

I am not a perfect father. I have two kids, as most of you know, Holden and Addie, who are 2 and change and eight months old, respectively. You all love my kids, and I cannot express my gratitude enough. Holden has been, frankly, my best sermon material I've ever had. He has taught me more about God's love than a hundred sermons could, I think, and why God seems to love His people so much, and why He gets frustrated with them, and why He is jealous for them. Why He hurts for them. More on that later.

It's Palm Sunday today, and it's Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. It's a long passage—Luke 19:29–44—and I'm not going to read it all, but I'll tell the story up to verse 41, where we'll pick up together. He sends two of his disciples ahead for a donkey, saying "the master has need of it." And they go, and they get the donkey, and they bring it back, and it's this public declaration of a prophecy fulfilled that the Messiah will come into Jerusalem—not on a warhorse—but on a donkey. On a colt. And the people start shouting "Hosanna, Hosanna," and they lay down their cloaks on the road for him, welcoming him as a king, and they wave palm branches, and wouldn't you know it, the Pharisees get in this tizzy. They say, "tell your people to quiet down," and he hits them with one of the hardest, coolest lines in all of Scripture, where he says, "if they keep quiet, the very stones will cry out." I love that piece. It's like his declaration that "all of creation testifies to God's plan." Nature sings God's praises, and so should we. But this, this is where our passage picks up, in verse 41:

### **Main Text: Luke 19:41–44**

But as he came closer to Jerusalem and saw the city ahead, he began to weep. "How I wish today that you of all people would understand the way to peace. But now it is too late, and peace is hidden from your eyes. Before long your enemies will build ramparts against your walls and encircle you and close in on you from every side. They will crush you into the ground, and your children with you. Your enemies will not leave a single stone in place, because you did not recognize it when God visited you."

*"As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it..."*

### **Here's the question: why is Jesus weeping?**

Let's set the scene again: there's triumph, celebration, public declaration of Jesus as king—but Jesus isn't smiling. He's crying. Why?

There's a lot of reasons. For one, he knows what's coming—so do we. We have the book, we know how the story ends. But it's not just the cross—it's the rejection, the misunderstanding, the lost opportunity for peace, the melting pot of the human condition found in Jerusalem that is rooted in ignorance. It's not about fate, the end at the cross—it's about a broken people with a broken idea of who Jesus is. It's about us, really.

Jesus sees what we don't in this moment, what the people just can't in this moment. See, if you look at Israel's history of oppression, from Egypt, from Babylon, from Rome, in every circumstance where their slavery or oppression ends, it ends with fire. It's blood and ash and God showing up with military might. It's 185,000 Assyrian soldiers encamped around Israel that are destroyed in a moment by an angel of the Lord.

So what do they expect in the King, the Messiah, who has come to set them free from Rome and from sin? They expect what they have always seen in the cycle of slavery and freedom.

They're too immature. We are too immature. They simply can't see it. We can't see it. And this breaks Jesus' heart. He's spent all this time with the masses, with the Pharisees, in the temple, with tax collectors and sinners and fishermen and his best friends, and they simply can't see it. Even the ones who are closest to him. Even when we get to the garden later, down to the wire, we see that Peter, his best friend, pulls out a sword to defend him. They just. Don't. Get. It. Neither do we, sometimes. And we already know how the story ends.

Do you know the frustration? Where you try to explain something and someone just can't understand? It probably doesn't happen with adults as often, but maybe with really young kids. It's not anger, really. It's closer to heartbreak. And I

think that's what we see in this passage.

**Jesus isn't angry. He's heartbroken.** Let me explain.

### **Let's talk about Holden.**

You all know me, and you know my kids, Holden and Addie. Addie is eight months old, Holden is 2 and change. And you all love him so well, and I'm so grateful for that. It's one of the biggest reasons we'll stay here, even when I move on from this position I have here, is because of how well you love my kids, and you have my heart for that. But let's talk about Holden for a second.

Holden says he *needs* a lot of things. Not wants, but needs. One of these things is my iPhone. We'll watch wheels on the bus or animal videos on it, or look at pictures of his grandparents, or videos of trains, or his uncles and aunt. It started out really sweet, like an occasional thing we might do when he's sick, but his lust for it is different now. He *needs* to see it, to touch it. He has to have it. And here's the thing: I know that this device is poison. I know how it splits my attention, and demands my focus, and, perhaps, does it have its redeeming qualities? Yes, of course. But I know how poisonous it is, really. Holden doesn't. He can't understand, not yet. But no matter how gently I explain, or how much I try to persuade him, he simply *cannot* understand how harmful it is. I can't make him see what I see. And that *breaks* me. That *guts* me, that he can't see how harmful it is, that he can't view the sort of prison this creates. And I'm not mad at him—why would I be mad for something that is simply beyond his understanding? I'm *heartbroken* for him.

