

April 14, 2019

- Matthew 21:1-11 -

“Beware of the Mob Mentality”

Introduction:

An elderly woman was driving home one night. The weather was rather nasty. The rain was coming down very hard and it was very difficult to see. She was glad to notice tail- lights up ahead so she quickly followed behind that car. All of a sudden the car in front of her came to a stop. She began wondering what had happened. Thinking perhaps the car in front had hit a deer or something like that. Much to her surprise the car in front of her turned off their lights. She wondered, “Why was this person stopping in the middle of the road and then turning off their lights”. Then a knocking on her window startled her. There was a man standing in the pouring rain wanting to speak to her. She cracked the window open and asked the guy what was the problem. The man replied by stating, “what was her problem”? She argued that she was not the one who had stopped in the middle on the road and then turned off the lights. The man reply, Lady were not on the road you are in my driveway. Moral of the story is be careful who you are following. Beware of being persuaded by the crowd.

In his bestselling book Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion, psychologist Robert Cialdini writes, “There is a bias most of us use to determine what to do, think, say, and buy: the principle of social proof. To learn what is correct, we look at what other people are doing. Social proof is a shortcut to decide how to act. However, God desires we think according to his word.

Today as you may well know it is Palm Sunday. Palm Sunday marks the day that Jesus made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Palm branches were a symbol of victory (Olympics). The winner of the race carried a palm branch as a flag. Jesus descends from the Mt. of Olives to Jerusalem to offer himself as King of Israel.

The crowd followed Him into Jerusalem yelling out, ‘Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest... which means “Save.” They cried out “Save us, save us.” Many were there that had heard Him teach, seen Him heal the sick, give sight to the blind, cause the lame to walk, and raise the dead and they followed Him wherever He went. I believe many in the 1st crowd were also present in the 2nd crowd that cried out, in **Matthew 27:20 -22** “Crucify Him, crucify Him”. They were persuaded. I wonder if we were there how we would have reacted? Would we have been persuaded by the crowd to cry out against Christ? Let’s concentrate on three principles that will help keep us from being persuaded by the crowd.

I. Be Aware of Peer Pressure

1. I believe that many of the people there praised Him because they were caught up in the excitement, everyone else was doing it. Many later, cried out crucify Him for the same reason. It is in our nature to go along with the crowd. We want to please others. Do what they do, dress the way they dress, listen to the music they listen to, go where they go. We don’t want to be different, because people who are different are teased, mocked, ridiculed, spit on & sometimes beaten. Look what is happening today with conservatives on college campuses.

2. People began stripping palm branches off the trees and then started laying them in the pathway as Jesus rode by. And as Jesus rode into town I am sure that some thought, "Here is the one who will free us from Rome! Here is the one who will run these filthy Romans right out of town and set up the kingdom of David, with all it's glory.

Application:

Pressures are all around us and it's very uncomfortable to stand apart from the crowd. We want to be liked, accepted, we often desire to try to please everybody. Our youth are being pressured by their "friends" to dress a certain way, have sex, drink alcohol, and do drugs. Their being pressured by their school to believe that evolution is the truth and creation is a religious hoax. Their being pressured by society to believe sex before marriage is O.K. as long as they use protection, and that having an abortion is a choice not the taking of a viable life. Adults are being pressured to believe that work is more important than family, money is more important than morality, and popularity more important than character.

Christians are being pressured to conform to the world's values instead of God's. Peer pressure is all about conformity. The world we live in is calling us to be politically correct in everything we do we're being called to conform to this world, and its standards. The only way to overcome peer pressure is to be aware of its presence and live your life for God's purpose. **Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. Col. 2:8**

We see the example here ...people so quickly changed!

II. Be Genuine in Your Praise

1. I think it's interesting to note that many in the crowd praised Christ only because they thought He was going to release them from the control of the Roman government. They had heard the prophecies about the King. When it looks like praising and serving Him is going to benefit us, we say "Hosanna". But when things didn't turn out the way they planned they turned on Him.

What driving force could be so powerful that it could transform a serene group of individuals into a potentially violent mob? What could sway the minds of this crowd of people or mob based on the influence of only a handful of people? It's the same thing that motivates a person to share an impassioned social media post in knee-jerk response to public standards. It's a yield to "perceived group pressures" by publicly expressing whatever sentiment is in agreement with the norm. It's so easy to do that most of us aren't even aware when we are !

a) Many people praise the Lord when life is good, when things are going their way, and when there are obvious blessings from the hand of the Lord. But when life is hard, when they are struggling in life they turn against God, they blame God, and they curse God.

That's exactly what Job's wife told him to do when everything was turning south in their life, Job 2:9, "His wife said to him, 'Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and

die!” Listen God is God in the good times and in the bad. He is still on His throne, He is still in control. And no matter what you go through in life He will use it for your ultimate good.

2. Many turn to God in time of need and call upon God. There is no commitment, no genuine praise, they just want out of their trouble. Genuine praise is not lip service, but life service. Jesus knew their hypocrisy, in fact prior to this event Christ had mentioned this in...

Matthew 15: 7-8, [Ye] hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with [their] lips; but their heart is far from me. “But in vain they do worship me, teaching [for] doctrines the commandments of men.

We may be tempted to ask why. Job did... Many others did, even Jesus did when He was on the cross, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” We may feel that God has forsaken us. But he hasn’t. He did not forsake Job and He will not forsake you. **Hebrews 13:5** “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

III. Be Consistent in Your Walk

1. The crowd praised Him one week, and cried “Crucify Him” the next week. They were inconsistent, because they had no foundation. Every Sunday should be a worship celebration for us who believe in the King of Kings! Every Sunday should be a time of joyous celebration! You need to make your Sundays just that...a time of joyous celebration for the King! Let God change our hearts and attitude about worship and coming to church.

2. We're all faced with a choice. We're forced to either Crown Him as our King or Reject Him as our Ruler. Let us never be too proud to worship or serve Him because of circumstances.

1 Kings 18:21, And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD [be] God, follow him: but if Baal, [then] follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

a) Many Christians are the same way; they fluctuate from week to week depending on their mood swings. 1 Corinthians 4:2, “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” God gives us everything we need to be faithful servants. - **Hebrews 10:23-25**

3. If your inconsistent in your faith you will not grow in the “Grace and knowledge of Christ.”

Eph 4:14 That we [henceforth] be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, [and] cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Conclusion:

I want to remind you, on this “Palm Sunday” as we remember Christ’s Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, that some people cheer for Jesus when it was convenient and popular but a true follower makes Jesus their Lord no matter what the crowd is doing.

Either Jesus is your Lord and you’ve come here to praise and worship him for who he is, or you’re a part of the crowd who refuses to acknowledge him. God wants our humble worship...not our self - righteous attitude. He seek true and faithful worshippers.