

November 13

Matthew 26; Mark 14; Luke 2-22; John 12

Hi this is Steve Walters, pastor for pastoral care coming to you with an accelerator for November 13<sup>th</sup>. This reading is covering Tuesday afternoon through Wednesday. Today you read Luke chapter 21 and walked with Christ through the second half of the Tuesday of what we now call Passion Week. So far we have noted that on Sunday Jesus came into Jerusalem to the adoring cries of a Galilean multitude. On Monday He cleansed the Temple, driving out those who were profaning the House of God. Tuesday was the day of confrontation with the religious and political leaders of the Jews.

By the way, did you know the word "Hosanna" is not an exclamation of praise, but the Hebrew imperative which means "save now." In his book on John's gospel entitled John the Gospel of Belief, Merrill Tenney reminds us that "The Passover expectation was the return of God's Messiah to deliver His people." By applying the words for Psalm 118:25-26 to Jesus, the crowd was recognizing that He was the king and calling upon Him to take the throne of Israel. Again, this heightened sense of crisis in the face of the resurrection of Lazarus and now the rising of the population to acknowledge Jesus is the King, the chief priests were compelled to act.

I think that in Luke 21, it is incredible to find Him noticing the poor widow who put her meager offering into the temple treasury. It is not surprising that Luke, with his special interest in women, remembered to tell us about it.

"In the court of women in the temple, there were 13 collecting boxes known as the Trumpets. They were shaped like trumpets with the narrow part at the top and the wider part at the foot. Each was assigned to offerings for a different purpose - for the wood that was used to burn the sacrifice, for the incense that was burned on the altar, for the upkeep of the golden vessels, and so on. It was near the Trumpets that Jesus was sitting." (1 Barclay; Luke; "Olivet Discourse"; pg. 255)

All she had to her name apparently were two thin coins - the name of the coin in question was 'lepton' and it literally means 'thin one.' Jesus, apparently using His omniscience, is aware of the fact that this was all the lady had and eulogized what she has done. In so doing, He teaches His disciples, then and now, two critical lessons about giving:

- 1) The really critical thing about giving is the spirit with which the gift is made. Paul in 2 Corinthians 8:12 says, *"For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have."*
- 2) The second lesson is that the value of an offering to God is measured not by its amount but by the sacrifice it represents.
- 3) Let me add one more question – how do you view and handle your wealth and possessions? Do you recognize God as the owner of it all? Do you see yourself as a steward/manger of what you have or do you see yourself as a consumer/hoarder?

Matthew 26 is full of evil and hope. We see evil in that the priests and elders are conspiring to crucify Jesus. Evil in that this is when Judas agrees to betray Christ, for 30

pieces of silver, in those days, about the going rate for a slave. We see hope in that Jesus is described as the Lamb of God, the Passover Lamb if you will that is a fulfillment of Jeremiah 31.

Much of what is happening during this week leading up to the crucifixion is fulfillment of prophecy and/or a demonstration of what Jesus had been teaching over the previous three years of public ministry.

The blood of the Passover lamb points us back to Jeremiah 31, where the prophet has a marvelous vision of the new covenant. There are all kinds of covenants in the Bible we have looked at.. In Judaism, you cut a covenant and there could be no covenant without the shedding of blood. When the covenant was predicted, the new covenant, in Jeremiah 31, no blood was mentioned. Jesus makes good the covenant, for the new covenant would not be sealed with the blood of animal, but we read in Hebrews 9.22 that without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. Jesus' blood offers the forgiveness of sins. Mark said it in his Gospel; Matthew says it here in his account of the institution of the Lord's Supper. It is for the forgiveness of sins.

That is what Jeremiah said in chapter 31. I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more. The Old Testament sacrificial system did not convey forgiveness of sins, covering, but not forgiveness. The death of Christ changed all of that. 'This is my body, this is my blood.'

*"The time is coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt...This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the Lord. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor or a man his brother saying, 'Know the Lord' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the Lord. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." (Jeremiah 31:31-34) The Old Covenant was solemnized by the blood of bulls, goats and lambs. The New Covenant was solemnized by the blood of Christ, and the cup of communion is meant to speak to us of that.*

a sovereign God was still in control because it was God's plan that Christ should die at the Passover. Why? Because Christ is our Passover Lamb. *"The Lamb of God",* John called him, *"Who takes away the sins of the world."*

On Thursday, Jesus gathers His disciples to celebrate the Passover meal with them. There is no mention in Luke's account of any lamb, which, of course, was the focal point of any Passover meal, and that may be an indication that they were celebrating an early or unofficial meal, because Jesus would actually die at the time the Passover lamb was slain. As you read today, there is some debate about the actual timing of these events, but the significance of Christ dying at Passover time because He is our "Paschal Lamb" is too obvious for us to miss.

Yet, we read in John 12 that there were people who “still would not believe in Him.” And that they would not confess their faith for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue – for they loved praise from men more than praise from God.” During this time, many did not recognize Jesus as the Lamb of God. Others saw Him as the Messiah, but had ideas of how he would live and act as the Messiah. Yet, others were afraid of man and man’s opinions.

Where do you fit? How do you view Jesus? What are your expectations of Him? Or...are you afraid to take a stand for Jesus? To share your opinion about Jesus? I pray that you will grow in your faith and trust and dependence on Jesus, recognizing that He is worthy of praise, trust and will be with you, he has promised to never leave you or forsake (abandon) you.