

Casual or Committed?

Luke 19:37, 38; 23:13 – 23

I. Intro

- A. Today, Palm Sunday; all know the significance behind today, Jesus enters the city of Jerusalem, people waving palm branches (sign of honor, basically worship, of any ruler during that day); shouting, *Hosanna, Hosanna; Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord* (again, common exclamation of praise for any ruler); *Hosanna* means “save”
- B. A time of celebration where Jesus is both worshiped and praised (of course, many still saw Jesus as an up and coming earthly ruler)
- C. But, Friday is coming, the cross is coming; the attitudes of the people will quickly change from one of praise to one of condemnation when their words become, *Crucify Him, Crucify Him*
- D. Two passage from Luke: **READ Luke 19:37, 38; 23:13 – 23**
- E. **Question:** What a contrast? People can be so fickle right? More than just being fickle – great example of how people can be so easily influenced
- F. **Statement:** If you don’t stand for something you’ll fall for anything; If you stand for nothing you’ll fall for everything
- G. Isaiah 7:9 (NIV)
 - 9 ... If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.
- H. **Question:** What is the stance taken by many in the church today?
- I. **Billy Graham quote:** *The greatest mission field in our country today is in our local church- the people already sitting in our churches*
 - i. Point made: There are people in churches today who know what to say, know how to say it, know even how to act in it, but when rubber meets the road there’s no personal relationship with Jesus Christ – no salvation
 - ii. Passages perfect example: one day people shouting praises to Jesus, then on Friday they’re shouting give us Barabbas (a murderer) and crucify Jesus (the innocent God-man, Messiah, Savior of the world)
 - iii. The people had religion certainly, but they didn’t have Jesus
- J. **Today’s question:** Is your faith a casual faith (tossed to and fro depending on which way the world’s winds are blowing) or is your faith a committed faith
 - i. Hymn lyrics: *How firm a foundation ye saints of the Lord is laid for your faith in His excellent Word*
- K. Keys to a committed faith

II. **1** – Committed Faith is not Self-Centered, it’s Christ-Centered

- A. More common than not, for professing believers in Christ to only pull Him out (so to speak) when it's convenient or when we think He can be useful; that's not Christ-centered, that's just self-centered Christ-handly, convenient, "when I need it" tool
- B. **Question:** Why were the people in Luke 19 praising Jesus at this time? 2 likely reasons
 - i. **1** – They saw him doing great miracles (v. 37) – healing sick, raising the dead; He was serving them in a way that they were benefiting; Christ didn't come to earth, and die on cross, just to meet our physical or emotional needs – He came to bring us back into a right relationship with God the Father
 - ii. **2** – They saw Jesus as a political savior – free them from Roman oppression; attitude, *Jesus will you free us, deliver us, so that we can do or live any way we want to*
 - a) When Jesus said: John 8:36 (NIV)

36 ... if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. ; didn't mean free to live any way and do any thing as you choose – meant freedom from enslavement, bondage, penalty from a life controlled by sin; meant freed from eternal condemnation and death to an abundant and eternal life
- C. Few days later, on Friday, when they saw a beaten and disfigured Jesus, no longer looked like a deliverer or ruler (Jesus looked defeated), as they heard the lies that were being spread about Him, He was a blasphemer, crazy man, insurrectionist (Ch. 23:14) – they bought into it all and quickly changed their tune
- D. Romans 12:1 (NIV)

1 ... in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. (real committed act of praise to our Lord and Savior); giving Him all we are and all we have

III. **2** – Committed Faith is Relationship Driven

- A. Following Jesus is not something done out of obligation or duty
- B. When crowds were shouting *Hosanna, Hosanna*, at that moment it was the trendy thing to do; when the crowds began shouting *Crucify Him, Crucify Him*, then at that moment it was the trendy thing to do
- C. Commitment is based on personal will; based on unwavering devotion, undying allegiance, steadfast loyalty, unshakable bonding, eternal faithfulness – it's about relationship, whether to something (job, career, cause) or someone
- D. **Illustration of this type of commitment:** A man who spent at least eight years caring for his wife, who had Alzheimer's. They were married over 50 years. He cooked and fed her every bite of food she ate. He bathed her

and dressed her every single day. They had no other family; She had lost a baby at birth, and they never had any more children. She was unable to recognize anyone, including him. The only things she showed any interest in were two baby dolls that were never out of her hands. Whenever he came to visit/care for his wife, he would park, then sit in his old pickup truck for a few minutes, pat down what little hair he had, straightened the collar of his shirt and look in the mirror for a final check before going in to see her. It was as if he were still courting her. They had been partners for all those years and had seen each other under all kinds of circumstances, yet he carefully groomed himself before he called on his wife, who wouldn't even know him.

- E. That's a commitment of unwavering devotion, undying allegiance, steadfast loyalty, unshakable bonding, eternal faithfulness – and we should never give the Lord any less than that

IV. **3** – Committed Faith is not Swayed by Trials, Crises

- A. How easy it would've been for that man in this story to have become burdened by the time, effort it took for him to care for his wife and just given up and let someone else handle it
- B. How easy it would've been to just go and visit her only when he had the time or it was convenient for him – when there wasn't something else more important to take care of
- C. But that's how many treat their relationship with the Lord, especially when facing trials, difficulties, or some crisis
- D. We become burdened by the activities/struggles of this life and it's just too much effort, takes too much time to come to church, much less mature and grow in our relationship with Christ
- E. We'll make it too church when the time permits, or if it's convenient and there's nothing else more important that we think we have to take care of; I'll pray more when I have the time, or when it's more convenient; I'll read the Bible more when I have the time, or when it's more convenient
- F. Hear this statement made by people all the time – *I just have so much on me right now!* (**Question:** Can you tell how sympathetic I am when it comes to this excuse?)
- G. If our faith is based on our situations/circumstances it will never be a committed faith – it will always be casual
- H. **Camp illustration:** Students have great experience with the Lord, they're on fire, they want to serve God and live right; but, always tell them that it's easy to have those desires at camp, but the real test comes when they return home, get back to school, the very minute they leave camp

V. Close

- A. **Illustration:** Story of a little girl who saw a beautiful flower, loved it so much she went and picked it. When the gardener who had cared for that flower saw what she had done he became upset and furious. The little girl said she didn't like that beautiful flower being in all that dirt. The gardener told her that in order for that flower to become as beautiful as it was it had to be planted in the dirt, and be watered, and cared for.
- B. God has planted each and everyone of us in the dirt of this sinful world; He is the gardener that feeds us, cares for us, nurtures us so that He can bring us to a greater level of spiritual beauty; but it takes a committed faith, completely surrendered to God working in us for that to happen
- C. **Question:** This morning, how would you describe your faith in Christ – as casual or committed?
- D. This Friday, Good Friday, we remember the day when Jesus suffered incredibly for us, for our sins, because of His commitment to us; where our sins past, present, and future were the nails that were driven into His hands, His feet, hanging Him on that cross
- E. **Question:** Doesn't He deserve your commitment to Him? Doesn't He deserve your unwavering devotion, undying allegiance, steadfast loyalty, unshakable bonding, eternal faithfulness? Doesn't He deserve your life?
- F. **Question:** Doesn't He deserve a faith that's centered around Him, that's based on a close, personal relationship with Him, that's not swayed by the trials, troubles of this life?