

- I. Ever you ever been to a party that you expected to be great but was a total flop?
  - A. Probably we've all done something public that totally failed
  - B. You walk away from such events flat, wondering why you came, wishing you'd spent the time at home or doing something satisfying
- II. How many people were feeling away that way on Palm Sunday?
  - A. They were out in the streets shouting "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"
  - B. He was going to free them from the Romans
  - C. To have Him go to the temple was a total anticlimax, and they had to wonder why they came out, and possibly why they made such fools of themselves
- III. How many changes have you started to make in life that began well only to fall flat?
  - A. Ask a smoker how many times he or she has quit
  - B. How many times have we all tried to develop new exercise patterns, to regularly read the Lord's Word, to develop a sane work schedule, to overcome a particular spiritual problem
  - C. Things start out so well, but fizzle, and we can feel like failures
- IV. That's exactly what happened with the Lord in many people's eyes
  - A. They all knew the routine – one day a Messiah would come who would be a descendant of their greatest king, David, & He would free them
    1. The Lord did the things He could to proclaim Himself a king
      - a. He rode a donkey that had never been ridden, people laid garments out, people proclaiming Him using Scriptural prophecies
- V. Now let me ask the same question another way: Have you ever done something that you thought was a total flop, but when you check with others they say actually went quite well?
  - A. That's how the Palm Sunday story actually went.
  - B. The Lord started a chain of events that led to His fully uniting His Divine soul with the human form He took on
    1. He became far more than the mere king people hoped for so in that He was wildly successful on Palm Sunday
  - C. And similarly it describes events in our lives that may seem unsuccessful but in reality succeed beyond our hopes
- VI. The story is symbolic of things we do when we set out on a new path in life, when we try to make the Lord king in our lives
  - A. New Church teaching says a king relates to truth, so when we accept Lord as king we accept something from Him as true, deciding it's going to rule our lives
  - B. We try to submit our minds to it
    1. This is meant by the donkey He rode. It stands for our minds, and our job is to let the Lord guide our thinking.
  - C. We lay clothes on the ground before it: We use the truth we know to support

the Lord's kingship in our hearts

1. This means confirming that truth, coming up with reasons it is true, seeing the many ways it applies in our lives and in the world
- D. We move forward, making progress, and so we rejoice: "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"
- E. Let's look at an example. Say a person wants to allow the Lord's teachings about forgiveness to rule, to make them king in his life
  1. Setting the Lord on a donkey & colt is to be willing to accept the idea of forgiveness
    - a. That colt that had never been ridden because part of us had never let the Lord in here before and we see the need
    - b. Like a donkey, our mind can be stubborn. It wants to go its own way, not be guided, especially into uncomfortable places
    - c. We find that we are used to thinking in unforgiving ways, and do not like being guided towards love
    - d. If we are honest, resentment can be a lot of fun to indulge in
  2. So we choose to let the Lord ride, and we lay our clothes on the ground in front of Him
    - a. Lay clothes is finding teachings and ideas that support the concept of forgiveness
      - (1) When we forgive we don't pretend it never happened
      - (2) When we forgive we can still take measures to protect ourselves from future harm
      - (3) Forgiving means giving up right to judge why that person did it
        - (a) It means looking for the good motives & qualities in them
        - (b) Only God knows enough to judge person & He never does
      - (4) "Forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors"
      - (5) Unforgiveness is a bigger sin than many of the evils that others have done to us
  3. All these support & make strong our effort to forgive
    - a. They move us forward to Jerusalem – the goal of true forgiveness which is founded in a deep doctrinal understanding of what it means
    - b. We feel ourselves let go of hatred & resentment, of being a martyr, of feeling sorry for ourselves
- VII. And we find a growing freedom from unforgiving feelings, we cry out that we are free; they are going away!
- VIII. Then in the middle of the procession, Jesus stops and weeps for Jerusalem, for what could have become
  - A. The principle of forgiveness is a beginning, but a forgiving heart is the goal
    1. "If you had known ... the things that make for your peace!" He said.
      - a. The Lord grieved over the pain of the past evils, of the lost opportunities
      - b. So when we seek to forgive we see the Lord's grief at the pain we

have created by our own unforgiveness

- c. This is so crucial because it fills us with compassion for others. Unforgiveness is all about me. Forgiveness of necessity involves thinking of others with compassion

