

“THEY DIDN’T GET IT”

Pastor Mike Corwin

PALM SUNDAY

TEXT: LUKE 19:28-44

SCRIPTURE: ZECHARIAH 9:9-10

I – HE DIDN’T GET IT:

He attended church services at “The Living Church of God” every Saturday. He was so dedicated to attending he missed a friend’s wedding because he would have had to skip church. Those who knew him described him as an “average Joe” who lived in a modest 2 story home with his mother and older sister and worked as a computer technician. He was an avid gardener who built his own greenhouse and shared his home-grown vegetables with the neighbors. He had never threatened anyone, had no criminal record and was so nice he used humane traps to catch squirrels and release them alive someplace else rather than hurt them.

The last thing anyone expected him to do was to walk into the church he loved and murder innocent people. Yet that’s exactly what he did. On Saturday, March 11 of 2005, 44-year-old Terry Ratzman got up about 30 minutes into the service and fired 22 rounds from a 9mm handgun. When he was done 7 people were dead, 4 others injured and then he turned the gun on himself and took his own life. He left no notes, and no one knows exactly why he did it. He just did it.

As I saw and listened to the news about what had happened one thought kept coming back to my mind...HE DIDN’T GET IT! He attended church regularly but somehow; he just didn’t get the message. You can’t hear about the love of God and then kill people...IF YOU GET IT. You can’t hear the message of grace and mercy and then take innocent lives...IF YOU GET IT. You can’t be in the middle of the Lent season when the message of Salvation and forgiveness abounds and shoot people and yourself...IF YOU GET IT. HE JUST DIDN’T GET IT! Somehow, he missed the message.

II – IT’S NOTHING NEW:

I guess we shouldn’t be surprised about it. When it comes to religion and our relationship to Jesus there are a lot of examples of people not getting it...not grasping the message of the Gospel. Remember the crusades, where knights in shining armor traveled from England to the Holy Land to protect the city of Jesus from the heathens? As they conquered the people along the way they would ask them if they believed in Jesus and if the people said no, they would cut off their heads. Somehow, they didn’t fully embrace the Gospel message of love and forgiveness. Remember the Spanish Inquisition? The church in Rome decided it had to do something about all the

non-believers in the world, had to protect society and the church of Jesus from heretics – those who talked against Jesus. So, they tortured people until they signed confessions and then killed them. I'm guessing they just didn't get it.

The shame of all of this is the people who were killed in the name of religion didn't get it either. They never got to fully hear and experience the message of the Gospel. How can you feel the love of God at the end of a sword? How can you convince someone that a Savior suffered and died for them when you're torturing them? I look around society today and I see all kinds of people who don't get it. Some because they haven't been told about this Jesus and what he did for them...some because they've chosen to disregard the message when they've heard it. For whatever reason...they just don't get it.

Even in the Easter story we read about people in Jesus time that didn't get it. The Jewish people had been waiting for a Savior, but when he came, they didn't accept him, they turned on him and called for his execution. The Romans didn't get it as they sentenced him to crucifixion and mocked him as they did it for being the king of the Jews. The Religious leaders of the time saw him not as a Savior, but as a threat to their way of life. Even one of his own disciples, Judas, who was with him on the three-year journey of ministry turned on him. Obviously, none of them got it.

III – TEXT – LUKE 19:28-44:

The story of Palm Sunday as we find it in Luke is a story of how Jesus felt because the people just didn't get it. It's a story of how he felt when he thought about the fact that all the prophets had predicted his coming, had told generation after generation about the coming Messiah. It's a story of how Jesus felt after he had spent three years of his life preaching, teaching, and doing miracles so the people would believe he was the Son of God. It's a story of how the Savior felt when the people just didn't get it.

Luke 19:28 - 38 (NLT)

²⁸After telling this story, Jesus went on toward Jerusalem, walking ahead of his disciples. ²⁹As they came to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany, on the Mount of Olives, he sent two disciples ahead. ³⁰“Go into that village over there,” he told them, “and as you enter it, you will see a colt tied there that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹If anyone asks what you are doing, just say, ‘the Lord needs it.’” ³²So they went and found the colt, just as Jesus had said. ³³And sure enough, as they were untying it, the owners asked them, “Why are you untying our colt?” ³⁴And the disciples simply replied, “The Lord needs it.” ³⁵So they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their garments over it for him to ride on. ³⁶Then the crowds spread out their coats on the road ahead of Jesus. ³⁷As they reached the place where the road started down from the Mount of Olives, all his followers began to shout and sing as they walked along, praising God for all the wonderful miracles they had seen.

