

ARE WE ON THE WRONG SIDE OF HISTORY?

(Sermon Summary)

Reading: Luke 19: 28-48.

One day, the things we do today will be called 'history'. Various people will write that history. What will they say of us? Will we be well thought of or badly thought of? Will we be denounced maybe? In other words, will we be on the right side of history or the wrong side? Will we be judged kindly or harshly by those who might one day write up the days we live in and make a judgment about us?

In this passage of the Bible there is only one Person who will be judged to be on the right side of history. It is the Lord Jesus Christ, who is found here unassumingly riding on a donkey. He is destined to be hated and to be put to death in a very short space of time. The people who put Him to death thought they were on the right side of history. They were seriously mistaken. For the Person who is going to write up history is the Lord Himself and He will not err in what He judges and what He writes. But we can see a selection of people who were on the wrong side of history in verses 39, 44 and 46.

1. Thinking we are right when we are wrong.

The Bible talks to us about people who imagine they are in the right when they are really in the wrong (see Proverbs 14:12 and 16:6). Pharisaism represented the worst case of this error. Pharisees felt they were right and that that there was no need of further reflection or thought. Evidence against them simply bounced off them for the most part. But we all share something in common with them. There are some who hold tenaciously to 'conspiracy theories' despite evidence that refutes them. There are groups who believe the earth is flat and other 'truthers'. There has been a lot of talk about the idea of 'my truth'. This means that whatever we think is beyond challenge by anyone else. It might actually be fiction, but we will defend it strongly.

The Pharisees and other religious leaders thought that they had it right and that the Lord Jesus had it wrong. They thought the disciples were wrong to think the Lord Jesus was a King or that He could bring peace (v39). In Matthew 21:14-16 we see they were wrong to try to stop the children calling Him the Son of David. They were wrong when the Lord declares that they had not recognized the day of their visitation (v44). They were also wrong to have tolerated the money changers plying their trade in the temple precincts. We learn this when the Lord casts them out (v46) which leads to the leaders' indignant question in Luke 20:2 about what authority He had to do these things.

In John 11:47-48 we learn that they were motivated by a carnal desire to hold on to their position and prestige. They feared the loss of power and influence. They, like us, have hearts that are a tangled mass of contradictions, hypocrisies, lusts, hatreds, jealousies, and deceitfulness. They, like us, are not on the right side of history, though they might believe it strongly, but are actually on the wrong side as will be evident on the Day of Judgment.

2. Coming to our senses.

The Holy Spirit is our Teacher and Counsellor. He wakes us up. He is like an alarm clock waking us up to realize that we are wrong and that we need to take action. He stimulates in us a healthy process of self-examination which brings the realization that we are wrong and that we need to change direction quickly. This is when we begin to seriously seek eternal rest, salvation and spiritual knowledge and wisdom. We then see we need to move urgently to be on the right side of history which means that we will now side with the Lord Jesus Christ. We now will join the disciples and the children as they declare the glory of the Lord Jesus. We will realize the day of our visitation and grab it with both hands lest it pass us by.

These things are not in the end a great enigma or a puzzle that has to be solved. These are plain facts and events that need to be believed. At the centre of it all, beyond donkeys and palm branches, is the Lord Jesus Himself. We acknowledge Him to be a King, wise and holy. We see Him as being entitled to rule. We rejoice (v37) because we see that He does bring peace. He assures us that He has not come to destroy us but to save us. We too say 'Glory' because this is the best news we can hear. We realize that there is great danger if we reject Him, and we will end up losing what we hoped we would be able to keep. We humbly recognize ourselves as belonging to the den of thieves who take away from His honour by greed and selfishness. We do not allow Him to take His rightful place at the centre of true religion.

3. Getting on the right side of history and having a bright future.

It is said that history gets written up by the victors. God is ultimate victor, and He gets to write up the true history. It is His truth which is 'true truth'. It is the only truth worth having and knowing.

We need to be on the side of the Son of God who is doing all things well and is on the right side of history. We have to study Him carefully as He proceeds to the cross and concede the absolute necessity of all that awaits Him there, including the betrayal, the false condemnation brought by men against Him and then His death. We have to allow Him to do His work and not seek to deter Him or re-write it to make it something other

than what it is. We should rely on the Bible to explain it to us. His blood was shed for sinners like us.

So we must get right with Him. We must believe that His death secures that position for us. We will be safe on the Day of Judgment, having gained His forgiveness in this life. Our sense of guilt will have been removed. We can join the crowds, including those who dwell above around the throne, as we rejoice and praise Him. We declare Him to be the King and Saviour. We admire His courage and His love. We love the truth that He so boldly proclaims and lives out. We hear His warnings and take immediate action. We believe in Him and then we are on the right side of history, receiving the blessing of God and salvation.