What Do You Want From Your King

Today as we celebrate what is traditionally called Palm Sunday I would like to propose one application question for us to consider. That question is:

How do we gain entry into the Kingdom of Heaven? Remember the scriptures say of Christians that God has:

…he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 2:6 NLT

And Jesus said:

21 Those who are victorious will sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne.

Revelation 3:21 NLT

So how does this happen? How do we conquer (more than conquerors in Christ)? How do we gain triumphal entry into the Kingdom?

Jesus gave us a couple ways that people were trying to enter the Kingdom. The first way, and the right way is by humble faith.

3 “God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him,

for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

Matthew 5:3 NLT

18 About that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?”

2 Jesus called a little child to him and put the child among them. 3 Then he said, “I tell you the truth, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven. 4 So anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Matthew 18:1-4 NLT

The second way, which is the wrong way, is by trying to gain access by force, Jesus said:

12 From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and forceful people lay hold of it.

Matthew 11:2 NLT

One commentator explained Matthew 11:12 by writing:

the violent force their way into the kingdom for their own interests not God’s.

The prideful seek to do enough good to merit entrance into the Kingdom. Like the rich young ruler or even Peter when he pulls out a sword and cuts off Malachus’ ear, some think that by being aggressive enough and disciplined enough they will enter the kingdom by force.

But that is not how it works. Entrance into Christ’s kingdom does not come about by being able to keep the commandments since your youth and neither does it come about by the weapons of war.

So let’s look at the way that the One True King made His ascension to the throne.

Triumphal Entry

11 As Jesus and his disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of them on ahead. 2 “Go into that village over there,” he told them. “As soon as you enter it, you will see a young donkey tied there that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. 3 If anyone asks, ‘What are you doing?’ just say, ‘The Lord needs it and will return it soon.’”

4 The two disciples left and found the colt standing in the street, tied outside the front door. 5 As they were untying it, some bystanders demanded, “What are you doing, untying that colt?” 6 They said what Jesus had told them to say, and they were permitted to take it. 7 Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their garments over it, and he sat on it.

8 Many in the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him, and others spread leafy branches they had cut in the fields. 9 Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting,

“Praise God!

Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

10 Blessings on the coming Kingdom of our ancestor David!

Praise God in highest heaven!”

Mark 11:1-10 NLT

Jesus, the King of the Jews, was fulfilling the prophesies of Isaiah and Zechariah.

The Lord has sent this message to every land:

“Tell the people of Israel,

‘Look, your Savior is coming.

See, he brings his reward with him as he comes.’”

Isaiah 62:11 NLT

Rejoice, O people of Zion!

Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem!

Look, your king is coming to you.

He is righteous and victorious,

yet he is humble, riding on a donkey—

riding on a donkey’s colt.

Zechariah 9:9 NLT

The onlookers were expecting a new political King. A King who would establish His rule over all the earth, and who would put an end to the Jews temporal captivity, they were seeking God’s Kingdom for their purposes. As the people yelled “Save now,” for most, their expectations were temporal. They wanted Jesus to take away all their earthly problems. Israel had a habit of thinking a powerful, earthly King would solve things for them. In 1 Samuel, when Israel was asking Samuel for a King God said to Samuel:

7 “Do everything they say to you,” the Lord replied, “for they are rejecting me, not you. They don’t want me to be their king any longer.

1 Samuel 8:7 NLT

And God also said about Saul:

16 “About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him to be the leader of my people, Israel. He will rescue them from the Philistines, for I have looked down on my people in mercy and have heard their cry.”

1 Samuel 9:16 NLT

Israel was choosing to reject God in hope of a leader who would deliver them from their physical enemies.

So what are you asking Jesus to save you from?

Jesus did not come to deliver the Jewish people from all their political enemies. Matthew 1:21 says that Jesus came to…

“…he will save his people from their sins.”

Matthew 1:21 NLT

While the onlookers shouted save now, most of them were seeking the wrong kind of salvation. How often will we trade in something that is spiritually nourishing in order to satisfy our desire for temporal well being?

There can be no doubt, that Jesus was a different kind of King than Saul. Jesus did not ride into town on a war horse or in a chariot. He did not come with a sword made of tempered steel. He came with a sword, a sword that is every word that proceeds from His mouth. Every word is faithful and true and every word pierces our soul and causes us, in humility, to shout “Save Now!” Save me from my sins! Jesus, as He rode into Jerusalem on a colt, was the King of Kings and Lord of Lords a humble, Suffering, Sacrificial, Servant Savior. For those who were looking for a politically conquering mighty warrior Jesus would have been a major disappointment. They wanted a king who would make things happen by force!

It is true that:

…despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

Romans 8:37 NLT

But we are conquerors in Christ and like Christ, not with a sword but with a Spirit of grace, truth, love, and humility.

Our king has come to us, He is righteous and He has salvation, He rode into Jerusalem mounted on the foal of a donkey, and He calls, as His subjects, those who are ready to be part of a Kingdom that is not always identifiable among the powerful and temporal kingdoms of the earth! As the scriptures record in Luke…

20 One day the Pharisees asked Jesus, “When will the Kingdom of God come?”

Jesus replied, “The Kingdom of God can’t be detected by visible signs. 21 You won’t be able to say, ‘Here it is!’ or ‘It’s over there!’ For the Kingdom of God is already among you.”

Luke 17:20-21 NLT

If a temporal Kingdom and temporal power and privilege is the chief motivator behind our Christian service and our acts of good deeds, then we are no better than the unbelieving Jews who cried “Save Now!” and yet they knew nothing of the King and Kingdom that was right in their midst.

Our King came into His kingdom with complete humility and yet all authority.

Though he was God,

he did not think of equality with God

as something to cling to.

7 Instead, he gave up his divine privileges;

he took the humble position of a slave

and was born as a human being.

When he appeared in human form,

8 he humbled himself in obedience to God

and died a criminal’s death on a cross.

9 Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor

and gave him the name above all other names,

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

11 and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord,

to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:6-11 NLT

No one enters the kingdom of Heaven by triumphantly declaring their right to sonship, but rather as Jesus said:

“God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him,

for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

Matthew 5:3 NLT

Do you want to have a Triumphal entry into the Kingdom?

Then believe and agree with Jesus who says:

18 About that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?”

2 Jesus called a little child to him and put the child among them. 3 Then he said, “I tell you the truth, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven. 4 So anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Matthew 18:1-4 NLT

And as Peter writes:

5 In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you, dress yourselves in humility as you relate to one another, for

“God opposes the proud

but gives grace to the humble.”

6 So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor. 7 Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.

1 Peter 5:5-7 NLT

Spiritual warfare and the battle for our soul is not won with swords and prideful resolve in our own strength. It is won with humble trust in our all-powerful King of Kings and Lord of Lords.