³⁸ “Bless the King who comes in the name of the Lord!

Peace in heaven
and glory in highest heaven!”²

The day has come. It's time for the beginning of what we call Holy Week. All the sermons I've preached during Lent took place after this day...Palm Sunday. This is the day Jesus is going public, removing all doubt that he claims to be the Messiah who has been the prophets have been talking about. He even marches to Jerusalem just the way the prophet Zechariah had told the Israelites hundreds of years before...on the back of a donkey. The disciples follow his orders and go and find the young donkey just as Jesus said they would. The donkey has never been ridden before and so is pure and fit for a king to ride. The disciples and the followers of Jesus proclaim he is king as they throw their coats and palm branches on the ground before him, a tradition reserved for kings of the time. As he starts down from the Mount of Olives, the place he'll be arrested on Thursday of this week, the crowds sing of the great miracles they've witnessed and give thanks to God. They pronounce the same blessing, which the angels sang on the night of Jesus birth...peace and glory in the highest heaven. Jesus marches towards his destiny in a parade so all will know.

Luke 19:39 - 40 (NLT)

³⁹But some of the Pharisees among the crowd said, “Teacher, rebuke your followers for saying things like that!” ⁴⁰He replied, “If they kept quiet, the stones along the road would burst into cheers!”

Even during the parade there are those who just don't get it! The teachers of religious laws, those who should know the prophecies because they demanded all the people learn them, they taught them to the people, but they still don't get the message...JESUS IS HERE! Jesus says it's too late. If the people don't recognize me then the whole of creation will because I was there when it came into existence. You can no longer hide the fact that the Savior of the world has arrived.

And then we find it. The reaction of the Savior who came to save the world and was met with rejection...

Luke 19:41 - 44 (NLT)

⁴¹But as they came closer to Jerusalem and Jesus saw the city ahead, he began to cry. ⁴²“I wish that even today you would find the way of peace. But now it is too late, and peace is hidden from you. ⁴³Before long your enemies will build ramparts against your walls and encircle you and close in on you. ⁴⁴They will crush you to the ground, and your children with you. Your enemies will not leave a single stone in place, because you have rejected the opportunity God offered you.”

Jesus stops before he enters the city of his coming death on Friday. He stops and he cries. He cries over the fact that people have failed to get the message. He cries because their Salvation is right in front of them, and they are still blind to their own need for repentance and forgiveness. He

rides to his demise and some people will never get the message. I imagine any of us would have to stop and cry too if we were carrying such a burden on our shoulders and knew that there were those who would never get it, would never find their way to Salvation.

IV – SOME DID GET IT:

We know that Jesus didn't stay outside the city. He rode into the city and carried out the plans of the week, which resulted in his being arrested in the garden on Thursday, tried, tortured, and crucified on Friday. He was buried and was resurrected three days later. He did it all because he knew that there were those that DID get it, and there were those to come who would get it. He did it because:

- There are those like the widow who put all she had into the collection box like we heard the 1st Sunday of lent who got it. Who loved God above all else.
- There are those like Simon of Cyrene who we heard about the 2nd Sunday of lent, who helped Jesus carry his cross and got it later and told others of this Savior.
- There are those like Mary, who we heard about the 3rd Sunday of lent, who got it and poured her expensive oil over Jesus out of love for him, what he had done, and what he was about to do.
- There are those like the man who gave Jesus and his disciples a fully prepared room as we heard the 4th Sunday of lent so Jesus could hold the last supper, which is shared by his disciples to this day.
- There are those like Joseph and Nicodemus we heard about last Sunday, the 5th Sunday of lent, who loved Jesus so much they stepped out of the shadows and buried him.
- And there are those like the man who gave up his donkey so Jesus could ride into town this Palm Sunday, the last Sunday of lent.

They all got it. They all heard the call of their Savior to pick up their cross and follow him. They all said yes and did what they were asked to do. That's why Jesus did what he did, even after all the disappointment, because he knew there were those who would get it. Those who would recognize him as the Savior and love him as he loves them. He knew that there were and would be those who would heed the call to pick up their cross and follow him so that others would get it.

V – DO YOU GET IT?:

When I read articles such as the one, we spoke about this morning...when I sit in my office and think about all those in our city who don't know Jesus...when I think about how nonchalantly some people have come to treat their religion...I realize there are still those who just don't get it. Like Jesus I sometimes weep over the city of nonbelievers.

My question for you this morning is very simple...DO YOU GET IT? Can Jesus stop crying for you? If not, I pray, he soon can.

AMEN