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Then They Remembered

Text: John 12:12-19

This is one of the few events in the life of our Lord Jesus which is recorded in all four gospels (Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-40; John 12:12-19). Only John’s account tells it was Passover time (12:1) and that the crowd used palm branches to celebrate Jesus’ entry (12:13).

The population of Jerusalem would increase significantly at Passover time. Josephus, the historian, writes that on one occasion the number of pilgrims in Jerusalem was 2,700,000! (*Wars* 6.422-425*).*

The text says that a number of those 2.7 million went out to meet Jesus. Have you come out here to do the same?

The setting is full of visual and auditory cues about Jesus:

**Sight**

Palm branches were used in the celebration. Historically, palm branches were used as signs and symbols of victory and kingship.

Earlier in this gospel, Jesus left and went to the mountain when people were trying to declare him a king (6:15). *Now*, Jesus allows this kingly gesture.

**Sound**

Hosanna! - means *save now.*

Old Testiment quote- Psalm 118:25-26

**Sight**

Jesus sat on a donkey- This is another symbol of royalty. Verse 15 is a quote from Zechariah 9:9.

His disciples did not understand these things at first. -

**Q**: What things??

**A**: The actions, some of them symbolic, of Jesus.

This wouldn't be the first time the disciples were *clueless*. Excuse me. It wouldn’t be the first time they *didn’t understand*. Go with me, please, to Mark 8:14-21, 31-33.

Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and they did not have more than one loaf with them in the boat. **15**Then He charged them, saying, “Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.”

**16**And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “*It is* because we have no bread.”

**17**But Jesus, being aware of *it,* said to them, “Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened? **18**Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember? **19**When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?”

They said to Him, “Twelve.”

**20**“Also, when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up?”

And they said, “Seven.”

**21**So He said to them, “How *is it* you do not understand?”

**31**And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. **32**He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. **33**But when He had turned around and looked at His disciple, He rebuked Peter, saying, “Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”

There are times, when we, like the disciples, are not mindful of the things of God. We are not always tracking with Christ. We are, in a word, *clueless.*

Matthew 8:27:

 The men were amazed and asked, “What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!”

Matthew 15:15-16:

Then Peter answered and said to Him, “Explain this parable (about uprooted plants and blind leaders) to us.”

**16**So Jesus said, “Are you also still without understanding?

Back to our text. As the Palm Sunday event is unfolding, these disciples, who don’t always “get it” are, again, befuddled.

BUT when Jesus was glorified. Since it is such a turning point in the text, we need to find out what *glorified* means. This phrase is synonymous with what John tells us in John 2:22:

**22**Therefore, when He had risen from the dead (was glorified), His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

Edward W. Kline, III offers a line in his commentary on the gospel of John:

*It was only when God by his Spirit removed the cataracts of distorted human kingship from their eyes that the disciples understood the nature of King Jesus. Ironically, it was only after Jesus finished his ultimate service of sacrifice that they saw his power and glory.* (Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: John p.540)

Clarity does, eventually, come for these clueless disciples...and for us. In fact, that clarity was promised (John14:26;16:13). Let me speak to all of us gathered here, as if I were speaking to the clueless ones in the first century.

* The king has come, entering not only Jerusalem but our lives as well.
* Will you welcome him?
* Do you understand what’s going on here?

**Illus**.

*Wisdom too often never comes, and so one ought not to reject it merely because it comes late.*

Supreme Court Justice (1939-1962) Felix Frankfurter

For the disciples, wisdom, insight, understanding and clarity came late, but it came.

How about you? Are you, perhaps for the first time, seeing the pieces of life’s puzzle begin to come together?

If so, what will you do with Jesus? Wave your branches and have him go by?

Receive him and have your life transformed?

Verse 19 says that some who were in that crowd that day, were never the same after Jesus came through. The Pharisees said it was as if the *whole world* went after Him.

I can’t speak for the whole world, but I can speak for myself. I want to follow Jesus. I want to remember what He said and did and follow after Him. I hope that you want the same. Clueless? Not I.

Amen