

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF MANCHESTER

PALM SUNDAY

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED



PASTOR DAVID SAYLOR - PALM SUNDAY - MARCH 31, 2024

Luke 19:36-44

[It's Palm Sunday...here you are...Alistair Begg
"Plain Things are the Main Things"]

I'm sure you have, but let me ask, have you ever just gone on a "Sunday afternoon drive?"

Every once in a while Nina and I will jump in the car and take off and we have no particular destination in mind. We just start driving simply to enjoy each other's company and to enjoy the beautiful scenery of the countryside. It's just a leisurely drive and we sometimes stop for an ice cream cone on the way (actually more like ALWAYS!).

Again, it's just driving with no particular destination in mind.

Let's apply this to our lives. Do we find we are living our lives in that manner; with no destination in mind or view? We're just living life. Surviving?

What do you say when someone asks you, "What's new?" Do you find yourself saying, "Nothing much. Same old. Same old." Have we allowed life to become so mundane, so predictable that we are just merely existing?

If so, I'd like you to see Palm Sunday from a whole new perspective - as walking the road of life with Christ.

Lk. 19:28-30 *And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹ When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰ saying, "Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here.*

This was not the setup for a *Sunday Afternoon Drive*. This set up the stage for one of the most important, exciting "rides" that ever occurred!

And it can lead to the most exciting, the most joyful experience you will ever have; and that on a daily basis. It all depends on which road WE are traveling and the destination we have in view.

What roads did you use to get here today? First

Baptist Church is located on Hillstown Road but there are a number of roads you travelled to get here. (metaphorically) All of us travel different roads or paths every day of our lives. We take different *career routes*, different *educational paths*. We do not live in a cookie cutter world all trudging along in a mindless line.

The Bible speaks spiritually about travelling along the road of life.

On what we call Palm Sunday, Jesus was on a road marking His last trip to Jerusalem. It marks the day that Jesus made His triumphant entry, going entirely public as the long-expected Messiah and the King of Kings. It also marked the beginning of the final week of His earthly life for this road would soon lead Him to a cross. He went there to die for our sins.

Jesus calls us to follow Him on the Road to Jerusalem. Following His leadership and walking down His road leads us to life.

There are basically only TWO ROADS you can travel in life; the road that leads *away from God*, and the road that leads *to Him*. Which road are you on?

Matthew 7:13-14 ¹³ *"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴ For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.*

Jesus said that there are two roads... Let's talk about those two roads a bit – and especially the "road less travelled."

The Road Not Taken

BY ROBERT FROST

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
**Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.**

The Wide Road that leads to Destruction

We travel the **narrow road**, the road *less-traveled* when we choose to follow Jesus in our life. That road leads to life. (later)

Or, we can travel on the **broad/wide road** which Jesus very clearly says "*leads to destruction.*"

It's "Wide or broad" because it's spacious and seems easier. This would be a **road of tolerance and permissiveness**. No curbs, no boundaries. Travelers on this road follow their own inclinations. They do their own thing, regardless of what their Creator says. "*Figure out your own way. If it's right to you, it's all right!*"

If you think about it, can that possibly be "God's way" for us? "*Just do whatever you want, figure it out, do your own thing and that's fine with Me.*"

It doesn't take a Bible in hand to realize that any God that make that kind of plan is not much of a God.

Jesus also said *many enter through it*. It's also **broad** because it's the **common choice**. Multitudes are streaming down this road - and I think we can see that he's right. They seem to be either unconcerned or careless about the spiritual realities. That might include you...

But remember, it *leads to destruction*.....

The Jesus Road

So let's get back to that other road, the **narrow road**. *The Jesus Road*. Jesus wants you to travel His road. *¹⁴But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."*

It's **Narrow**. That doesn't mean that Jesus wants only a few to go there. It means that **it has parameters**. This is not a "*do your own thing, figure it out yourself road.*" Despite what the world proclaims, there is "**A path**" to God, and that path is through Jesus. *⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6*

The only way to heaven, to life, is to follow the path of Jesus, and He was clearly on the path to the Cross to earn our forgiveness and salvation. The only way to God is through Him and through the salvation He secured.

And it's not, contrary to some people's opinion, because God is "narrow-minded" or "narrow-thinking" – it's because God busted thru the darkness of sin and the certain judgment it brings and opened a pathway, a road back to Him that is for everyone!

This was also a **road of FULFILLMENT**.