So when we look at Jesus and his weeping over Jerusalem, you have to see—he weeps the same way—he doesn't weep in bitterness, but in *grief*. It's heartbreak. Do you hear that in his words?

*"If only you had known what would bring you peace..."*

And it's not just here. It doesn't end here. He carries that grief in his suffering all the way to the cross when we hear him say,

*"Father, forgive them—they don't know what they're doing."*

These aren't the words of an angry man. **these are words of heartbreak.**

### **This begs yet another question: So what?**

This moment shows us something sacred: God *feels* for us. And this matters, probably as much as anything. Your God isn't unaware of what's going on in your life. He's not ignorant as to what you're going through, or the struggles we walk with, that face us day in and day out.

Jesus doesn't stand distant from our mess, guys. He walks into it, and he weeps in it. Maybe you remember, it's the shortest verse in the Bible, right when he arrives at Lazarus's tomb: "Jesus wept." He felt pain then, he felt pain when riding into Jerusalem, and he feels your pain *now*.

### **Hebrews 4:15:**

"We do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses"  
He knows our pain. He *has* our pain. When there is suffering, oh my God. He feels it.

He sees the confusion, the shame, the struggle—the parts of us that just don't get it—and instead of turning away, he *weeps with us*.

### **Let's talk about the good news: He still enters in.**

Even when we don't get it... even when we reject him, or cling to what's hurting us...  
Jesus still comes riding in. He doesn't reject the Jerusalem that rejected him. He doesn't reject the people that rejected him. No—he does the opposite.  
Jesus still sees us.  
Jesus still weeps—for us, and with us. **Not because he's mad—because he's heartbroken.**

So when we see what's happening in Ukraine, continued violence, or the blood of thousands shed in Palestine, guess what? God is there, and he's weeping. He's carrying that pain. And for some of us here, maybe that's easy to see. Maybe you believe that.

What about pain that's closer to home? What about how Jesus might have sat with you, not just with things that are far away?

Let's get personal, vulnerable. Let me tell you, honestly, how Jesus has sat in my mess. I struggle with food. Food has been my crutch forever. I eat my feelings away, which as a diabetic, is not a healthy relationship with food. I have been busting my butt for years to lose weight, since before Holden was born, and I am hungry. Every. Single. Day. I can go to China Buffet and put away four plates in fourteen minutes. But even in something as, perhaps menial, as my struggle with food, with my battle with weight, with my self esteem around my body image, Jesus walks right into that and says, "I'm here in it with you." And when I stumble, when I overdo it or step out of bounds, guess who's there? And guess what? **He's not mad. He's heartbroken.**

What about when I was sixteen, and was diagnosed with diabetes and didn't even fully understand what that meant, and my dad and I sat in an endocrinology room at Saint Pats hospital, guess who was in the room with us?

And what about when I was seventeen and wanted to take my own life, guess who was right there with me?

Or when I was nineteen and got off the phone with my older brother telling him I was dropping out of college, guess who else was listening to the phone call with his hand on my shoulder?

Or when I was twenty one and walked away from faith for a season in pursuit of everything I thought I was missing out on, guess who was running after me?

I didn't know it then. I didn't see it, in any of those, not in the moment. I couldn't see it. I couldn't have known. But that doesn't make it any less true. Just because I didn't see it at the time doesn't mean that Jesus wasn't walking right into my mess with me lowering himself to feel what I felt and saying, "Forgive him, Father. He doesn't know what he's doing."

I don't know what you're fighting. I don't know what your struggle with sin is, or where you're looking at Jesus, or looking at the cross, and still not getting it. I know that I don't know where *I'm* looking at Jesus and still not getting it. But I know that in those places, that Jesus is right there, and he's sitting with you, and it's okay. He's saying, "I'm right here with them, Father. They'll understand soon. And I'm going to sit with them in their mess until they do."

**He's there. And sometimes, he's crying too.**

I think—and I really believe this, we come to church most Sundays, or we call ourselves Christian most times, and expect that there's something different that we have to do with that title. And maybe, in time, that's true. We prove our faith through our actions. But Jesus came because, the truth is, we're never going to get it right ourselves. Jerusalem was never going to understand if he didn't ride in the way he did. The world would continue to weep *alone* without him. But it doesn't, does it?

Because Jesus wasn't the kind of king who came and simply *overcame* death. No, he entered into every part of the human condition. His resurrection does not diminish the sacrifice of the cross—it magnifies it. He came to sit with us in the mess, to cry with us, to hold us.

And when he rose again, he didn't erase the pain.  
He proved that even *death* can't keep him from being near.

So until the day we *do* understand, trust this:

Jesus isn't disappointed in you. He's brokenhearted *for* you.  
And he's still here.

You don't have to understand everything right now.  
You just need to know—**he understands you.**