

The Last Mile of the Way



**An Examination of the
Last Week of Jesus' Life**

KIPP CAMPBELL

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of the Way***

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By Kipp Campbell

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Author's Note

I want to thank my wife for the encouragement, love and support she shows on a daily basis. God has truly blessed me with a woman of Proverbs 31.

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Before the foundation of the world, our loving Father formed a plan by which mankind would be redeemed. For thousands of years, the Messiah was spoken of but never realized, until the time of the first century. It was at that time, God’s plan was put into action. His plan culminated in the saddest, yet greatest achievement ever known: salvation for mankind through the death of Jesus. Only through the shedding of His Son’s blood could He bring man back to His side and at the same time restore the relationship that was once enjoyed by man and God.

Three years ago, I was encouraged by two sisters at the congregation where I labor, to write a book on the events surrounding the death of our Lord. His death, and the events during that week, has long been a fascinating topic for me. It is my opinion that we have a tendency to gloss over the details surrounding the last week of Jesus’ life, never really stopping to contemplate and appreciate all that was accomplished. It is my hope and prayer, that this workbook will help us better understand and appreciate all of the emotions, pains, and sufferings Jesus endured.

It is my intention, at this writing, to donate all proceeds from the sale of this book to Open Hearts, Open Hands to aid in the feeding of starving Christians in Zimbabwe, Africa. For more information on this noble endeavor, please see: www.openheartshelpinghands.com

Kipp Campbell

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Lesson One

God, Man and the Problem of Sin

We all have problems. Some are minor, others are major, and most are somewhere in between. As I write this, our country is embroiled in some major issues. Immorality is rampant, our economic system is teetering on the brink, and no one seems to know what to do. The easiest part of a problem is identifying it, but the solution can be difficult to determine and sometimes harder to implement. The one great problem we all have in common is sin. Paul said, “for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God,” Romans 3:23. Sin presents a problem for everyone, as it separates us from the One who loves and cares about us the most.

The Problem Sin Creates

In the beginning, God set forth a plan. He provided for man’s every need, giving him a beautiful garden in which to live, surrounded by the most wonderful creation one could imagine. Consider having any tree from which you could eat, beautiful rivers to gaze upon, precious metals to enjoy their beauty, and even having your mate provided for you, Genesis 2:4–25. The only condition to this wonderful arrangement was that man (and woman) was not allowed to eat of the tree in the middle of the garden, Genesis 2:16–17. We all remember how this story ends. Both Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit and were subsequently thrown out of the garden, Genesis 3. These circumstances led to a very large problem for mankind. How does one now restore himself to God? Before, he had a relationship like none other with the Creator of the universe; but now that bond had been irreparably broken. How could sinful man co-exist with a holy, pure God?

Thankfully, God had a plan in place to redeem mankind, even before the events in the garden occurred, Ephesians 1:3–7. The situation man found himself in was one of his own making, but he was incapable of providing his own way of escape. Thus, a solution had to be provided, and only God was capable of delivering it.

Jesus, the Solution to Our Problem

The wisdom of God is seen in His choice of remedy. God did not choose someone who was incapable of identifying with the struggles and sufferings of mankind. Instead, He chose someone who knew exactly what it meant to be human and have to deal with the pressures of life. The Hebrew writer said, “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin,” Hebrews 4:15. It is comforting to know that God did not send someone who had no clue what it was like to face the troubles we face on a regular basis. In moments of crisis we are made to feel better when someone else identifies with us, because they have made it through the same exact situation. How comforting it is to know that the temptations I face on a regular basis were faced and overcome by the One who gave His life for me!

The solution God offers us is by no means an optional one. Jesus is never presented in Scripture as a merely suggested way to the Almighty. The Bible tells us: He is the only way to God (John 14:6); the only name by which we are saved (Acts 4:12); and the only mediator between God and man, 1 Timothy 2:5. The fact is, only His blood has the power to destroy sin. You cannot find such power in any other person or philosophy that the world offers today. There is no way we can bypass the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ.

How We Contact the Blood of Christ

Knowing our need of the Savior’s blood and applying it to our lives are two entirely different things. How can one contact the blood of Christ and have his sins taken away? Thankfully, the Bible gives us the answer to this very important question.

While there are a number of New Testament passages that speak to the importance of baptism, one passage in particular stands out: Romans 6:3–4. In it Paul said, “Or do you not know that all of us that have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in the newness of life.”

