

Palm Sunday Luke 19:28–44

March 24, 2018

PRAY

Joseph T. Hallinan wrote a book with a ho-hum title but an exceptional sub-title. The Title?, “*Why we Make Mistakes*,” but the above average subtitle is, “How we look without seeing, forget things in seconds, and are all pretty sure we are way above average.”

There he describes most Americans. Right?

The book locates much of the reason that we make mistakes is the fact we don't see as much as we think we do or as much as we need to.

Rather, We see what we want to see. We see what we expect to see.

Most fascinatingly Hallinan talks about the phenomena of ‘Change Blindness.’

“Regardless of whether we are experts or amateurs, even those of us with otherwise perfect vision are *subject to fleeting but nonetheless startling kinds of blindness*. One of the most fascinating forms is known as change blindness. It occurs when we fail to detect major changes to the scenes we are viewing during a brief visual disruption-even so brief as a blink.

The profound impact of change blindness was demonstrated a decade ago in an impish experiment by Daniel Simons and Daniel Levin, both of them at the time at Cornell University. The design of their experiment was

simple: they had "strangers" on a college campus ask pedestrians for directions. As you might suspect, the experiment involved a twist. As the stranger and the pedestrian talk, the experimenters arranged for them to be rudely interrupted by two men who pass between them while carrying a door. The interruption is brief-lasting just one second. But during that one second, something important happens. One of the men carrying the door trades places with the "stranger." When the door is gone, the pedestrian is confronted with a different person, who continues the conversation as if nothing had happened. Would the pedestrians notice that they were talking to someone new?

In most cases, it turns out, the answer was no.

Only seven of the fifteen pedestrians noticed the change."

We don't see as much as we think.

We see what we want to see.

We see what we expect to see.

Less than half of the people noticed they were talking to a different person!

"When we look at something, we intuitively feel that we can see everything in it in great detail and are quite confident that we would notice any changes. That, said Simons, is what makes change blindness such an interesting problem. "People consistently believe that if something unexpected changes, it will automatically grab their attention and they will notice it." As part of their "door" experiment, for instance, the two Duns polled a group of fifty students. They read them a description of the experiment, then asked them to raise their hands if they

believed they would be able to detect the changes. All fifty raised their hands.”

I’d raise my hand.

But I know I—

don’t see as much as I think.

I see what I want to see.

I see what I expect to see.

We see what we want to see. We see what we expect to see. I’d be convinced that no way I would suffer from change-blindness.

Today we find that people around Jesus suffer from something like change blindness. They look at Jesus but don’t see him for who he is.

Why?

We don’t see as much as we think.

We see what we want to see.

We see what we expect to see.

Humanity is naturally blind to who Jesus really is.

PROP: Because Jesus is different than we expect we can be blind to who he is—the King who brings peace.

See Jesus for who he is.

Let’s see Jesus together and not what we expect to see.

We join Jesus and his entourage as they come to the outskirts of Jerusalem—the city of Peace. The Church has traditionally marked and celebrated the Sunday before Easter as Palm Sunday.

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Passion week.

We are going to stand and watch Jesus, his disciples and hundreds of pilgrims coming to the city of Peace for Passover. These pilgrims came from miles and miles around—on foot. They were dusty, tired, smelly and ready to stop walking.

Then they see Jesus.

They don't see as much as they think.

They see what they want to see.

They see what they expect to see.

See Jesus for who he is.

We see--

Jesus in control (19:28-34)

Jesus as King (19:35-39)

Jesus in tears (19:40-44)

1. Jesus in control (19:28-34)

“And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29 When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, 30 saying, "Go into the village

in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. 31 If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this: 'The Lord has need of it.'" 32 So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. 33 And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" 34 And they said, "The Lord has need of it."

That is an amazing amount of detail for the story of getting a donkey colt. What is going on here?

When we hear the word colt you might think Indianapolis Colts—a young horse. But this is a donkey—young male donkeys are called colts. And Luke treats us to a blow by blow story of how the two unnamed disciples got the baby donkey.

