

Scenes from His Last Days

The Last Pages the Gospels

Introduction

In recent years it has become quite popular to hear people speak of their “**Bucket List**”, those things that people want to do before this life is over. I did a Google search this week and the word “Bucket List” is found on 84,400,000 pages out there in the Internet World – pretty amazing. The pages range from just a brief mention to how you can put one together, actual lists from people, and pictures of people finishing up their “**Bucket List**”.

It is an interesting question to ponder: **What would you do if you knew your time was coming? What would make it on the list? If you have a list, what would you drop off of it if you had too? Where would you want to go and who would you want to spend time with? What kind of focus would your life take?**

As we come to **Palm Sunday of 2017**, we cannot help but have our thoughts drift back 2,000 years to the last remaining days of Jesus life. **What did He do? What dominated His thoughts? What were the last things He knew He must do?**

Time and life’s circumstances have a way of bringing an incredible laser like focus in our lives where our attention is grabbed and the things that matter are all we are focused upon. In these moments, things that don’t really matter fade into the background or they are dropped altogether.

Unfortunately for us this kind of zeroed in focus in our lives gets lost too easily.

I thought this week in my own life of specific moments where this kind of focus dominated my life. I thought of how awesome this life can be as you and I live here on planet earth. As we exist here, there are some pretty amazing things to do, see and experience. I thought about some of the things I have gotten to experience during the years I have been allowed to remain here.

- Been at the top of the Rocky Mountains, Swiss and Austrian Alps
- Stayed in a place where Hitler and his generals did some planning during WWII. It is now a Christian retreat center where every day another kingdom quite opposite of his is spoken of and proclaimed.
- Been in the slums of Dehli, India
- Been in the middle of nowhere in the beauty of Nepal and watched as hundreds of Nepalis appear from nowhere to come and hear the Gospel
- Been in the deepest of corporate worship with other Christians
- I’ve wept and cried out to God during my wife’s battle with cancer
- Seen first hand the birth of all 5 of my children

Those were some moments that brought great impact upon my life.

As we approach the last days of Jesus life, we must not let ourselves lose sight of the reality of His humanity. Just as in our lives, the last days of a trip – whether a vacation,

a mission trip, or nearing the end of life, these days are very special carry with them the heightened focus and expectation of it all coming to an end.

Again, don't lose sight of His humanity when He was here and in much of His life He was like us – he had human emotions, desires, & longings in regard to life here on earth. It is important to not let the reality of Him being God rob our perspective of His humanity. Both of them are what makes Him so unique and awesome.

The things He said and did during this last week must have been very important to Him as He knew the end was at hand. What He had come to this earth to do in regard to His obedience to the Father was fast coming to a close. We should note and remember that He lived in such a way that every moment was lived to please the Father.

Today, I would like us to look at some of the last scenes from His life and see their implications in our lives.

I want us to see the things He embraced during His last week for they will tell us much about His focus in those last days.

1. Embraced His Purpose Until Death - Luke 18:31-34

Luke 18:31 And taking the twelve, he said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. **32** For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be

mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. 33 And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise.” 34 But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.

Luke lets us know for a third time that Jesus knew exactly what was about to take place. Now this does not mean that they only heard these words three times, for He must have been telling them this often.

They should have by now understood that Jesus was not about wasting idle words, but He meant what He said. He was not an idle talker of trivial matters, but one who spoke substance each time He spoke.

What He tells them here did not fit inside the box of their limited understanding, therefore they just could not grasp it.

EXAMPLE – Box – “My Understanding of God Box” –

If we are not careful, as a Christ-follower, we will carry around with us what I call “Understanding God Box”! It is a box that we carry around with us where we get to manage what we know and get to look down on what we know and we are comfortable with. We control what happens so we can ensure we fully understand things about God.

What we do unfortunately with this box is that we severely limit our understanding of Him in the most minute of ways.