Notice four things:

1. First, the only way for a person to become a part of Jesus Christ is through baptism (cf. Galatians 3:27). It is the mode that God chose to bring us near and restore ourselves to Him. The Bible simply speaks of no other way for people to become God's children.
2. Second, we have been baptized into His death. His death is the key to our spiritual transformation. Without it, we would have no hope of eternal life, no hope of having our sins forgiven. His death is the reason why we have hope in the first place.
3. Third, we have been baptized into our death. When a person is baptized according to the New Testament standard, he puts to death the old person of sin. At that moment an agreement is made to live a different life. A life of holiness and purity. A life where we seek to do God's will and not our own.
4. Fourth, our resurrection from the waters of baptism gives us new opportunity. One of the great and wonderful results of baptism is that it gives us a chance to start over. It brings a new outlook on life, full of new hopes and dreams. It gives our lives actual meaning, and we know our labor will be rewarded with a home in heaven. As Paul wrote, Jesus gained a new life when He was resurrected from the grave. We, too, gain a new life when we are resurrected from the watery grave of baptism.

While baptism has its place in the process of one becoming a Christian, we would be remiss if we did not place a disclaimer at this moment. True Bible believers understand that while baptism puts one into Christ, if one does not possess a proper faith, there is no point in being baptized, Mark 16:16. Likewise, if one is not willing to change their ways (repent), their baptism is pointless, Luke 13:3. All of these things working together are what produces salvation; baptism is simply the last step that must be taken.

Conclusion

There is a common problem we all face at some point in our lives. That problem is sin. And despite all we may do, the only solution is the blood of Jesus Christ. Only through the blood of Christ can we come to know true freedom and happiness. Only through the blood of Christ can one make their lives right with the Lord.

Questions

1. What are some problems you face today?
2. Of those problems, how many are shared by others?
3. What is the one problem every person has in common?
4. Why is sin such a problem for mankind today?
5. How was sin allowed to enter into the world?
6. What was the result of man's actions in the garden?
7. How long had God planned to provide a solution for man's problem?
8. Who did God offer up as a remedy for man's situation?
9. Why was He considered to be a good choice?
10. Think of the temptations in your life. Do you really think it is possible for Jesus to identify with your struggles?

11. What is the one substance that can destroy sin?

12. How do we contact the blood of Christ today?

13. Read Romans 6:3–4. Name four things that baptism accomplishes.

14. Is baptism all there is to salvation? If not, what else is there?

15. Have you honestly contacted the blood of Christ in the way God prescribes? If not, what do you need to do?

Lesson 2

The Triumphal Entry

Matthew 21:1–11; Mark 11:1–10; Luke 19:28–44

After wars are over, there is usually a celebration for the returning soldiers. In times past, this country has thrown parades to honor those who defended our freedoms. The purpose was to show those who willingly placed their lives in harm's way that we citizens were grateful for their sacrifices. It was a show of support to those who wore the uniform. A different "parade" of sorts was held nearly two thousand years ago. This time, however, the war had yet to be won. The enemy, though on the verge of being defeated, still clung to the last remaining bit of power he possessed: death. That power was soon to be overcome.

Jesus' Procession to Jerusalem

The four gospel writers give us, in essence, the same story. There is some variation between them all, however it amounts to the level of information given to their intended audiences, and it serves to show the four different, distinct authorships. All four writers give the place of occurrence as near Bethphage (Luke also includes Bethany). Both were located just a stone's throw from Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives. John tells us Jesus came to Bethany six days before the Passover, John 12:1. After spending the Sabbath with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, Jesus sent His disciples over to the neighboring village of Bethphage to secure a donkey and its colt, Matthew 21:2. The two disciples were instructed to deliver a specific message if anyone should question their actions, Matthew 21:3–6; Luke 19:28–44. Upon their return, they placed their coats upon the colt for Jesus to sit on as the journey to Jerusalem continued, Matthew 21:7. As they traveled along the road, the crowd began to lay down their own coats, along with cut branches, on the road before Jesus, Matthew 21:8. Upon reaching the descent (of the Mt. of Olives), the crowd began to praise Him and God, Mark 11:9–10. Also in the crowd that day were those looking for an opportunity to destroy Jesus, Luke 19:39. Jesus was told to rebuke His disciples of the blasphemy they were committing, but He refused, Luke

19:40. As He continued on His journey, Jesus began to weep over the city of Jerusalem. He knew the end was coming and the destruction that would be brought upon the beloved city, Luke 19:41–44.