It's kind of repetitive. Luke could have just said—they went to the little village and got a baby donkey. But instead Jesus says,

Hey—I need you two to go get a baby donkey in that village that no one has sat on. If someone asks—why you are taking that donkey—say the Lord needs it. Further, this little donkey has never been ridden.

They go and someone does ask why are you taking that donkey and they say the Lord needs it.

Why all this detail?

Because Luke is showing us that Jesus is in complete control. He is orchestrating events that will eventually lead

to his crucifixion on Friday he is in complete control. Jesus came to town not just knowing that he was going to die but planning his own death.

You can read about the events of passion week and think—man things got out of control fast and Jesus was a victim of a horrible mob mentality. It can seem that Jesus got caught up in something and lost his life.

That is what it seems. But today we are looking at Jesus and we see that Jesus is in complete control. He is calling all of the shots here.

Why is this important?

Jesus was orchestrating everything. Every little detail. Not just in the town and the village and the donkey but every detail in this week.

He is going to celebrate Passover.

He is going to be betrayed.

He is going to be arrested.

He is going to be tried.

He is going to be found guilty.

He is going to be sentenced to death.

He is going to carry his cross.

He is going to be hung on that cross.

He is going to die.

They saw Jesus die but didn't understand why. Why? They are like us—

We don't see as much as we think.

We see what we want to see.

We see what we expect to see.

It seems like there is a lot happening to him but he is making clear here that he is in control, orchestrating everything even, and especially his own death.

In the book of Luke, Jesus predicts his death three times. Most recently on the same day!

31 And taking the twelve, he said to them, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. **32** For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. **33** And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise. But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said. - Luke 18:31-34

His death is not a terrible accident but a planned event. But his closest friends could not see it. They didn't see it because it wasn't what they expected.

See Jesus in complete control of the smallest detail in the most important week in all history.

Application—

No one in that crowd understood that entering Jerusalem on the back of a donkey would lead to Jesus walking out of Jerusalem with a cross on his back.

But Jesus was in complete control—no one else really saw it that day.

We don't see as much as we think.
We see what we want to see.
We see what we expect to see.

This helps me. Jesus is in control of all things for my good. I might not see how, but if he working out these minute details, he is doing the same for me. At the end of a hard week that comfort is priceless.

I don't see as much as I think.
I don't see what I want to see.
I see what I expect to see.

See Jesus in control for our good. The King of Peace bringing peace.

We see Jesus in control and we see,

2. Jesus as King (19:35-40)

35 And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. 36 And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. 37 As he was drawing near-already on the way down the Mount of Olives-the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works 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!" 39 And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." 40 He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."

Jesus is not just riding along he is proclaiming something. He is announcing himself to be the King. Jesus is saying with his actions that he is the long awaited for—Jewish Messiah. The hope of the nation and the hope of all nations, had arrived.

It is not so obvious to us because it is riding donkey doesn't mean anything to us. But all the people there knew.

Just like if you pop into your local Fry's grocery store and see someone dressed in pants that are like knickers, high socks, a cap, cleats, a leather glove, a shirt with a number on the back you would immediately understand that that person is proclaiming himself as a softball/baseball player.

The people on the road to Jerusalem that day knew exactly what Jesus was doing. They knew because they knew what the prophet Zechariah had said seem 500 years prior,

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” Zechariah 9:9

All the people on the road that day knew what Jesus was saying when he hadn't even said a word—they knew Jesus was saying he was their king.

And they were shouting aloud.

Vs. 38,

**“Blessed is the king that comes in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”**

In Mark and Matthew they note the Palm branches (which was like waving a Jewish flag), but because Luke is writing to a Gentile audience who had no idea about all that. Instead he highlights something even the Gentiles would understand.

The red carpet treatment.

The people on the road were so caught up in the moment that they took their jackets off and laid them down on the road and shouted all the way. His disciples, the pilgrims on the road everyone was shouting, “Blessed be the King that comes in the name of the Lord.”

The king had come and these people are being swept up in all the excitement. Singing, running, dancing, shouting—all producing an unforgettable scene. High drama.

This is a commotion.

