Committed vs. Casual

Luke 19:36-38 / Matt. 27:21-22

4/10/22

A little boy was sick on Palm Sunday and stayed home from church with his mother. His father returned from church holding a palm branch. The little boy was curious and asked, "Why do you have that palm branch, dad?" "You see, when Jesus came into town, everyone waved Palm Branches to honor him, so we got Palm Branches today." The little boy replied, " Aw Shucks! The one Sunday I miss is the Sunday that Jesus shows up!"

This morning as many of you know today is Palm Sunday. The day, taken from the Gospels, where a whole city threw a parade for Jesus. As Jesus rode into the city, the people threw Palm branches in anticipation of his coming. Thus, we get our word Palm Sunday. This day marked a time of celebration where Jesus was the worshipped and praised.

This day is bittersweet for us though, because even as we read of the celebration, we know that Friday is coming; The cross is coming. We know that many in this same crowd will within a few short days exchange words of praise. to words of death. Shouting Hosanna, Hosanna, and then later shouting Crucify Him, Crucify Him.

This morning I want to focus our attention on two services both which focused upon Jesus, but with two different results. If you have your bibles this morning turn with me to two passages one from the Gospel of Matthew and the other from the gospel of Luke. Turn first to Matthew 27 beginning in verse 15. Place your finger there and then turn to Luke 19 beginning in verse 36.

The great evangelist, Billy Graham, has been quoted many times as saying that the greatest mission field in our country to today is in our local church, the people sitting already in our churches. That’s kind of true in the fact that a lot of pew-sitting people know what to say, how to say it, even how to act in it, but when the rubber truly meets that road, there is no personal relationship with Jesus Christ. No salvation, just empty words.

We see a perfect example of this in our two passages this morning.

* On Sunday Jesus rode into the city with the people shouting praises and praising God for all the wonderful miracles they had seen.
  + **Luke 19:36-38 - *36 As he rode along, the crowds spread out their garments on the road ahead of him. 37 When he reached the place where the road started down the Mount of Olives, all of his followers began to shout and sing as they walked along, praising God for all the wonderful miracles they had seen.***

***38 “Blessings on the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in highest heaven!”***

* On Friday they are shouting give us Barabbas, “Crucify Jesus Crucify Him.”
  + **Matt. 27:21-22 - *21 So the governor asked again, “Which of these two do you want me to release to you?” The crowd shouted back, “Barabbas!” 22 Pilate responded, “Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” They shouted back, “Crucify him!”***

Why the change?

Well, there are many possible reasons, but one simple reason is that their words did not match their heart. They possessed a casual faith and not a committed faith. They had religion but were missing the person Jesus…

I found a quote from a minister that said, “Casual obedience & lukewarm commitment weakens faith” So how can we have a committed faith? How can we be real and sincere, consistent in all that we do? Well, this morning I want to offer you some keys to just such a faith.

1. **Committed faith is not self-centered, it is Christ-Centered**

In America, we tend to say to God, “Hey God, here is my calendar, here is my agenda… Now I can squeeze you in here or here. Pulling God out or turning to God only when it is convenient or useful.

In our passage, the people praised Jesus as He passed by, but many of them praised him for two reasons.

* First, because of his miracles.
  + He had healed the sick, raised the dead…They praised Him because he was serving them
  + Second, because they saw in Jesus a way to be politically delivered from the Romans- To be set free from Rome as Israel was set free from Egypt.

Their praise was centered with an attitude of “Jesus what can you do for me?”

A few days later at the trial they saw a beaten and disfigured Jesus. A man who no longer looked like a deliverer or a conqueror, and as words were said about him, they bought into all the lies and quickly changed their position. For them, this faith they had in him was all about what can this guy do for me?

Casual Faith says what can Jesus do for me, Committed Faith say, what can I do for Jesus?

There is a legend about an ancient village in Spain. The villagers learned that the king would pay a visit! In a thousand years, a king had never come to that village. Excitement grew! "We must throw a big celebration," The villagers all agreed. But it was a poor village, and there weren’t many resources. Someone came up with a classic idea. Since many of the villagers made their own wines, the idea was for everyone in the village bring a large cup of their choice wine to the town square, “We’ll pour it into a large vat and offer it to the king for his pleasure! When the king draws wine to drink, it will be the very best he’s ever tasted!”

