

“Hosanna!” Luke 19:28-40 (4/12/25)

Have you ever seen a movie more than twice? Or have you ever read a book more than two or three times? When we watch an impressive movie or read a good book, we sometimes watch and read it two or three times. If we watch a movie or read a book like this repeatedly, we may learn things we did not know the first time we watched and read it, and because we already know the ending, the characters' emotions and actions often feel different than when we first encountered them in a movie or a book story. A good movie or book gives us new impressions every time we watch and read it.

Today's Scripture is like a good movie or book to me, which gives me new insights every time I read it. When I first read today's Scripture, I imagined Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem in glory and the crowds praising Him. I did not know much when I first read it, so I got help from the Bible movie. In the movie, Jesus was smiling brightly as he watched people praising him, and people also praised Jesus with expressions and voices full of anticipation and hope. My first impression of today's Scripture was the feeling of joy and praise.

When I read today's Bible verse again after I had some knowledge of the Bible story, I had more feelings about the crowds who praised Jesus when Jesus

entered Jerusalem. This crowd looked so bad to me. I knew that they would later curse Jesus and shout for him to be crucified. I thought, 'How could people change their actions in such a short period of time?' It was not good to read people changing their behavior too easily depending on the situation.

Then, when I read today's Scripture again later, I thought about what Jesus must have felt when he was entering Jerusalem with people's praise. Now, I know the story's ending after just a few pages of the Bible, so I know that these people would later betray Jesus, but at the time, I understood that these people had no idea what would happen to Jesus. However, in today's Bible story, there was a person who also knew the ending of the story, and he was Jesus. Jesus knew what his mission was, what his destiny was, and what was going to happen to him. Jesus probably also knew that these people who were praising him now would later curse him. Can you imagine how Jesus was feeling when he was entering Jerusalem? I was able to learn the deep and warm heart of Jesus. Even though Jesus already knew everything, he did not stop those people who were praising him, but allowed them to praise him joyfully, and Jesus did not say, "Don't praise me like that now, because you will curse me later!" Also, because Jesus already knew his future, Jesus might try to say to God, "Father, I do not want to enter Jerusalem in this way. I do not want to see people betraying me. Please just skip this triumphal entry to Jerusalem." But

Jesus humbly accepted and followed God's plan to fulfil the Words of God that were written in the prophecy.

When I read today's Scripture again for today's sermon, I had a question. "Why did God put this story in the Gospel?" There are four Gospels in the Bible, and the Gospel of John is written from a different perspective than the other Gospels, so there are stories that are in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, but not in John. However, the story in today's scripture passage is uniquely recorded in all four Gospels. This means that all authors of the Gospel considered the triumphant entry of Jesus to be a very important story that should be written in their writing. Then, why is this story so important?

In today's Luke Scripture, Luke used the word blessed while the other Gospel authors used the word Hosanna. And only Luke wrote the conversation between some of the Pharisees and Jesus. So, through today's Scripture, we can learn the importance of the story of the triumphal entry in three ways.

Firstly, through this triumphal entry story, we can know that Jesus is humble. Luke wrote the Gospel for the Gentiles, so he did not quote the prophet's writing to explain why Jesus rode a colt to enter Jerusalem. In other Gospels, the authors said that Jesus rode a colt to fulfill God's word and quoted the prophet Zechariah's

writing.

While the Gentiles read the Gospel that Jesus rode a colt, they might learn how Jesus humbled himself. In the time of the Roman Empire, the Roman emperors rode specially selected and trained war horses or ceremonial horses. They often rode strong horses in parades or public appearances to display their authority. Especially, they rode white horses. The white horses were the symbol of divinity and power. So, in Gentile's idea, if Jesus were the king and Messiah, Jesus should ride a big and strong white horse. But Jesus rode a colt, which was the symbol of ordinary life and the working class. The Roman people valued the colt for labor, transportation, and carrying things. So, when the Gentiles read this story, they might think Jesus was their king and Messiah who was humble, and who was with them in their ordinary lifestyle.

Secondly, Jesus was the Messiah and the King. Luke did not use the Hebrew word in this story. Through other Gospels, we can know that people shouted Hosanna when Jesus entered Jerusalem. Hosanna is a Hebrew word. And it appears in Psalm 118:25. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, crowds used this word traditionally and historically.

As we know, the Hebrew word Hosanna means "Save us!" Traditionally, the

people of Israel used the word Hosanna during the Feast of the Tabernacle. On the day of the Tabernacle, they shouted Hosanna while marching around the altar to celebrate the salvation of God from the oppression of Egypt.

So, the crowds might know that Jesus riding a colt was the Messiah who could save them. A popular argument is that the crowds expected that Jesus would save them from the Roman Empire's oppression. But some scholars argue that the crowds might not shout the word Hosanna politically. So, when we focus on Jesus, not on the crowds, this story is important because it shows that Jesus is the Messiah, our Savior.

And through Luke's expression, people could know that Jesus was the King. Later, the Roman Empire persecuted Christians because of Jesus's Kingship. The Roman Empire allowed people to worship many gods and goddesses, but the Empire did not allow people to serve other emperors or kings. In special cases, the empire allowed some colonial kings, like King Herod, but the Roman Emperor should be greater than other kings. But Christians of the early church worshiped and served Jesus as the greatest King and the King of kings, so they were persecuted by the Roman Empire. So, the sentence, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" was very powerful words that explained Jesus was the King when Gentiles

read this story. So, this triumphal entry story shows both Messiah Jesus and King Jesus.

Thirdly, this story shows that Jesus listened to the people. There were many problems with people shouting Hosanna. This was why the Pharisees asked Jesus to stop the people from shouting Hosanna, and “blessed is the king.” The Pharisees might be concerned about the trouble that would arise if the crowd called Jesus king. Or maybe they did not want to admit that Jesus was the Messiah. Whatever the reason, Jesus did not listen to the Pharisees, who were the spiritual leaders at the time, and let the crowds shout, “Hosanna.” Jesus knew better than anyone that the crowds would soon curse him. In my personal opinion, I think the reason Jesus left them to shout is because he wanted to embrace and emphasize with the expectations of the people who were longing for the Messiah and the hearts of people who wanted to be free from Roman oppression as soon as possible, rather than the difficulties that would come to himself, the political problems that would arise, or the fight for authority. Jesus was listening to the people who were looking forward to seeing the Messiah.

Today is Palm Sunday. We wave palm trees for Jesus' triumphal entrance. However, the things that will happen to Jesus in the future after this triumphal

entrance were too painful and miserable to be called the Messiah and the King's victorious. Jesus sacrificed himself to show humility, to be our Messiah and King, and to listen to our voices. And Jesus achieved true victory over the power of sin and death. I hope this victorious Jesus be with us today and during the Holy Week that begins this week. Through this Palm Sunday and Holy Week, I hope we can also experience God's victory in our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.