

I. Introduction

Good morning! Let's begin today with the words of Ecclesiastes 3:1-8.

[1] There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under heaven:
[2] a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
[3] a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
[4] a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
[5] a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain,
[6] a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
[7] a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
[8] a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.



There is a time for everything. In the gospel of John the idea of the right time is strongly emphasized, for example, in **John 2:4** when Jesus tells His mother, **“My time has not yet come.”** But the same idea is present throughout the Bible. There is an appropriate time for everything.

Today we will look at the last half of Luke 19, and we will see that it is the appropriate time for Jesus to be publicly declared as the rightful King of Israel and of all the nations. Previously, Jesus had discouraged those who wished to call Him King, but now He declares that it must be done. Let's read Luke 19:28-48.

II. Scripture Luke 19:28-48 (NIV)

[28] After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. [29] As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, [30] "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. [31] If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it.'" [32] Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. [33] As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" [34] They replied, "The Lord needs it." [35] They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. [36] As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road. [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:

[38] "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" [39] Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" [40] "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out." [41] As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it [42] 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. [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. [44] 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."

[45] Then he entered the temple area and began driving out those who were selling. [46] "It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be a house of prayer'; but you have made it 'a den of robbers.'" [47] Every day he was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him. [48] Yet they could not find any way to do it, because all the people hung on his words.

III. Teaching

When they drew close to Jerusalem and passed near two small towns, Bethany and Bethphage, two of the disciples were sent to get a colt that had never been ridden on. Jesus gave them some unusual instructions, they were not to ask permission, but simply to untie the colt and bring it. And if anyone asked, they were to reply only that, "The Lord needs it." This may have been prearranged by Jesus. But if so, it seems that Jesus did not explain it to the disciples. Nevertheless, they demonstrated their faith by obeying without question, even when they did not understand.



Jesus often gives us opportunities to show our faith in this way. If we trust Him, then we can joyfully obey His commands even when we do not understand. This is not blind faith. The disciples had seen a lot of evidence that proved that Jesus was Lord. We also have a great deal of evidence for the truth of the Scriptures. The evidence points us to Jesus, and when we see that He is Lord over all, we are then able to step out in faith and obedience even when we do not understand. As we do this, we learn to say along with Paul (2 Timothy 1:11-12), **"And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day."** Paul says, **"I know whom I have believed."** These are words of faith. Notice that Paul does not speak of what he has believed. There is a lot of teaching in the Bible. But the core issue in Christian faith is not, "what?" the core issue is, "who?" We affirm Jesus Christ as Lord and God. In doing so, we affirm all that Jesus taught, but the core of Christianity is found in our relationship to Jesus Christ. Salvation is received through knowing the Savior.

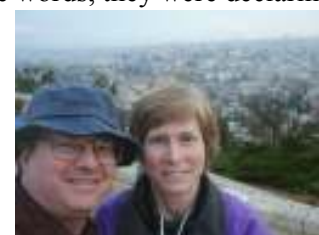
The disciples brought the donkey's colt to Jesus. By doing this, they helped to set the stage for the fulfillment of a prophecy spoken by Zechariah over 500 years earlier. **Zechariah 9:9, "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."** A conquering king would have come to Jerusalem riding on a powerful war horse, surrounded by armed soldiers. But King Jesus came in peace, humbly riding on the foal of a donkey.

Jesus is Lord and God. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. He came to Jerusalem in peace, and He comes to us in peace also. Revelation reveals that one day Jesus will come in power to defeat all of His enemies and to right every injustice. But on this day, He comes in peace, reminding us of the words of the prophet Isaiah that we read every Christmas (**Isaiah 9:6**), **"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."**

Can you imagine the scene when Jesus rode into Jerusalem? Take a look at this painting. The children are running ahead, some are spreading their coats on the road, and the people are shouting and rejoicing. But not everyone was happy. **Luke 19:39, "Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!"** Why did they complain? They complained because the people were singing these words (**Luke 19:38**) **"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"**



These words are taken from Psalm 118:26 and the Pharisees recognized them as prophetic words that announced the coming of the Messiah of Israel. When the disciples shouted these words, they were declaring to all that Jesus is King and Savior. The Pharisees objected because they refused to recognize Jesus as the Messiah who was to come, and as their rightful king. But take a look at Jesus' answer (**Luke 19:40**). **"I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.""**



In February of 2006, Karen and I went to Israel to celebrate our twentieth wedding anniversary. While we were there, we stopped at the Mount of Olives,

where Jesus entered Jerusalem 2,000 years ago. I looked around and picked up this stone as a souvenir. I don't know whether this stone was there 2,000 years ago, but it always reminds me of this passage. The time for Jesus to ride into Jerusalem and be declared as King and Messiah was set before the creation of the world. And, right on schedule, Jesus came to Jerusalem, riding on a donkey's colt.

