

The Word the World Waits for

John 12:12-26, 32

March 16, 2008

Palm Sunday

The Church is first and foremost a movement and only secondly an institution. It is a people on the move with theology on the move, a pilgrim people with a vision that calls them forward into the places where God's name and beauty have not yet been known. "Follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." This is at the heart of what it means to be the Church and to be a follower of Jesus. If we ignore the call of the Gospel to us to go with the Gospel to others, we are in fact denying the very Faith we seek to affirm. We are a pioneer people, called to announce the reign of God to all the world. Christ is hailed as King as he enters Jerusalem, even his opponents noting "the whole world has gone after him" (John 12:19). Where Christ is proclaimed as King, his opposition flees from before him and the world comes to him. It is why at this exact moment the Gentiles come and say, "We want to see Jesus." (John 12:21) He is coming to them through the ministry of Philip and Andrew. Are we available to direct people to Jesus?

- Isaiah: Woe! → Lo! → Go!

I. The Hope of the Prophets

A. Isaiah's Vision of the Savior

1. Suffering, rejected substitute – 53:3-6
2. Vindicated and ruling the kings of the earth - 52:13-15

B. Isaiah's Vision of the Mission

1. God's love – 52:15
2. God's sovereignty – 53:1

We must go because Christ has come.

The Message of the Apostles

A. Paul's Gospel – Christ Crucified Savior and Resurrected Lord

1. Sins forgiven
2. Satan defeated
3. Sinners delivered
4. Son of Man ruling

B. Paul's Passion – The Savior for the World

- Quoting Isaiah 52:15 as the basis for his world mission in Romans 15:19-21

We must go to all nations for Christ's inheritance is in all nations.

II. The Labor of the Lord Jesus

A. "The Hour has come ... to be glorified." – The Cross-Throne of Christ

- The Cross is the vision of salvation: John 12:32
- The Cross is the message of salvation: 1 Corinthians 1:23-24

B. David's Son welcoming the Gentiles – they flow in (see 1 Kings 10)

C. David's Son sending his ambassadors – the word flows out of Zion.

We must go because his world must hear his message.

III. The Great Commission of the Church

A. Those who follow do so unto death and life – the nature of “witness” is martyrdom: John 12:25ff

- We have seen this literally in the death of Cyd Mizell.
- We see it daily in those who forsake comfort for the path of obscurity and denigration to take Christ to people who presently despise him.
“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” – Jim Elliot

B. Those who follow him will find he has gone before them – to follow means the other has gone on ahead.

C. Those who follow will find that on the Last Great Day of the Lord, their labor was not in vain.

- Philippians 2:5-11

We must go because we have been sent.

The supreme reason we must go is not the need of man; people are often difficult to love and we can only be moved by so many stories of need. Rather, what must motivate us is that terrible cross, the awful specter of that loving sacrifice and mighty battle against darkness. What he did there was to secure Israel and the all the world as his inheritance. There are places all around the world today that do not yet know they are the inheritance of Christ, and we are called to go and tell them the glad tidings that the darkness is defeated, that death is overcome, that sins are forgiven, that God and man are reconciled through the mediating work of the Savior.

We have confessed this morning our “Woe”; we have heard this morning God’s “Lo”; it only remains now for us to eat and drink and obey God’s “Go!” In a world that is looking for Jesus, “arise, let us be going” (Matthew 26:46).