

## SERMON

Luke 19:28-40

Humility and Greatness United in Jesus

Nunawading and Waverley, 10-4-22

Dear friends in Christ,

How does humility and sacrifice exist alongside power and glory? No one can bring these together in a successful way except God himself and his Son, our Lord Jesus, which we see happening when Jesus rode to Jerusalem, gently on a donkey.

When I was young, I was very shy and yet I wanted to be recognised. Do you sometimes find that in yourself that you want to both hold back and step forward? I wanted people to see what I could do and yet when they gave me attention, I felt I needed to shrink into my shell. Well, we have to grow up eventually and we learn how to accept compliments and yet not big note ourselves. The tension is still there, however. You can be too much in the back ground but also misuse our positions of authority.

Jesus managed it. He accepted the shouts of Hosanna from the crowd on the day he rode towards Jerusalem. The people sang, **blessed is he who comes, the king, in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven and glory in the highest.** He accepted that praise and worship from the people. He was the **King**, coming in the name of the Lord, the exact representation of God in human likeness. How could he shut them up? **Even the stones lying on the ground** would be forced to sing to him in music and praise. You notice that Jesus did not give a little acceptance speech: "I could not have done this without my Mum and the support of my disciples." Nothing like this at all. He was the Saviour and the Messiah, the Lord of every creature on earth and governor over stars and galaxies.

It is hard to understand that next to this power and glory was Jesus' deep humility. How often he told those he healed, having performed a great feat of power to miraculously end blindness or walk on water or be transfigured in light, **do not tell anyone what you have seen.** This is a humility beyond our understanding; a humility that is from another world. The truth is, we want to be seen and to stand out from the great mass of ordinary people.

It was Jesus' right to ask for an **unridden colt** and expect to have its first use since he was the donkey's Lord and its creator. That the crowds **cut down branches, some putting their cloaks on the ground to be ridden on and all of them shouting words of praise** and glorifying him for a name that is above all other names only seems right. Jesus had every right to have a seamless robe, which was a gift, to take a room in Peter's home in Capernaum, to ask for an upper room to hold his last supper and finally to be offered a new tomb, freshly carved from the hillside not far from Golgotha. He can also demand your life and mine, claiming it as his own for as our brother Paul said, **you have been bought with a price so honour God with your bodies.** Many Christians dishonour Christ by saying they are too busy doing other things than worship him. What will you do when Christ raises you from the dead and makes you stand in his glorious presence, reborn in his kingdom and transformed into his likeness? It won't be: "Sorry Lord, I've got something on at the moment. Can we make it another time?" Better to maintain the habit of worshipping him.

Jesus never misused power. What was his secret? How did he do it? It was simple in the end but very hard to do: he gave up his power, his glory and the kingdom that belonged to him to serve you and me. He jumped into the fight for our souls so that we would no longer give them to greed, to our selfishness, to our lust for luxury, advancement, position and status. His awful crucifixion was the climax of a life of giving away his status and serving us. He made us the centre after giving himself completely to the will of his Father. Throughout his ministry he could combine greatness and humility. Thinking of two more examples: he taught and acted with authority claiming the right to forgive sins. There was mercy and compassion in him yet power to free people from the mess they had made of things and the shame they felt. Think about how he rose from the dead, smashing suffering, crushing mortality and yet say to Mary Magdalen, **tell the others I am ascending to my Father and to your Father, to your God and to my God.** He could unite humility and glory by giving himself to the word. Let us lift up our voices to him and show him the honour he deserves.