanna, the shouts, the expectations, the hopes. They kept watering down the Messiah, what the Messiah would be like. So, you can imagine confusion on the part of *some* Jews when they saw their *possible* Messiah was riding into Jerusalem on a donkey colt. They all knew what that meant. It was not a mysterious figure or symbol to them. The Jews understood the symbolic nature of this act. They saw this donkey as a lowly but noble beast. We like donkeys. We think they're pretty cool. And knowing that if a King wanted to approach a city in peace, he would ride up to the gates on a donkey instead of a war horse. So, I come in peace was the message.

They were not looking for peace; they were looking for salvation by war, a Moment of Triumph. We call Palm Sunday the Triumphal Entry because we see the spiritual reality of it, apart from the physical and we see the King of Peace as the King who *does* defeat the devil and brings Peace. Peace with God, Peace with Men. I mean it's remarkable! Today, Christians rejoice, yet back then, people were looking for something entirely different. They were very disappointed. In not too many days, many of the same people that shouted Hosannas, Hallelujahs, and Praise God would be shouting, "Crucify Him."

At this time, Jesus the Christ, the long-awaited Messiah, the Son of David, would be declared the King of Israel. He entered Jerusalem, the city of Peace, in a peaceful manner; not as a Warrior-Messiah who would physically conquer the Roman army, but as the prophetic Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6. But not all received Him. Not all would receive Him. Not all would see Him, recognize Him. The words of God did not fall upon their ears and "sink down into their ears." It did not do so.

Finally, we see that as the Messiah, King, and Prophet looked over the crowds, it caused Him to weep over Jerusalem.

**39** And some of the Pharisees in the multitude said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples."

**40** But He answered and said, "I tell you that if these become silent, the stones will cry out." Luke 19:39, 40.

Notice they said Teacher instead of Lord. It was not Lord. It was Teacher. **Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.** Jesus responded as Teacher. He was in effect saying, "Do you not understand? This is the moment that God, my Father, has been preparing since the foundation of the world. For you to have your Messiah, I am officially here. This is the time. This is the day. This is the moment when God meets with the world. And if I stop my disciples from singing... Psalm 118 is what they were singing,... then you're going to hear a literal 'rock concert.'"

Now many of the Pharisees who were blinded by the religious system that promoted power, fear, jealousy, and greed had been plotting to seize the Lord without arousing the crowd. They were already set; their hearts were set upon getting Him. The only thing that kept them from doing it was the jubilation of the crowds, the notice of the crowds. Some of them watched the parade as it passed by and hearing many of the disciples singing praises to God, as I mentioned, cried out to Jesus as He rode by them saying, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples."

This was the moment when the leadership rejected Jesus as their Messiah. They were saying that these people were calling Jesus King of Israel when there is no king but

Caesar. The corrupt spiritual leaders knew that if Pilate heard about this demonstration, which had all the markings of a political revolt, and everyone believed in Jesus, then the Romans would take away both their temple **and** their nation. It would not be a good thing. But Jesus replied, I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out. Jesus approved of the people's seeking to proclaim Him as their Messiah and King. He also knew that most of them wanted Him to conquer their physical enemies and rule their land rather than their hearts. What a dynamic, what a dramatic, knowing that the hearts were not there and yet they were rejoicing and calling Him their King and not fully understanding.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen *doth gather* her brood under *her* wings, and ye would not! Luke 13:34 KJV

Ironically, when the crowds quoted from Psalm 118, they skipped to verse 26. They really didn't get it. Psalm 118:22-25 fit the circumstance perfectly.

**22** The stone *which* the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

**23** This was the Lord's doing; it *is* marvelous in our eyes.

**24** This *is* the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

**25** O Lord do save; we beseech Thee.

Wow. They left that part out. They picked up on verse 26 as they sang: **26** Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed *is* the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!

The crowds left out the part that was really taking place at that very moment, namely, the rejection of the Cornerstone. Obviously, the crowds were proclaiming the hope of the restoration of the Kingdom of David at this time and implying deliverance from the yoke of Rome and Israel's re-establishment as a great and independent nation. As the people saw it, God was at peace with the human race; everything was okay, particularly with Israel.

And in turn they shouted with joy to God for His grace towards them, in that attitude. We should take notice of this for our own time. Many, many, many people think we are at peace with God, all is well. All is well. Our nation is doing fine for the most part. Oh yes, we have our problems but as far as God is concerned, if there is a God, He doesn't seem to be *bothering* us very much.

Do we understand the state that we're in? Do we understand how much we are in need of a Savior? Our joy to God should also include the real concern for our nation and an honest evaluation of what it has become. The signs that are evident are not good. The news is full of increasing decadence and immorality.

Well, back to Palm Sunday in Jerusalem. During all of this religious activity and excitement on this first Palm Sunday they were missing the whole point of the Lord's humble entrance into Jerusalem. He was coming to offer personal salvation, which in turn would indeed have brought blessing to Israel as a nation. Israel could once again be the light of truth to the other nations of the world. Societies CAN be changed when the hearts of the people are changed and filled with the righteousness of God through

His Son, Jesus Christ. While God does deal with nations, Jesus Christ, sent by the Father to save, saves individuals.

<sup>41</sup>And when He approached, He saw the city and wept over it, <sup>42</sup>saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which made for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. <sup>43</sup>For days shall come upon you when your enemies will throw up a bank before you and surround you and hem you in on every side, <sup>44</sup>and will level you to the ground, and your children within you; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation." Luke 19:41-44.

What are the things that make for peace? This was the Prince of Peace sitting on His colt and He was offering eternal spiritual peace, reconciliation between God and Man. So, the Lord's message was not salvation from the Romans, but salvation from personal sin, resulting in holiness and spiritual fruitfulness.

Our nation, and indeed the entire world, needs to be careful. We don't know when the Living God is going to come suddenly in our midst. We need to watch, and pray, and be ready, that we recognize the time of our visitation. And when Jesus is in our midst, He wants to bring blessings to our lives. But if our flesh at both a personal and a national level wants to resist Him and His offer of salvation, it will certainly result in a national level of spiritual death. Right now, the global outcome hangs in the balance.

So, what really happened on the first Palm Sunday?

1. Jesus the incarnate Son of God, the infinite God-Man, prepared to offer Himself to Israel as their long-awaited Prince of Peace and their King Messiah. He came to offer not only Himself as the sacrifice for sin and to satisfy divine justice, but also to offer the gift of salvation, the Holy Spirit, and to set up His kingdom of righteousness in the hearts of all those given to Him by His Father. It is the Father's good pleasure to give believers the kingdom, the Kingdom of God.
2. Many responded to this offer, but...
3. Most of the nation rejected the Prince of Peace and His invitation of redemption. So...
4. He wept over Jerusalem. The old is passing away; behold, the new comes.

After their rejection, Jesus finished out the week as the final Passover Lamb who willingly died for the sins of the world. Because of His death on the cross, His resurrection, and His ascension into the presence of the Father where He now reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords, we see the greatest redeeming value of the events of that first Palm Sunday.

Regardless of the political, religious, or social circumstances of our lives, the Prince of Peace is still inviting everyone to repent of their sins and to place their faith in Him and be reconciled to the one, true God in order to enjoy the FULL peace of God. Amen.

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