The day before the king’s arrival, hundreds of people lined up to make their offering to the honored guest. They climbed a small stairway and poured their gift through a small opening at the top. Finally, the vat was full! The King arrived, was escorted to the square, given a silver cup, and was told to draw some wine, which represented the best the villagers had. He placed the cup under the spigot, turned the handle, and then drank the wine, but it was nothing more than water. You see every villager reasoned, "I’ll withhold my best wine and substitute water, what with so many cups of wine in the vat, the king will never know the difference!" The problem was, everyone thought the same thing, and the king was greatly dishonored.

Today, Palm Sunday we should choose to honor our great King Jesus Christ by giving him our very best. Withholding nothing… Giving him our all for who He is, not just what He can do for us?

2. **A second key is that a committed faith is relationship driven.**

Many of those who gathered to throw their coats and palm branches onto the street and who shouted praises did so because it was the popular thing to do at the time. At that one brief moment it became trendy. Perhaps some began doing it with sincere motives, but others soon did it because others were doing it. Later at the trial, shouting crucify Him was the thing to do… In fact, for a brief moment, it was the trendy thing to do to make a mass murderer and criminal their hero when they shouted, we want Barabbas.

A committed faith isn’t “trendy”, It’s not based on someone else’s faith or their relationship to Christ. A committed faith comes only through a true, one on one, personal relationship with Jesus Christ and you!

* Some are serving God because their friends are
* Some go to church because the girl or guy they like is going

We must develop a relationship where every day is fresh and new as Jesus personally directs our steps. To have a committed faith we must maintain this personal relationship with Jesus daily with COMMITED prayer & personal Bible devotion. Group Bible studies, whether in small groups or on our Wednesday nights teaches us and should cause our faith and relationship with Christ to grow! This way we’re founded in His truth and not on what someone else is doing.

3. **Committed faith is not swayed or blocked by our personal trials and crises.**

At the parade it was trendy to offer praise. Everyone was doing it. But at the trial to speak out for Jesus was risk, possibly even life threatening.

Many of us come to Jesus expecting everything to go well. Maybe some slight difficulties, but not too much of it. So, when the bottom drops out for us, we often ask God Why? Many thinking it is not supposed to happen this way.

If our faith is based on our situations or circumstances, it will never be committed… It will always be casual. A committed faith is one that grows daily, through good and bad times! My faith is not based or committed due to circumstances that change like “trendy” issues, but on a stable and foundational relationship with Jesus Christ. In living this way, I know that all I am ever promised is that in the midst of both the good and bad; Jesus will never leave me nor forsake me. He will stand with us ALWAYS! He’s committed to me 100%, so I should be committed to Him 100%

A story is told of a little girl who while walking in a garden noticed a particularly beautiful flower. She admired its beauty and enjoyed its fragrance. “It’s so pretty!” she exclaimed. As she gazed on it, her eyes followed the stem down to the soil in which it grew. “This flower is too pretty to be planted in such dirt!” she cried. So, she pulled it up by its roots and ran to the water faucet to wash away the soil. It wasn’t long until the flower wilted and died.

When the gardener saw what the little girl had done, he exclaimed, “You have destroyed my finest plant!” “I’m sorry, but I didn’t like it in that dirt,” she said. The gardener replied, “I chose that spot and mixed the soil because I knew that only there could it grow to be a beautiful flower.”

Closing

Church, God has placed YOU exactly where we are today for a reason. Maybe we don’t understand why, but we must trust him. In the trusting we eventually see that He is using our pressures, trials, and difficulties to bring us to a new degree of spiritual growth & beauty. True contentment comes when we accept what God is doing and thank Him for it. This builds committed FAITH.

**This morning is your faith casual or committed?** As we approach this week where our Jesus suffered incredibly for us & where our sins, past, present, and future were the nails that hung him on that cross, doesn’t Jesus deserve a second look.

This morning don’t be like that little boy at the beginning of our message and miss Jesus this morning! He’s come this morning to meet you, comfort you, save you. Doesn’t he deserve total control of your life? Doesn’t he deserve a personal relationship with you? This morning will you consider 100%… and go against the crowd & choose to give it all to him?