Matt 21:4-5 *4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying,*

*5 "Say to the daughter of Zion,
'Behold, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'"*

Refers to the prophet Zechariah and the prophet Isaiah. Over 500 years previous they foretold that the Messiah would come into Jerusalem riding on a donkey.

This wasn't luck or chance, but all a part of fulfilling the divine plan of Almighty God. In fact **there are well over 200 prophecies in Old Testament fulfilled in Christ**. Jesus does not come into this world in kind of a vacuum, He is the Messiah foretold of in the Old Testament because God planned this from the beginning.

In fact, *on the same day*, Luke 19:45-46 tells it – another prophecy foretold of him appearing suddenly and forcefully and zealously cleaning house at the temple courts.

In fact, in the final 24 hours leading up to his atoning death for the sins of everyone who will ever turn to Him - **over 30 prophecies were perfectly fulfilled** – all recorded 500 years or more prior to his birth! Many of the kind you can't script -- you don't DO....they are done to you.

Here's the list. I'll read some!

1. **He will be betrayed by a friend** (Psalm 41:9; Matthew 26:49).
2. **The price of His betrayal will be thirty pieces of silver** (Zechariah 11:12; Matthew 26:15).
3. His betrayal money will be cast to the floor of my temple (Zechariah 11:13; Matthew 27:5).
4. His betrayal money will be used to buy the potter's field (Zechariah 11:13; Matthew 27:7).
5. **He will be forsaken and deserted by His disciples** (Zechariah 13:7;
6. He will be accused by false witnesses (Psalm 35:11; Matthew 26:59-60).
7. **He will be silent before His accusers** (Isaiah 53:7; Matthew 27:12).
8. He will be wounded and bruised (Isaiah 53:5; Matthew 27:26).
9. He will be hated without a cause (Psalm 69:4; John 15:25).
10. He will be stuck and spit on (Isaiah 50:6; Matthew 26:67).

11. He will be **mocked, ridiculed, and rejected** (Isaiah 53:3; Matthew 27:27-31; and John 7:5,48).
12. He will collapse from weakness (Psalm 109:24-25; Luke 23:26).
13. He will be taunted with specific words (Psalm 22:6-8; Matthew 27:39-43).
14. People will shake their heads at Him (Psalm 109:25; Matthew 27:39).
15. People will stare at Him (Psalm 22:17; Luke 23:35).
16. He will be **executed among sinners** (Isaiah 53:12; Matthew 27:38).
17. His **hands and feet will be pierced** (Psalm 22:16; Luke 23:33).
18. He will pray for His persecutors (Isaiah 53:12; Luke 23:34).
19. His friends and family will stand afar off and watch (Psalm 38:11; Luke 23:49).
20. His garments will be divided and won by the casting of lots (Psalm 22:18; John 19:23-24).
21. He will thirst (Psalm 69:21; John 19:28).
22. He will be given gall and vinegar (Psalm 69:21; Matthew 27:34).
23. He will commit Himself to God (Psalm 31:5; Luke 23:46).
24. His **bones will be left unbroken** (Psalm 34:20; John 19:33).
25. His heart will rupture (Psalm 22:14; John 19:34).
26. His side will be pierced (Zechariah 12:10; John 19:34).
27. **Darkness will come over the land at midday** (Amos 8:9; Matthew 27:45).
28. He will be buried in a rich man's tomb (Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 27:57-60).
29. **As a final testimony, on the third day after His death, He will be raised from the dead!** (Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:31),
30. He will ascend to heaven (Psalm 68:18; Acts 1:9), and
31. He will be seated at the right hand of God in full majesty and authority (Psalm 110:1; Hebrews 1:3)

All within 24 hours! That's because of God's plan. God's plan for you and me!

The whole life of Christ was the divine plan of God the Father to redeem us, to save us from our sins. All that Jesus went through was for the fulfillment of the salvation of you and me. Jesus knew that the road into Jerusalem *for Him* would lead to His death on the cross, AND His death that would bring eternal life with God in heaven *for you and me*.

So the question to each of us is this: are we on the Right Road? Are you following the right leader?

If you are on the wrong road, following the wrong leader, Jesus says it's *a road that leads to destruction*. Loss of life, hope, meaning. An aimless road.

If so, God is placing glaring road signs in your path, with flares and flashing lights to warn you of the danger because you are following a path to destruction.

- He's doing it with His Word and He's doing it with Palm Sunday.
- He's doing it with the testimony of people who have testified outwardly to the reality that Jesus Christ has made and is making a difference in their lives – like the baptism of this young man who met Jesus Christ on the Road Less Travelled.

