Sermon Notes

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4/20/25

Everything All at Once
Easter 2025

1. We have come to Easter. We have come to the resurrected Lord, our King, at last. We've prepared our hearts for this day for the last 8 weeks.

2. Over the last year, our nation and our world have been through a lot. Politics, war, divisiveness, violence. This year needs Easter, and to be honest, every day needs some Easter in it, for it was on Easter that death was killed by God. On Easter, Jesus became Christus Rex, the King over all things, including life and death.

3. Let's look over the last week of Jesus' life. This is no random series of events but a planned, intentional week. There is gold to be mined here if we take time to read and think about these 8 days

4. Let's start with the Saturday before Pam Sunday, just the day before. Remember: the next day would be the day of palms and hosannas. What did Jesus do the day before? He went to the house of a leper (Matthew 26:6,7). Well, there is a jam-packed set of two verses!

5. Was Simon a leper at this point? Almost certainly not. It could be that Jesus had healed Simon. Jesus did that a lot, and there were many people named Simon, so there have been many guesses as to who this was…but that is beside the point. Jesus fellowships him. And then a woman comes in and opens up a jar of very expensive fragrance (a year's wage for a common laborer). Things like this were used as currency, rather like jewelry was and is. No central banks existed, so people had to invest in things that were usable for currency, and ointment like this was one option.

6. When he was criticized for allowing this" waste" of money, Jesus let the assembly know that something was coming: his own burial. He said this the day before the entry into Jerusalem. Let that sink in a bit.

7. On Sunday, we have the triumphant entry. I used to wonder what was all that special about entering Jerusalem on a donkey. I'd seen many movies about triumphal entries, but they were on horses or in chariots – or tanks! So, why a donkey? In Zechariah 9:9, we see that it was prophesied that he would do so, but that doesn't answer our question. The real answer? In ancient times, when a king rode into a city to take the throne, he was on a horse if he was at war with the city. He came on a donkey if he was coming in peace to take control peacefully. Jesus came in peace.

8. But that peace was not absolute – Jesus cleared the temple for the second time. Those who wanted to profit from those forced to buy after their long journey had changed a celebration into a burden. God did not intend for His people to be burdened by their faith and obedience. As Jesus said, his yoke is easy, and his burden is light. How dare we make it hard? It's supposed to be Good News.

9. Sometime in this time frame, he cursed a fig tree that wasn't bearing fruit. Shortly thereafter, the tree was found to be withered and dead. There are many lessons to be mined from this story, but we aren't sure exactly why it is included in this story. What we do know is that Jesus is running out of time, and so are the rest of us. Even the trees need to get on with the job. If they won't, then why exist at all? Harsh? Yes, I agree. But this was a harsh week full of harsh realities.

10. We don't know for sure what happened on Wednesday. That may have been the day he spoke to the people about their religious leaders and gave them parables (Matthew 24). It was on that day that he told his followers that he would be killed at Passover, just two days away. They really didn't get it because they weren't listening for that. It wasn't something they expected to hear.

11. On Thursday, Jesus celebrated Passover with his friends and instituted what we call the Eucharist or Lord's Supper. It is really a very sweet thing that Jesus did. It would help them deal with their grief and give them a way to remember him in good times, at a table with friends, rather than the chaos of the coming days.

12. Early, early in the morning, while his best friends slept, Jesus walked down the mountain to the mob and was arrested. He was shuttled from one court to another, shamefully treated every step of the way, and crucified. Later that same day, he was buried in the tomb. God turned off the lights and ripped the curtain in the temple to the Holy of Holies.

13. Before I say this last bit, I want you to remember what we learned last year in our study of the Book of Hebrews. Jesus is the express image of God, the exact likeness of the Father. So, what did God do the week before little humans killed him on the cross?

14. The week before Jesus died…he fellowshipped a leper, showed grace and love to a woman whom others were scorning, and rode to shouts of praise and adoration but didn't stop working. He cleared out those who were mistreating the faithful and taking advantage of their helplessness. He warned us that living for him would bring fruit of one kind or another. He spent time with his closest friends and showed them grace and kindness. He protected his friends by walking away from them, drawing the mob away as he was being arrested.

15. He stayed faithful and truthful during all the mistreatment he received. He died with words of forgiveness on his lips.

16. And then he arose. He showed us his scars and told us that the last enemy, death, was now defeated. We are immortals through faith in him. Easter is the day death died. Fear was banished. Hope was reborn and is reborn every time we take the bread and the cup and celebrate our Lord.