The pilgrims knew Jesus was claiming to be king and they were caught up in the excitement. We don’t know who made up this crowd, but we know what they shouted—blessed be the King that comes in the name of the Lord.”

Another crowd would gather in just a few days and shout, “Crucify him, Crucify him.”

Today, the crowd is poised to enter the city to crown a king. In just a few days another crowd would force him to exit the city in abject rejection.

Today a baby donkey is carrying the king of kings; in a few days the king of kings would carry his own cross.

Crowds are fickle. The hero today can be the martyr tomorrow.

The crowd expected Jesus to be a different kind of King than he turned out to be.

This crowd thought that this king would overthrow the Caesar and become the new king. They expected him to be coronated as king by sitting on a throne, he was coronated as king by hanging on a cross.

Jesus came not to bring freedom from Roman occupation but he came to bring freedom from the power of sin.

Look and not see Jesus for who he really is.

But also—

He was saying something about his kingship.

He was saying something about the battle he was going to fight. Have you ever heard of a king or a general going out into battle riding a baby donkey?

Of course you haven't because if ever did that they would be dead. By riding a donkey Jesus was saying with his actions—I am king and I will fight against your enemies—but not the way you expect.

We don't see as much as we think.

We see what we want to see.
We see what we expect to see.

He was showing all who have eyes to see that he was going to wage a different kind of war. He is the king we need if not always the king we want.

He rode a borrowed baby donkey.
He rode without gear; no saddle, bit or bridle.
He rode not at the head of a great army.
He rode in the midst of weary pilgrims.
He rode in not as a conqueror, but to be conquered.
He was here to claim a city but the city claimed him.
The Prince of Peace rode into Jerusalem (city of peace) and her citizens would kill him.

He was to be an army of one waging war alone, against the great threat to mankind.

The donkey indicated the way that he would fight. The donkey was reserved for lowly, menial work. It was a beast of burden. The donkey was designed to carry a burden for many long miles.

Jesus would carry a burden too. He would be saddled with the burden of sins he did not commit. He would be led like an animal to his own execution. He was killed on a cross, which was the lowest, most ignominious way to die.

He would conquer by being conquered. He fought unlike any king before or since.

He fought by dying because his was not a fight against an occupying army but he fought against sin & death. He would defeat sin by dying. He would defeat death by rising from its clutches.

And no one saw this coming.

Why?

We don't see as much as we think.

We see what we want to see.

We see what we expect to see.

See Jesus for who he is.

But not everyone is shouting and singing and getting whipped up. The Pharisees are there and they demand that Jesus stop all of this shouting.

And Jesus says,

“I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

Do you see what he is saying? The rocks recognize something the Pharisees do not. The rocks—lifeless, immovable, quiet—recognize the presence of the King. The Rocks know better than the Pharisees.

Jesus is saying more than you are dumber than a box of rocks—he is saying—you are less perceptive than a rock.

At least the rocks know who I am.

Jesus came and the Pharisees didn't see him. They looked but they did not see. The leadership of Israel missed the coming king.

How?

Hard hearts. That means they refused to listen.

The crowds and disciples were confused, but the Pharisees refused to see. They thought they knew better.

They refused to believe he was who he said he was. Despite the plain facts laid out before them they refused to believe he was who he said he was—the savior of their nations and all nations.

There is nothing more tragic than a hard heart.

Why?

Do you know how God judges a hard heart? By letting you do whatever you want. You think you are free but you are slowly losing your powers of reason. You think you are shunning legalism and groupthink but your heart is going cold and petrifying.

You think you can see everything—But really you—

You don't see as much as you think.

You see what you want to see.

You see what you expect to see.

And so you stop seeing.

There is nothing more tragic than a hard heart—maybe your heart is going hard. Here are some possible signs.

1. You go through the motions of church

- You know the lingo—grace, Jesus, hope, prayer—you have all the words. Sure, you can put on a good church face and look the part and answer the questions and say grace and ‘obedience’ a lot.
- Stopped having a relationship long ago. You don’t pray anymore—Bible? Ya right.