Taking a Deeper Look

The purpose of prophecy. Matthew is the only gospel writer to make mention of the prophecy given in verse 5. Matthew's audience was without a doubt Jewish, and thus, it was important for those particular people to understand that Jesus was a fulfillment of prophecy. Throughout his gospel Matthew uses numerous references of prophecy to prove what he is teaching is true (cf 1:23; 2:6; 11:10; 12:18–21). This is just one more example. The Jewish people longed for the day when God would send them a deliverer to make Israel relevant again, only they did not understand that Jesus was not about earthly kingdoms. His was a spiritual kingdom, John 6:15. It is also important to point out the impact the fulfillment of this prophecy would have had on the two disciples who secured His colt. Imagine being told what you would find, what you needed to say to anyone who may question you, and then finding those very circumstances presented to you exactly as you were told.

The use of a colt “never sat on before.” Both Mark and Luke record the Lord's specificity to the kind of colt that was to be used—“find a colt tied on which no one yet has ever sat.” The use of a colt that had never been sat on before was more than just a personal choice. In the Old Testament, it was common to use a “virgin” animal when it came to religious service, Numbers 19:2; Deuteronomy 21:3. We see a similar concept when we consider the use of spotless, blemish-free lambs for the use of sacrifices.

Consider for a Moment

The omniscience of the Lord. As we have already stated, Jesus knew full well where the colt would be and the reaction of its owners. Yet He still sent His disciples to Bethphage to retrieve the donkey and colt so He might have a way to enter Jerusalem. This was just another example of who He was and the power He held.

The irony of the crowd. As Jesus proceeded to Jerusalem, He was met by a crowd of people who went out of their way to shower honor and glory

upon Him. They laid their coats down on the ground for the colt to walk over. They also cut branches off of trees to provide a carpet over which the Lord could travel. They showered Him with words of praise, “Hosanna to the Son of David; BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Hosanna in the highest!” (Matthew 21:9). The irony is seen when you consider that in a matter of days, it was quite possible many of these same people would be screaming for this same Lord to be crucified.

The courage of the Lord. By this time Jesus had already spoken openly about the events surrounding His death. He knew how this story was going to end, and yet He faithfully and willingly executed the Father’s plan. Have you ever had to do something that you really didn’t feel like doing? How did that make you feel? Were you eager to get the job done? Did someone have to drag you to deal with it? The Lord needed no other motivation than the willingness to complete the Father’s will.

The compassion of the Lord. Although His entry into Jerusalem would ultimately lead to His death, He still felt compassion for the city and its inhabitants. He knew they would ultimately reject Him and would be destroyed as a result. Yet His words were words of sorrow and even caused Him to weep. He spoke of the manner in which the city would be decimated—yet another prophecy that was ultimately fulfilled in AD 70. Rome would finally have enough of the city and its inhabitants and would put to a complete end the once proud city of Jerusalem.

Conclusion

Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem must have seemed like a positive, inspiring event to behold. He did not enter as one who had conquered the world, sitting atop His white steed, accepting the adoration of the grateful inhabitants. Instead, He entered upon the back of a colt, humble and graceful. He came to offer His message of hope, peace, and salvation. Though his journey to the Great City was nearly over, there was still a long way to go before His plan would be completed.

Questions

1. From where was Jesus coming when He came upon Bethany and Bethphage?
2. Where are Bethany and Bethphage located?
3. According to John's account, with whom did Jesus interact in Bethany?
4. Where were the disciples told to find the colt?
5. What guidance did Jesus give the two disciples regarding the use of the colt?
6. What was Matthew's purpose in using so much prophecy throughout his letter? What, if any, impact should that have on us today?
7. What had the Jewish people been waiting for up to this point in time?
8. Why was it important for the colt Jesus was to ride to have never been ridden?
9. What does Jesus' ability to know where to find the colt, and the circumstances surrounding its use, show about Him?

10. What is ironic concerning the crowd that followed Him on that day?

11. Why do you think they showered Him with such adoration and praise?

12. How was entering the city of Jerusalem a courageous act by Jesus?

13. How did Jesus display His compassion for the city of Jerusalem?

14. As you think about the Lord's entry into the city, what stands out to you as an important aspect of the story?

15. How did Jesus enter Jerusalem? As a king and conqueror or as a humble servant?