- IX. When the Lord got to Jerusalem, He went to temple not to Herod's palace, which confused everyone
  - A. How could He become king if He did not get rid of the current king?
    - 1. How can we learn to forgive if that person won't own up and say sorry or make amends, or if they are going around doing the same thing again?
  - B. The Lord chose a different path, driving out the moneychangers who exploited the simple religious people to make money.
  - C. Everyone's mood changed. The momentum shifted
- X. The Lord's going to Herod's palace stands for there being no more troubles in your external life. It would be saying that you go to the person who has harmed you and sort things out. Then your negative feelings would go away
  - A. Isn't that what we want: for the problem to go away?
  - B. The thing is that with our inner problems, the external circumstances aren't the real issue.
    - 1. Even if we sort out the problem with this person – which is certainly what we'd hope – others will also hurt us and then we'll plunge into more resentment and unforgiveness
    - 2. We have to take a deeper look into our own heart, and that means going to the temple
  - C. Think for a second. If a king stands for the truth in your life, what is a temple? It's the good in your life, the part of you that worships from the heart
    - 1. It is the part of yourself that forgives from love. A phrase I like is: Seeing with the eyes of love
  - D. All spiritual growth starts in the head. We begin with a *principle* of what is right, and we obey it even though we don't want to
  - E. Then we start to have feelings and make choices
    - 1. We start to see the hurt we've cause, symbolized by Jesus weeping
  - F. Eventually we come to have a genuine love for others, a real desire to see good in them
    - 1. The Lord's going to the temple means looking honestly into our hearts and seeing the judgmental ways of being that have allowed us to hold vengeance and hate in our hearts. It means seeing where we have found delight and profit in running them down
    - 2. Driving out money changers means driving away those self serving ways
      - a. It is the work of time
        - (1) Like the crowd, we may feel disappointment here because we started out wanting to forgive and it seems like we are making little progress
        - (2) We are, but as in the Palm Sunday story, the true progress is on the inside.

3. Listen to this commonly quoted teaching that describes the inner shift that takes place. It is describing the time Noah's three sons found him passed out and naked in his tent after drinking too much, and their various responses: "Ham's noticing his father's nakedness, that is, his errors and perversities, describes people with whom faith is separated from charity. Such people see nothing else but errors and perversities residing with a person. But those who have faith arising from charity are different. They notice the goods, and if they do see evils and falsities they excuse them, and if possible endeavor with that person to correct them, as is said here of Shem and Japheth. Where charity does not exist self-love is present and consequently hatred towards all who do not show favor to self. As a result they see in the neighbor nothing except his evil. Or if they do see anything good they either perceive it as nothing or else place a bad interpretation on it. It is entirely different with those with whom charity is present. And from such presence or absence of charity these two kinds of people are distinguished from each other. Especially when they enter the next life, with those who have no charity, a feeling of hatred is manifest in every single thing; they wish to try everyone and indeed to pass judgement on them. Their one desire is to discover what is evil in them, all the time having it in mind to condemn, punish, and torment. But those who have charity hardly notice the evil in another person, but instead notice all the goods and truths that are his; and on his evils and falsities they place a good interpretation. Of such a nature are all angels, it being something they have from the Lord, who bends everything evil into good." (Heavenly Secrets 1079)

- XI. At the end of the story the Scribes & Pharisees want to kill the Lord but can't because people are always around Him hanging on every word
- A. At the beginning of the story, the Lord had 12 disciples following Him, now He had huge crowds every day
  - B. Before the Lord was on a mountain, in the inner part of our mind where we all want to do right & be good
  - C. Now Lord down in the city, taking part in daily life. He is guiding us in daily life, and particularly our thinking process about what we should do.
- XII. His presence does not take away all problems. There is no "happily ever after" in this world. Merely a more and more peaceful existence. But with the Lord down in our lives we will succeed
- XIII. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake... Yeah though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for You are with me.... Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Lk 19:28-48 When He had said this, He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. And it came to pass, when He came near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mountain called Olivet, that He sent two of His disciples, saying, "Go into the village opposite you, where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose it and bring it here. And if anyone asks you, 'Why are you loosing it?' thus you shall say to him, 'Because the Lord has need of it.'"

So those who were sent went their way and found it just as He had said to them. But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, "Why are you loosing the colt?" And they said, "The Lord has need of him."

Then they brought him to Jesus. And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him. And as He went, many spread their clothes on the road.

Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, saying: " 'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!' Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, saying to them, "It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"

And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.

96:1, 5 *Throughout the whole progress of His Divine providence, the Lord preserves these two faculties [of freedom and rationality] in a person intact and as sacred.* The reasons are that without these two faculties a person would not have understanding or will, and so would not be human; further, that without these two faculties a person could not be conjoined with the Lord, and so could not be reformed and regenerated; and so, too, that without these two faculties a person would not have immortality and eternal life.... The Lord resides in people, both good and evil, in these two faculties, and by means of them conjoins Himself with every person. It is because of this that an evil person as well as good one can understand, and so has the potential of a will for good and an understanding of truth. That they are not actual is due to his abuse of these faculties.

The Lord resides in every person in these faculties because of an influx of the Lord's will - His will being to be received by the person, to have His abode in him, and to

impart to him the felicities of eternal life. These are objects of the Lord's will because they are the objects of His Divine love. It is this, the Lord's will, which creates in a person the appearance that what he thinks, speaks, wills and does is his own.