2. You think no one understands your life

- You think that no one can really grasp your situation. What you are going through is so unique and confusing that no one can really help. All they will do is tell you things you already know.
- So you bury it inside and you get paranoid and you think everyone is against you.
- You take everything people say in the worst possible way.

3. You isolate yourself

- At first the isolation is subtle—you withdraw a bit emotionally and people ask why you are distant. I’m fine, I’m fine.
- But you aren’t and it isn’t long before your emotional withdrawal is physical.
- You tolerate and hide secret sin.

4. You don’t listen

- Even if everyone says the same thing—they don't understand after all. They don't really know.
- Because they don't know what you are going through. Even if everyone says the same thing—they are wrong.

5. You live a compartmentalized life

- You aren't the same in all situations.
- The secret sin ceases to be secret.

AND everyone says, 'What happened?'

A hard heart happened.

Please stop. See Jesus for who he is. Throw yourself upon him. Because—

We don't see as much as we think.

We see what we want to see.

We see what we expect to see.

See Jesus for who he is.

The King of Peace who can offer even those with the hardest hearts—hope.

We've seen Jesus in control and as king now we see,

3. Jesus in tears (19:41-44)

When the crowd is in full hysterics as their shouts and songs echoed down off Mt. Olives—Jesus does something surprising.

“And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, 42 saying, “Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side 44 and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

He weeps and wails over Jerusalem.

He knows that His city would reject him. They looked but did not see Jesus for who he was.

“Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.”

The crowd might have thought they were tears of joy but they were tears of intense sorrow. Sorrow because the city—the people didn’t know who was coming. And because of that they didn’t know the “things that make for peace.”

If there was a city that should be quickest to see and embrace Jesus it would be the capital city of Israel. They should be excited—but instead they would kill him in just a few days. Furthermore, this is a city that should know about peace. For example, if we were on a trip and passed through a city called “Donutville” we would assume that that city has good donuts right? Or Pinetop you would

assume that there are pine trees there and mountains (which there are). Jerusalem means the city of PEACE.

Jesus is Peace City and they don't understand the things that make for peace. So, the very name of the city lies about what it really is. This was the sad commentary on the whole nation of Israel both present and past. They had never listened to the prophets:

They ignored:

- Jeremiah's tears
- Malachi's warning
- Ezekiel's message
- Daniel's vision
- Hosea's metaphors

They had ignored them all the way until Moses and now they were about to ignore and kill the great prophet—Jesus Christ. God didn't just send a message he sent the great messenger and the people didn't listen. This is why Jesus wept. They should have understood, but their hearts were hard and they did not.

The prince of peace had come to the town of peace and they didn't know him. This reality was too much for Jesus and he wept uncontrollably. He offered eternal peace but they didn't want it.

They missed Messiah and would not experience the hope that he brought. The people thought they understood their needs—a savior but one from the Romans. They chafed under the yoke of slavery of the Romans.

Jesus saw Jerusalem's true state. He saw the people enslaved to their mortal enemy—sin and death.

The city of peace should have been ready for the prince of peace. But they could not see him. They looked at him—they were happy to hear him preach, perform miracles, cleanse the temple—but they rejected him.

The city of peace did not live up to its name. It was the city of peace in name only.

I do want you to see that this rejection did not cause Jesus to become irate, but to cry. That says a lot about Jesus. He does not relish judgment.

He was rejected but he wept. He knew each name and wept over each one. He knew that the faces that would turn away and reject him. Instead of kindling an anger—he wept.

That shows his heart for sinners.

We don't see as much as we think.

We see what we want to see.

We see what we expect to see.

See Jesus for who he is.

Do you see him crying for his enemies?

Do you see him weeping for those who will kill him?

Do you see him wailing for those who would crucify him?

We don't see as much as we think.
We see what we want to see.
We see what we expect to see.

See Jesus for who he is.

No one understood why he was crying.

Is he weeping over you?

If you aren't following him, there is still time for you. You can still come to him. It is not too late. Don't be someone who doesn't know what makes for peace.

We all struggle with blindness in some ways to who Jesus really is.

We don't see as much as we think.
We see what we want to see.
We see what we expect to see.

See Jesus for who he is.

He is the king who brings peace.