

Jesus Parade Luke 19:28-48

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Back in 2019, my wife was on a three-ish week work trip that spanned the first half of September. Not that I don't want to hang with the boys all the time, every day, but I was looking for things to do and I decided that that was a great year to try out the Fire Muster Parade.

Now, as I took in the first 15 minutes of the parade, I think I had a thought that a lot of people have when they attend, "Man, I should have brought ear plugs." If you don't know, the Fire Muster is a parade of fire engines with really big horns. It is loud.

Once I was able to get over the volume, my thoughts drifted to a set of questions that I often think of when I go to a parade. Who is this parade for? Where is this going? And what's the goal?

Today, on this Palm Sunday, we are gathered around a parade of sorts. A Jesus parade, if you will, where the onlookers and participants are wondering those same questions. Who is this parade for? Where is this going? And what's the goal? Three questions that, really, we should be asking of our Jesus parade—our church, our small groups, our own life of discipleship. Who is this for? Where is it going? And what is the goal?

Who is this for? Where's this going? What's the goal? Let's go to the text – Luke 19:28-48:

²⁸ After he had said this, Jesus went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹ When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰ saying, "Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it.'" ³² So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. ³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" ³⁴ They said, "The Lord needs it." ³⁵ Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the

colt, they set Jesus on it. ³⁶ As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. ³⁷ As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, ³⁸ saying, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!"

³⁹ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." ⁴⁰ He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

⁴¹ As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴² saying, "If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. ⁴⁴ They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God."

⁴⁵ Then he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling things there; ⁴⁶ and he said, "It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer'; but you have made it a den of robbers."

⁴⁷ Every day he was teaching in the temple. The chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people kept looking for a way to kill him; ⁴⁸ but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were spellbound by what they heard.

The word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

Who is this for?

Have you ever walked into church and wondered about the story of the person sitting next to you? I guess, do you remember when people used to sit next to you? Haha I'll bet you did. I always do. I wonder if they believe the same things. I wonder if they have a different story than me. I wonder if they believe at all. Long story short, you would be surprised at all of the different people in here on any given Sunday. And that is good news.

The short list of characters in these short paragraphs isn't short at all. It's actually impressive and it tells us a lot about how we should think about our community

today. Let's take a look at some of them:

Disciples: Near to Jesus are the people who have been there all along. Those he called, invited into some specific roles in his movement.

Pharisees: On the opposite end of the spectrum were the religious leaders who had a vested interest in shutting the Jesus march down before it caused any more confusion.

Romans: Looming over the march was the eye of the Roman empire that could easily crush this small column of people.

Crowd: One of the little known main characters of the Bible is the crowd. People like you and me, who have left our porch to see this Jesus that people are talking about. They are the poor, the workers, people on the margin, religiously curious.

Zealots: Then there were the Jews looking for a fight and hoping Jesus would be the one to strike the first blow.

So, what can we take from this list for our parade today? I think that we can confidently say that not everyone was wearing the t-shirt, or knew the chants. There was diversity of perspective and purpose. Certainly, you had the inner circle of people who felt called, led by Jesus into a particular mission. But you also saw Jesus make room for the opposition to come and see this new thing God was doing. Think of Nicodemus, Zaccheus, and others who came from out of the Jewish tradition to follow. Then there was the ambivalently curious Romans. Jesus' movement includes you even if in your list of priorities, you don't include it. Then there are the zealots, people who would feel fantastically let down by Jesus because this wasn't a march to war.

But then, there is the crowd, which is where most of us are: people who are tired. People who get up and go to work. Who take care of children. The sick. Our elderly. People with hopes and dreams and traumas and failures. People who, caught up in the gravity of some kind of hope in Jesus' name, can't help but join the parade.

Our community, our parade, our church is a place where all are welcome. So, if you have ever wondered if you are in the right place, the answer is yes. If you have ever wondered if someone has to believe all the same things as you, the answer is no. If you have ever wondered if there is any kind of bar someone has to jump over to call this place home, this movement

theirs, the answer is no. Who is welcome? All are welcome.

Where's it going?

There isn't much that realtors and Bible scholars have in common other than their relentless belief in the mantra, "Location, location, location!" Let's take a look at the ground Luke calls us to pay attention to.