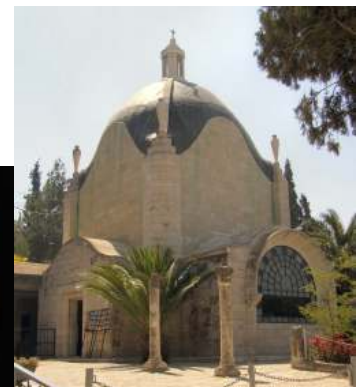
This event was so important that if the disciples had been silent, then the stones would have cried out to announce Jesus' coming. I kind of wish that the disciples would have kept quiet. If they had been quiet for a few minutes, then we would know for sure if Jesus' words were literal or figurative. But the point is that when the right time came for Jesus to be declared to all as Messiah and King, it had to happen. Neither men, nor nature, nor history, nor anything else can stop or delay the plans of God, because He is Lord over all.

Luke 19:41-42, "As he 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."" Jesus wept over the city. Why? **Luke 19:44** gives us the answer, **"because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."** Our Lord Jesus is the Son of God and God the Son. **John 1:1** tells us, **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."** And, **John 1:14** tells us, **"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."**

Let's think about that for a moment. God came to Jerusalem in the person of Jesus Christ. On the day that was decided by God before time began, Jesus came to Jerusalem. On the day that was spoken of by the prophets, Jesus, the Prince of Peace, came to Jerusalem and was declared King. This should have been a time of great joy and celebration. But instead, Jesus wept over the city, because they did not recognize the time of God's coming to them, and only judgment remained for the city.

The people of Jerusalem, and especially the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, all claimed to believe in the Lord and to serve Him. They studied the Scriptures. They did all of the rituals required in the Law of Moses. They were experts on Scripture and they were honored as religious leaders. But it seems that they did not really know the Lord. Perhaps they were just going through the motions of religious activity while their hearts were really full of other things. On the day when the Lord came to them, they did not recognize Him. Jesus stood and looked out over the city and wept. This is a warning to all of us. We need to examine our hearts and lifestyles and make sure that we have not allowed other things to crowd Jesus out.

If you have a chance to visit Jerusalem, you might see this church. It is called Dominus Flevit, Latin words that mean, "the Lord wept," and it is shaped like a teardrop. The church is near the site where Jesus would have stood looking over the city. Inside there is a window which shows the view of Jerusalem.



The church is built to look like a teardrop, because it stands in the place where Jesus wept over Jerusalem. Jesus also wept with Mary in John 11:35, just before He raised Lazarus from the grave. And, as Hebrews 5:7 reveals, Jesus wept on other occasions also.

When we stop and think about it for a moment, the fact that Jesus wept is an extraordinary thing. Jesus is God, but He is not a far off and distant God who cannot understand human struggles. Instead, Jesus is a God who understands our struggles and sorrows. When our sins separate us from Him, He weeps for us, longing to draw us back to Himself. And when we suffer in pain and sorrow, Jesus weeps with us and comforts us.



Take a look at this building. Does anyone recognize it? It is the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. At least, this is what it looked like before I was bombed on April 19th in 1995. After the bombing, it looked like this. The terrorist bomber was Timothy McVeigh, an American citizen who attended church when he was a child. It is a useful reminder for us to remember that terrorists can come from all kinds of cultural and religious backgrounds. But that is not the reason that I am sharing this today. What I want to point out is this statue, which stands in the memorial park near where the building was. It is a statue of Jesus weeping.



Jesus weeps over the sins of mankind. Jesus weeps with the suffering people of the world. When we weep, we do not weep alone, because God weeps with us. Usually we point to the cross of Christ as the great proof of God's love and that is good and right for us to do. But today, I want to point to the tears of God as another demonstration of God's love for us. A distant God would not weep with and for His people. But Jesus is not far away; He is here with us. And when we weep, He weeps with us.



A few minutes earlier, I read from Ecclesiastes 3, where we saw that there is a time for everything. Take a look at **Ecclesiastes 3:4**. It says, **“a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance.”** We live in a fallen world fully of violence and sin of every kind, and as long as we are here, there will be weeping and mourning. But the verse also says that there will be a time to laugh and a time to dance.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey's colt with tears on His face, weeping for the city. After that He cleansed the temple, driving out the dishonest merchants and crooked money changers so that people could pray in peace. A few days later, Jesus was arrested and falsely accused, and the disciples wept as He was crucified and buried. But that was not the end of the story. On the third day, Jesus rose from the grave, and the weeping and sorrow was turned to joy.

IV. Conclusion

In this world, we have trouble and sorrows. We weep and mourn. But for all who trust in Jesus as their Lord and Savior, a better day is coming. Jesus bears our burdens for us. He weeps for us, and He even gave His life on the cross as a ransom for ours. And at just the right time, He will come again and restore all things and promise of **Revelation 21:1-4** will be fulfilled. **“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. [2] I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. [3] And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. [4] He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.””**

Jesus, our Lord and God, will wipe away all of our tears. And then, I think, He will wipe away His own tears last of all. For when all of our sorrow and pain has been healed and our tears are no more; then the tears of God will also cease. Let's pray.

V. Closing Prayer