Coronavirus Social Distancing Daily Devotion #10

Letting Go

**John 12:12-13 (NASB)** *12  On the next day the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13  took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, "Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, even the King of Israel."*

 To say the least, this is a very unusual Palm Sunday weekend. Everything about it will be different. But I’m reminded that our God is not a God of the “usual.” There is nothing about Him that is standard, or common, or normal, according to how we define those words. In fact, everything about God is different from humans.

 And it was no different on this day. The day that has historically been called Palm Sunday or the Triumphal entry into Jerusalem. I’m quite convinced that the people were doing all they could to make it a day of great festivity and celebration to welcome the One whom they thought would deliver them from their human suffering. The One who would deliver them from the hands of their Roman oppressors.

 But that is not what God had on His mind. Our Lord came to completely turn the world upside down spiritually and turn His people, Israel, upside down spiritually. He came to set them free alright, and a freedom that would give them more liberty than any earthly king could do. As we know, He came to set them free spiritually.

 Unfortunately, they didn’t see or hear Him. All they could see is what they could get from Him. I don’t think most of them meant harm, but they were certainly blind to who He was and what He really came to do. But that’s how our sinful hearts work, isn’t it? Our sinfulness is bent on taking what we want and when we want it. Whether it is something tangible or something that will help us emotionally or in some other way. Taking and hording is the “normal” working of the human heart. We get bent out of shape when someone does our job, does better that we do at a task, gets a bigger raise, gets more praise, has a more harmonious family, a better relationship with their spouse, etc. And we turn inward to see what we can do to fix things, or we turn inward to depression and self-pity.

 But, spiritually, Jesus came to set us free from those things: those wrong ideas, those wrong emotions. He came to give us an eternal home but to also give us peace and true life (John 14:27, John 10:10). But here is the catch. In order to have those things, we must first embrace Him for who He is and for all He is: Lord and Master (John 13:14-16). And that embrace of Him means letting go of everything else at the same time. If you have ever tried to hug someone with your arms full of stuff, you know it’s impossible to give a heartfelt embrace. To give the kind of embrace to someone who is important to you is to put everything down and wrap your arms around them without holding on to something else.

 Beloved, if you think about your life, how many times is Jesus someone you embrace with all your stuff in your arms? How many times do you try to embrace Him with all your baggage in your arms? All the emotions, all the feelings, all the problems, all the things you have accumulated.

 Today would be a good day to drop all of that and embrace Him with both arms. Drop all the things you hold on to: relationships you are struggling with, job uncertainties, children and the concern you have for their future. Whatever may be keeping you from fully embracing Jesus as Lord and Master, the One who wants to ride into your heart as your Savior, redeemer, provider, counselor - let it go! He came to give life, real life.

 This year, although very different from past years, could very well be the greatest Palm Sunday you have ever experienced. He is a great God, who understands your heart perfectly. I’m reminded of how Isaiah described Him: “And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6b).