Bethany: Jesus' parade starts here on the eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives. It is the place where he raised Lazarus, where he was anointed with oil, and where later he ascends into heaven.

Mount of Olives: The Mount of Olives is on the way from Bethany into Jerusalem from the East. This place is packed with significance. Among the people then and Jewish people today, it is where the Messiah is expected to arrive from to redeem Israel.

The Temple in Jerusalem: The temple is the place where heaven and earth met for Jews in the first century. It was the center of the universe and in its architecture, mirrored an ancient worldview's picture of the universe.

So, our parade goes from Bethany, to the Mount of Olives, to the temple in Jerusalem. What does that tell us about our movement today?

If you have joined Prince of Peace somewhere in the last 20 years, or if you don't pay much attention to elevation when you drive, then you may not know that Prince of Peace used to be known as "the church on the hill." If we removed the trees over there, all the facilities and neighborhoods around us then, you would see that this church sits on top of a bluff. You could see Prince of Peace for miles around. That was intentional.

The other thing you would have noticed about the history of this place is that it hasn't always been all of this. Prince of Peace started as a mission start in a village south of the river between the cities and the lake country of the south. This was the "ends of the earth" as far as the cities were concerned 50 years ago.

So, where is this going? Out. We believe it so much we made it part of the tagline: "We are Prince of Peace and we are moving Up, In, and OUT." After all of the work that we have done on our building it can be easy to miss that reality because we've been so focused on coming here, but we are called to be a church on the move OUT for the world so that all might know they are loved. IF you're wondering where this work can take you, then look no further than our Planting

Hope series we just finished. It can take you to your neighborhood or parish. It can take you to your local Feed My Starving Children, it can take you to the halls of your high school, to a counselor or mental health clinic, and around the world to the Ukraine. We are Prince of Peace and we are called to go out for the world. So, where is this going? Out.

What's the goal?

The goal of the Burnsville Firemaster is to raise awareness and funds for the fire department. It has a point. What is the goal here? Get people into heaven? Keep people from going to hell? Being big?

What is the goal here?

Boy it would be fun to say, "come back next week" because, you know, Easter and all, but that wouldn't be that helpful, for that column of people following Jesus on that particular day or for us in our particular circumstances. So here, goes, what does the text tell us about the goal of Jesus' movement?

Our first clue comes from the crowd. Remember them? The disciples, the Pharisees, the Romans, the zealots, the crowd, and the rest. All of them had their own agenda, all of them could be found in Jesus' train.

Our second clue is in where this all ends up, at the temple. The place where heaven and earth meet in the religious imagination of the people of the first century. The callback in the architecture of the temple wasn't just anywhere. It was the garden of Eden. THE place where heaven and earth met, more importantly, where it was created.

So, if we take those pieces together, what do we know about Jesus' goal with this movement? Well, it seems to be the case that Jesus is drawing everyone and everything close. Real close to a point so that they can experience something important. All people, all perspectives, all our brokenness, all of our sin, all of creation. He's drawing it all to himself, like he's the new center of everything, a new temple, a new place where creation and newness of life can happen.

One of the things that I feel like ruins me whenever I'm up to preach is that I know too much about the people in the room. I wonder, "How in the world do I say something that meets everyone where they are? There are people grieving, searching, in high school, in transitions of all kinds..." But then I remember that the bottom line of our parade is to draw them to Jesus for a moment of new creation. An encounter with Jesus is. So what does that mean for the goal of our parade,

our movement today? Prince of Peace. Say that. Prince of Peace. Who are we talking about when we say that? Jesus. So, what is the goal for our work? It is a signpost that points people to Jesus. The goal of our existence as a community on the move in our world is to point people to Jesus.

Who is welcome? Everyone. Where is this going? Out. What is the goal? An encounter with Jesus.

Is that what this place is about? Is that what your faith is about? Where do we need Jesus to check us? Where do we need to repent? In who we invite? Where we're willing to go? Who we let lead? These are all such important questions for us to consider on this week of all weeks where we are pointing the world to that moment where Jesus makes us and all things new. So, here's my question to you: Will you join this parade?