EXUBERANT PRAISE WITHOUT REAL UNDERSTANDING

John 12:13 They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, “Hosanna!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Blessed is the king of Israel!”

Luke 19:39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!” “I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

Why They Were Praising Jesus

Luke 19:37 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:

John 12:17&18 Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the dead continued to spread the word. Many people, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to greet him.

The True Things They Said About Him

Matthew 21:9b “Hosanna to the Son of David!”

Luke 1:30-33 But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”

Matthew 21:11 The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.

Luke 13:33 “In any case, I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day – for surely no prophet can die outside Israel.”

Mark 11:10a “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!”

Luke 19:38a “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!”

John 12:13d “Blessed is the king of Israel!”

John 18:36 Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

THREE GROUPS OF PEOPLE

Those Convinced He Was the Messiah and Were Praising Him

Luke 19:37 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.

Luke 18:31 Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, “We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be delivered over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him and spit on him; they will flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again.” The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about.

Those Convinced He Was the Messiah but Were Afraid to Say He Was

John 12:42&43 Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue, for they loved human praise more than praise from God.

Those Determined to Not Believe

John 11:45-48 Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. “What are we accomplishing?” they asked. “Here is this man performing many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation.”

John12:9-11 Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and putting their faith in him.

The Only One Who Apparently Really Got It

John 12:1-3 Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany where Lazarus lived, who Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus’ honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus’ feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

John 12:4-6 But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, “Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year’s wages.” He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

John 12:7&8 “Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. “It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.”

Three Groups Today

Those who believe Jesus is the Messiah and like to praise Him, but don’t understand that following Jesus in our culture is going to increasingly mean persecution. The disciples forsook Him and fled because they were expecting a coronation and weren’t emotionally prepared for the cross.

2 Timothy 3:12 In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Those who believe Jesus is the Messiah but won’t even publicly praise Him because they are more concerned about what people think of them than what God thinks of them.

John 12:43 for they loved praise from men more than praise from God.

Those who are determined not to believe. The response of the chief priests to the raising of Lazarus and all the attention he as well as Jesus was getting was to make plans to kill both of them. Although 2 Thessalonians 2:10b refers to a different time, it accurately describes some people today, “They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.” 2 Peter chapter three is talking about our day when it speaks of those who are “willfully ignorant” because they don’t want to know.

Mary may have been the only one of Jesus’ disciples who was really aware that Jesus was going to die before He would reign. That is probably because she “sat at Jesus feet listening to what he said.” (Luke 12:39). She apparently not only knew He was going to die, but was willing to show her love for Him in an extravagant, costly way.

Things to Think About

Now as then, there are people determined to keep people from following Jesus. Their opposition will take many forms, but it is a determined mindset. They hated Jesus because He told them the truth, they will hate us if we tell them the truth.

Now as then, there are people who believe Jesus is the Messiah but are not going to be public about it for fear of what people will think or say or do.

Now as then, there are people who are willing to publicly identify as followers of Jesus and publicly praise Him, but expect the Christian message to triumph without cost. That is not what the Bible teaches and has never been historically true.

Now as then, there are some like Mary who understood the cross had to precede the crown, some who understand really following Jesus will mean voluntarily paying a price. David, the man after God’s own heart (Acts 13:22) refused to offer a sacrifice to God “that cost him nothing” (2 Samuel 24:24). Mary showed her devotion to Jesus by giving Him something very valuable, are we willing to follow Jesus even if it costs us?