



Going Deeper - Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide

Palm Sunday - Luke 19:28-40

3/28/2021

"Truly I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."

-Jesus

A friend of mine once said most people he knew who claimed to believe in God actually believed in a potato head god. He meant that we humans, each of us, have a strong bent toward taking the frame of God (of which we have an inherent awareness) and then attaching various bits and pieces of desire, perhaps wishful thinking, maybe some popular science or psychology and etc. to it in order to get the god we want. As Bill rightly points out, there is very much a difference between a god we want and the God we need. As Jesus entered Jerusalem in Luke 19, the people ushering him in as King were doing just this. They were taking the beautiful and powerful outline of Jesus, coloring it with their own desires and cultural assumptions and arriving at a savior who was nothing like the saviour Jesus had been telling (and would soon be showing) them he was. Of course, the saviour he was (and is), though not what they wanted, was thankfully what we all needed.

Now, before we get too far along in condemning the people who were there for the triumphal entry, let's be sure to say that Jesus is difficult to understand. He is the right version of us, but we're so familiar with the wrong version that the right one seems backward, enigmatic and idealistic. So we must not be afraid of making the mistake of misunderstanding him. If we were, we might never get started or carry on, and those are the only mistakes we cannot make. However, as we journey along it should be our expectation that it is we who will change to understand more fully the person and teachings of Jesus. We should expect to feel some friction, to wrestle with ambiguity, to be frustrated, even to be angry, to have things in the story we cannot rationalize or classify yet. This is the tangible process of redemption, or moving our crooked line ever more toward the plumb line of reality, which is a process I am confident does not end in this world. In fact, I would suggest that should we ever find ourselves completely content with our understanding of Jesus, that's how we'll know we've completed our potato head god.

Easter Sunday is the culmination of the celebration of our rescue from slavery. Slavery to, as Paul would say, sin and death (Romans 8:2). As it turned out, the rescue plan was very unconventional. We shouldn't forget this. Just because there are now parts we may understand doesn't mean we understand the whole, and a sense of wonder is necessary to maintain our often rather difficult journey in Jesus toward our real selves. It's the sense of wonder that fuels our curiosity, our humility and our awe. This Easter season, let's begin with considering what kind of conquering king unapologetically rides into a city on a borrowed donkey.

So, Consider:

1. Do you agree that we all tend toward creating our own version of god? Why or why not?
2. What are some aspects of God you may currently be defining according to your own desires?
3. What are some elements of the "rescue plan" that may currently cause you friction, frustration and/or confusion?

Take Action:

This week, take at least ten minutes out of each of your mornings to read, pray and/or meditate on the matter of a conquering king riding into a city on a borrowed donkey. What does this say about that king?

May the Lord bless you and keep you! Ben Scott