

What Blinds Us?

2018-03-23 - Year B - Palm Sunday - The Rev. Christopher M. Klukas

Mark 11:1-11a; Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Psalm 22:1-11; Philippians 2:5-11; Mark 15:1-39

- Magic tricks are designed to fool us by directing our attention in one place to keep us from seeing what is really going on in another place.

The Triumphal Entry of Jesus

- Jesus chooses to ride into Jerusalem on a donkey, this shows that he likely had the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 in his head.
- The crowd shouted “Hosanna (save us we pray), Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” (v. 9) Taking their cues from Psalm 118: 25-26 where it also speaks about the stone which the builders rejected becoming the chief cornerstone (Psalm 118:22).
- These were Messianic prophecies and the crowd and Jesus both were saying that these prophecies were speaking of Jesus. Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah!
- The crowd then makes their understanding of the situation even more clear v. 10.
 - “The coming kingdom of our father David.” This is political language.
- The crowd almost got it right
 - Jesus was the Messiah, but his mission was not something they anticipated
 - Jesus was a king, but as he would later tell Pilate, “my kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36).
 - Jesus was a victor, but his victory would come through suffering and death - Isaiah 53:4-5
 - The crowd pictured a champion riding in to do battle with the Roman Governor and perhaps, eventually, with Caesar himself
 - Jesus pictured himself as a champion ready to do battle with Satan and with death itself.
- So how were they so far off in understanding the mission of the Messiah?
 - They were blinded by their own desires and by the cultural expectations of their day.

What Blinds us Today?

- There are lots of things that have the potential to keep us from seeing the movement of God today.
 - Joshua: A Parable for Today
- Culture
 - Politics - I expect that God probably feels very passionately about the issue of our day: guns, school shootings, abortion, euthanasia, immigration, poverty, taxes, war, education, terrorism, healthcare, marriage. But I don't think his responses would neatly fall into the partisan boxes we have created.

- Values - We each have lots of values that drive our decisions and responses. Hopefully many of them are grounded in God's word. But how many of them come to us from our culture?
- Expectations
 - Theology: some people have very detailed theological speculations about what the return of Jesus will be like.
 - Anglicans tend to focus more on Jesus' instruction to always be ready for his return rather than on the particulars of that return.
 - Sometimes we present our plans to God and get mad when he doesn't fulfill them
 - We forget that God is the master planner and that our plans might be in conflict with his
 - We forget that God knows us better than we know ourselves, and that his plans might be better for us.
 - A false gospel of salvation without transformation
 - What are we being saved from? Not just hell, but also sin and death (Rom 5:12).
 - Jesus offers us abundant life (John 10:10), he reminds us that we don't have to live this way
- Fear
 - Money
 - Pain/Suffering
 - Humiliation
- Pride
 - Doing it on our own

What can we do?

- Pray
- Immerse yourself in God's word
- Jesus' apostles and disciples all got it wrong at one point or another, but they stuck with Jesus and they remained open to the movement of God.
- Be humble: recognize the fact that you don't have it all figured out yet because God hasn't revealed it all yet and let God take you for a ride.