

# Attachments

Matthew 27:15-26 ; Luke 19:36-44 NIV

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?"

His father, wanting to be as simple as he could, explained: "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!"

For the message this morning, I chose two events from the last week of Jesus life. These events are about five days apart. In this short period of time, the crowds go from shouting, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" to "Crucify him!"

What could cause such a change in attitude? Why would some who waved and laid palm branches in celebration of Jesus' arrival so quickly choose the release of a known criminal over the King of kings?

Of the two events, one is recorded in Matthew 27 and the other in Luke 19. We will begin in Luke with the parade and see

if we can get a hint to what changed the attitude of the people.

<sup>36</sup> **As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.**

<sup>37</sup> **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 19:36-37)**

I read that Billy Graham, on more than one occasion, is credited with saying that America's greatest mission field is her local churches—those who attend and the regular members.

Could this be true? Those who see God do great things on a regular basis, who shout praises to his name, those who know what to say, how to say it, even how to act in it, but when the rubber truly meets that road; or from the text above, should I say, where the hooves meet the cloaks, there is no personal relationship with Jesus Christ; just shouts filled with empty words.

Tell me it isn't true. But it seems that this is what is happening as Jesus rides toward Jerusalem. In such a short time, the shouts would turn from praise to

crucify! How could this happen after all the miracles they had seen?

Preacher Graham may be right. Those filling our churches today can't be too quick with pointing fingers at those along the road watching Jesus pass on his way to town. We all know that many in the church have only a casual relationship with Jesus. They have religion, but not committed faith.

The casual Christian can shout praise the Lord one minute and crucify him the next. The goal is to be real, sincere, and consistent in all that we do; in who we are.

So, what is the answer? How does the how to book say that we take up our cross daily?

Consider our calendar on our refrigerator, or where ever you have yours. When we pencil in events, do we say something like: 'okay, Lord. I can fit you in here; I have a little time there. Wow! This week is pretty full. I'll have to catch up with you next week.'

Busy, busy, busy. Most of it is much to do about nothing, though, isn't it? Don't mess with me. You're talking to a pro, here. I can waste time with the best of you.

In our passage in Luke, the people praised Jesus as He passed by, but many of them praised him for shallow self-centered reasons.

First: because of his miracles. He had healed the sick, raised the dead, and fed the living... 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 their ancestors Israel was set free from Egypt. Their praise was tempered with the attitude of: 'Jesus, what can you do for me?'

Understandably, then, a few days later at the trial when they saw a beaten and disfigured Jesus; a man who no longer looked like a deliverer or a conqueror, and as words were passed through the crowd about him, they bought into all the lies hook, line and sinker and quickly changed their position from praise to crucify. For them it was all about Me, Me, Me.

A casual faith is a self-centered faith; a committed faith is a Christ-centered faith. We hear this so much in the church, it's like we really don't even hear it when it is said anymore. It is so obvious; and yet so easily missed, so easily undone.

A committed faith is not self-centered, and has to be 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 moment it became 'trendy.' Some may have been doing it with sincere motives, but others who joined in 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.

"Let's make a mass murderer and criminal our hero. At least he is a man of action. He may actually try to free us from Rome. It doesn't look like Jesus is going to do much."

They didn't know; as was said from the cross, they didn't know what they were doing. But, we have the advantage of the results. We are most definitely without excuse. We have the history and the eye-witness accounts.

Apparently, some of those in the crowd that shouted to crucify Jesus, may have been part of the crowd that heard the Good News in the streets-in Acts, chapter two, and became the first church members. Grace at its finest.

Among the group of hand picked followers, one became known as Thomas, the Doubter. He is the one that said, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." (John 20:25) When Jesus appeared to him and gave him opportunity

to see and touch the scars, Thomas believed.

And, along with the other hand picked disciples, Thomas did what he was asked to do-what Jesus trained him and empowered him to do-to go and make disciples.

After Pentecost, we learn from the writer, Eusebius, that Thomas preached in Osroene, which lay north of Palestine in what would now be known as eastern Turkey, and then from there he went to Armenia.

Thomas believed, made his commitment, and followed Jesus' instruction. Allow me to illustrate with a story about an attachment.

Let's say that you are a freelance inventor and have discovered the secret to artificial intelligence and made an attachment for a fork that so enhanced the utensil that it became the most versatile tool in the kitchen.

Not being a greedy person, you began selling the attachment on 'But Wait!' TV for 19.95. There was no need for the buyer to hear 'you also get this and this' because nothing else was needed. This attachment actually did all that was claimed. The attachment for the fork was simply amazing.

One day, after selling a blue-million of these attachments, you went to the utensil drawer and found that the attachment was

on a spoon. “What’s going on? Has the artificial intelligence malfunctioned?” And as hard as you tried, you couldn’t get the attachment to go back to the fork.

Some time later, it attached itself to a knife with the same attitude; it refused to re-attach to the fork and do what it was designed to do. (You began receiving letters, by the way.)

One day, you opened the drawer to find the attachment in the corner, un-attached to any utensil, sighing and depressed, and slightly disfigured.

You ask, “Why don’t you go attach yourself to the fork and do what I designed you to do?”

I wonder if God asks a question similar to that as he watches his creation and especially those who claim to be people of the cross.

We humans are designed to attach to God in a personal relationship, and we will mis-function, mal-function, and dis-function if we attach to anything else.

A committed faith is not self-centered; a committed faith is relationship driven; and, a committed faith is not swayed or blocked by personal trials or crises.

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 it could grow to be a beautiful flower.”

You can read about the life of Thomas and the other Apostles. Some of the history may be exaggerated or tradition. You can read of other disciples in books like Foxe’s Book of Martyrs or publications like The Voice of the Martyrs.

Some of the stories will make you ask questions like-how could one intelligent being designed in the image of God do something like that to a fellow human being?

God has placed us exactly where he wants us. We must trust that he knows what he is doing. In the trusting, we eventually see that He is using our pressures, trials, and difficulties to bring us to a new degree of spiritual maturity.

True contentment comes when we accept what God is doing and thank Him for it.

(Review)

A committed faith is not self-centered, but Christ-centered. Make sure you make time for Jesus every day.

A committed faith is relationship driven. You will mis-function, mal-function, and dis-function if you attach to anything else.

A committed faith is not swayed or blocked by personal trials or crises.

The old ‘Bloom where you are planted.’ A casual relationship with Jesus will not only have you playing in the dirt where you are planted, but becoming the dirt you are planted in.

I’ll close this message on a personal note: I remember what is called the fish-bowl existence that many experience while attending Bible College. I also remember leaving Bible College and returning to the construction work force; how shocking it was to hear the language and the off-color jokes once again. I turned a deaf ear for awhile, but just as the callouses grew back on my hands from the construction work, eventually the callouses returned to my heart as I not only heard the jokes, but began joining in, and I found myself detached from the one

I had once committed and attached myself  
to.

We need that committed faith to  
remain attached to who and what we were  
designed for, and the wisdom to bloom in  
the dirt where we are planted, without  
becoming the dirt.