He's pointing you to the Cross of Christ, to the right direction. Don't miss this. Don't drive by unconcerned.

CONCLUSION

This is Palm Sunday and the message is not hidden or new – but it is essential. (It's Plain and it's Main) God loves us so much that there are countless moments and ways He tries to reach us during our lifetimes. He's passionate about it. He wants us to know that there is a Savior; that our sins, which are real, and a real roadblock to a holy God, can be forgiven because His Son died on the Cross to take away our sins through His cleansing blood.

If I Were God

Some people think, *"I don't like this plan of God. Calling everybody a sinner. Saying that Jesus is the only way. It's so narrow and exclusive. If I were God I would do it differently."* Really! How? And given the nature of God and humanity, how would it be better or more fair?

A person Nina and I met at a conference was thinking about that issue wrote a poem, and I'd like to read it to you. It may not be great poetry, but it makes a point...(Warren Sumrall)

If I were God I would have a plan,
Equally fair to every man.

One that would Hold wide the door,
to infinite grace forevermore.
It would not matter how old you were,
Or whether you were him or her.

Your education or IQ,
Could neither help or hinder you.
Rich or poor yellow, black or white.

Light of day or dark of night.

Anyone could come and ask of me.
Might I gain eternity?
Then kindly I to them would say.
Agree with me you are not OK.

Trust in me my name confess,
Come as you are I'll do the rest.
With a plan so fair no one should choose,
To snub my offer this chance refuse.

The brilliance of this better way,
Would mean no more man could say.
If I were God I would have a plan.
Equally fair to every man

That was His conclusion.

The story of Christianity is simple, but it cannot be found anywhere else. It's not exclusive, it's universal – like gravity. It applies to everyone because it's the way the universe works (you don't break the law of gravity- it breaks you).

It tells us there is a just and holy God who loves each and every person. It tells us that our unholiness must be taken out of the way, and to do that HE HIMSELF came and bore our sin on the cross. His road was the *road to the cross* which only He alone could do.

It's different than any other religion. Unlike them, it's not a system by which we *do something* or *say something*, that makes us acceptable to God. ***It's how God made us acceptable to Him.***

God has made a plan of redemption that is for everyone. He loves every person and he opens the door for all to come.

Then he calls us to come. Come to Jesus. Follow Him down that Narrow Road that leads to His Cross. There isn't any comfortable middle ground - you cannot be neutral with regard to Jesus. Come to the cross. Can't you hear Him calling? He's calling today.

A woman was driving home one night and the weather was really nasty. Rain was coming down in buckets and visibility was almost zero, barely able to see the taillights in front of her. She knew the road was narrow, windy and dangerous. The car in front seemed to be going in the right direction, so she stuck with it. (pre-2000, before GPS)

All of a sudden the car in front of her came to a stop. She began to wonder what had happened; perhaps it had hit a deer or something like that? She began to feel uncomfortable; being stopped in the middle of the road can be treacherous.

Much to her alarm the car in front of her turned off its lights. Her inner alarms began glaring as a

man stepped out of the car in the darkness and rain and came toward her and began knocking on her window.

She slightly cracked the window open and asked the man "what wrong?" and what the problem was? The man replied saying that that was the question he was going to ask her. She reminded him that she wasn't the one who had stopped in the middle of the road and then turned off his car lights.

The man's reply was "Lady, we're not in the middle of the road -- but we're in MY driveway!"

Obviously, this woman had chosen to follow the *wrong leader* and *wrong road*. This leader could not take her to where she wanted to go and now she was really lost.

How about you? Which road are you on? Christianity is about *walking the Road to Jerusalem* with Jesus, or staying on *the wide road of your own making* until it leads to a dead stop in final destruction.

If your life resembles a Sunday drive, or maybe a roller-coaster ride, you can establish stability in a daily walk with Jesus. But you must be on His highway.

What do I do? Warren in his poem said it. "*Come as you are. I'll do the rest.*"

- Come to Christ as you are – a sinner who needs forgiveness, putting your faith in Jesus Christ.
- We do what the people along the road did on that Palm Sunday- they recognized Jesus as Messiah and King. As Savior and Lord. (at least some did)
- And he will apply His saving work to you when He died on the cross – and save you and forgive you and make you whole.

Will you do that today?

But you must trust Him and Him alone.

Dear Jesus. I know I am a Sinner. I know you are the Savior. Right now I turn from my sin and I turn to follow you in faith. Forgive me and make me Yours. Be my Savior and my Lord forever. Amen.