

The Divided Heart, Palm Sunday

Jimmy Harris April 9, 2017

Introduction

It's Palm Sunday today — Palm Sunday is the time that Jesus came into Jerusalem during the time of the Passover, and all the people hailed him as a King — waving palm branches in the air.

What is the Passover? The Passover is a celebration — it's a feast to celebrate Israel being set free from slavery — its about commemorating Israel's Exodus out of Egypt.

Why is it called "Pass-over" The Israelites had become slaves in Egypt. Moses was called out into the wilderness to lead the people out of Egypt. But, Pharaoh would not let all the slaves leave. God sent ten plagues to the Egyptians. For the final plague (the Passover), God told the Israelites to take a perfect lamb, kill it, eat it, put the blood on the doors of their houses — if the blood of the perfect lamb was on the door — then the Death Angel would Pass Over their home, while killing the first born in the houses of Egypt. Thus the time of the Passover was a celebration — people would bring their sacrifices to Jerusalem, and people would come from all over to the Temple to worship, feast, and make sacrifices.

The Passover happens three times in the Gospel of John in Chapters 2, 6, and 12. We learn some amazing things from Jesus, in how he dealt with our divided hearts.

1st Passover

John 2 — Review

- Jesus had just done his first miracle — water to wine — everybody loved this
- Jesus turned over the tables in the synagogue
- Money changers — people weren't so sure about this
- What authority do you do this?
- Destroy the temple — and in three days I will raise it up again

- **John 2:23-25**

Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. ²⁴ But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all *men*, ²⁵ and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

Why didn't Jesus entrust himself to men? *Because he knew what was in a man.*

What is in a man? A divided heart.

- **Hosea 10:1-2**

Their heart is divided; Now they are held guilty. He will break down their altars; He will ruin their *sacred* pillars.

- **1 Kings 18:21**

“And Elijah came to all the people, and said, “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” But the people answered him not a word.

- **Isaiah 29:13**

“Therefore the Lord said: “Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me, And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men”

- **Matthew 6:24**

No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

- **James 1:5-7**

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

- **Romans 7:18-24**

I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Do you know what is going on in your heart?

We need to recognize our own potential to have a divided heart.

- Do you know what is going on in your heart?
 - I know that I am a mess. I know that often my motives are not just wrong — they are evil. I know without a doubt that apart from Jesus my life would be nothing, but because of him — in spite of me — he is faithful.
 - You might think that other people have it all together, but trust me — they don't.
- We all have divided hearts at times — wishy-washy, double minded, lukewarm, undedicated — parts of hearts that we need to take a long look at.

Application — If you want to live a life wholehearted towards God, you must recognize your own tendency to be divided

- Trust that you have blind spots, that there are areas of your life that are compromised. (The problem is that when we are double-minded, we often don't realize it.)

Passover #2

John 6

- Feeds 5000
- Followers want to forcibly make him King
- Jesus walks on the water
- Crowds follow him across the lake
- They want more bread — like Moses gave them in the wilderness
- Jesus offers himself — but they don't understand
- **John 6:66 (The 666 verse!)**
From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.

We need to learn to trust him — even when it doesn't make sense.

In 1873 Horatio Spafford wrote one of my favorite hymns. He had just lost his fortune and his son in the Chicago fire. He sent his wife and three daughters ahead of him to cross the Atlantic Ocean. On the way the vessel sank. Spafford received a telegraph from his wife that said "saved, alone." Spafford had lost his fortune, his son, and his three daughters. On the boat across the Atlantic to reach his wife, he wrote the song — "It is well with my soul."

When peace like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
Even so, it is well with my soul.

Refrain:

It is well, (it is well),
With my soul, (with my soul)
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

Application — We need to learn to trust him — even when it doesn't make sense.

- Especially when things **don't make sense**
- When **things are confusing**, when life is upside down, where do you turn?

- When God **leads you into a difficult season**
- When **He is silent** when you think He should speak
- When He says **what you don't want to hear...**
- When **things don't make sense**, **Jesus is asking you the same question** — *Are you going to leave me too?*
- When nothing makes sense. **Don't become divided by confusion** — press in even more
- **Because there is a deep abiding well to draw from — a peace that comes when we trust Him in the most confusing times in our lives.**

Passover #3

John 12

- Triumphal Entry on a donkey
 - Crowds waving palm branches (historical significance)
 - Hosanna — which means “save now”
 - Their hopes and ambitions are for man-centered nationalism
 - Five days later? Yelling “crucify him!”
- **John 12:42-43**
⁴² Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Application — Beware of the praises of men!

- Get yourself some enemies! Jesus warned that if everyone loves you — it's a bad sign!
- Focus was on the external problem, but Jesus was focused on the cross
- They were intent on Jesus being who they wanted him to be, a warrior king, but Jesus was intent on the cross
- The people loved the praises of men, more than the praises of God

Review the three Passovers

- 1) **Recognize your own potential to have a divided heart.**
- 2) **Trust Him even when it doesn't make sense.**
- 3) **Beware of the praises of men!**

In 1916, the great preacher Charles Spurgeon gave an example from a sermon he wrote called “The Divided Heart” where he described a ship, their treasures, and a storm.¹

- On a Sunny day — we don’t cling to anything — we don’t even know where our treasures are on the boat.
- When the storm comes — we might go and find our gold and belongings. Our hearts are divided between our things and our survival.
- When the boat begins to sink — we leave all else on the floor of the sinking ship and we cling to the mast, and care for nothing but for the saving of our lives.

Jesus came into Jerusalem on a sunny day, the palm branches intended to be emblems of victory over Rome

- Jesus knew not to trust the praises of men — *tear down this temple and I will raise it up again in 3 days!*
- Jesus said *eat my flesh and drink my blood* — and many did not understand
- When the crowds cheered on Palm Sunday — when the people threw their clothes down on the ground — His heart was not divided — Jesus was focused on the cross! He did not live for the praises of men — He gave his life willingly for my sin, while I was still a sinner!

Even though it may seem like a sunny day — there is a storm — and it’s not out there somewhere — it’s in here — my sin — my divided heart needs The Savior. The ship is sinking and nothing else matters. I don’t cling to anything else but to Him.

We must cling to Jesus.

- **Cling to Jesus** — let go of everything that divides your heart from Him — don’t entrust yourself to anyone but Him!
- **Cling to Jesus** — get ready for a time when things just don’t make sense — so we can truly say “It is well with my soul” in our darkest hour

Cling to Jesus — no matter what other people do or say. Even if you have to go alone.

Closing Prayer

Teach us Your ways, O Lord;
We long to walk in Your truth; Unite our hearts to fear Your name.
We will praise You, Lord, with all our hearts,
We will glorify Your name forevermore.
For great is your mercy toward us
We cling to you, and to you alone. You will deliver our divided hearts from the depths
Lord, set our feet on firm ground so we can say even in the darkest hour
It is well with my soul.

¹ Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Complete Works of C.H. Spurgeon, Volume 5* (Delmarva Publications, Inc., 2015)

Discussion Questions

- 1.** Why didn't Jesus entrust himself to men?
 - 2.** What is a divided heart?
 - 3.** Have you personally experienced a divided heart? About what?
 - 4.** Is there a time in your life when you have trusted Jesus "no matter what."
 - 5.** What was the outcome of that situation?
 - 6.** When should you beware of the praises of men? Have you experienced that?
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Gethsemane / The Pressing Place

Friday, April 14th

7:00 pm

Sanctuary