When things don’t fit inside here, then we literally don’t know why God is doing something or what Jesus is doing.

You will have a very little Jesus if this is what you carry around with you.

****He does not fit in a box or even the universe – so we should just embrace the “largeness of His glory and embrace the reality that He is just bigger, better, wise, powerful, etc.**

People who have one of these never reach any kind of spiritual maturity.

Jesus’ Embrace of Who He Is

Jesus embraced every bit of what the Father had for Him. While they did not fully get it, Jesus knew exactly what obedience to the Father contained.

Because He knows all things, He can be completely trusted in all ways!

Loved them Until the End

John 13:1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

I love this verse that easily gets skipped over so we can look at His washing of the disciples feet.

Not only did Jesus embrace fully the Father's plan for Him, but He also embraced the Apostles with His great love until the end.

Q: How do you know that He loved them until the end?

John 13:2 During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, 4 rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. 5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

The expression of His great love is seen here so beautifully in His model of servanthood. Even before He does this, the text says that Jesus knew already that the devil had put it into the heart of Judas to betray Him, the Holy God in flesh served man who was so tainted with lack of faith, doubt, sin, etc.

2. Embraced the Joy of their Worship – Luke 19:28-40

Luke 19:28 And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29 When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, 30 saying, "Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. 31 If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this: 'The Lord has need of it.'" 32 So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. 33 And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" 34 And they said, "The Lord has need of it."

On their way to Jerusalem for the Passover, the whole region was full of people because so many were traveling to Jerusalem for the Passover. As they draw nearer to Bethany, which is not far from Jerusalem, Jesus sends two disciples on ahead into the city to get a colt for it is going to be used for a great purpose on this day. He tells them that if anyone asks, **'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this: 'The Lord has need of it.'**" This is a very interesting for these two to experience.

****Example – I encourage to go to target, Lowes, or a restaurant parking lot after church today and go up to somewhere getting in their car with these exact words – "The Lord has need of it" and see what they say!**

In the text, it happens just as Jesus said and it clearly seems all was okay with this spontaneous moment for the owner of the colt.

**If Jesus can do something so unique as that,
don't underestimate what He can Sovereignly do in our lives.**

35 And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. 36 And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. 37 As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, 38 saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" 39 And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." 40 He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."

They bring the colt to Jesus and as He gets on it and begins to ride, the people start to put their cloaks down on the ground. Matthew tells this story in this manner. **Matthew 21:8 Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.** Some of the people went and cut down branches from nearby trees

All of a sudden on the road, this spontaneous worship encounter happens. It is not just the 12, but this great other larger group of disciples, and they start to rejoice and praise God for everything they have seen with Jesus. They get caught up in the moment and worship right there on the streets. This is worship not confined to a building!

**It is spontaneous, sincere, unashamed,
and Jesus centered!**

What we are reading here is one of the rarest glimpses of worship in the Gospels by those closest to Jesus. It is the most dramatic and public worship and it is happening in on the road to and then in the streets of Jerusalem.

It says the **"whole multitude of His disciples"** were doing this, which would include the 12.

It says they:

(1) Rejoiced

(2) Praised

They cut it loose and declare, “**Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!**” These words are amazing for they are affirming that Jesus is the Messiah. There is no mention of man, just the greatness of Christ.

The essence of true worship is always centered on the glory of His character.

When worship goes into the streets, away from the safety of the building of the church, that kind of worship is Holy Spirit ordained and it is unashamed worship.

19:39 And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.”

Not to anyone’s surprise, but the Pharisees have a really big problem with what is taking place concerning Jesus from the people. *Their issue is that worship is to belong to God alone, and in that stance they were right.*

The problem was this: They refused to acknowledge Jesus as the God and the Messiah.

So they let Jesus have an earful and they tell him to rebuke his disciples from their worship. In my experience I always find this to be true:

**Religious people love religion & rules
and they never get or understand Relationship people.**

Religious people love rules and they exalt those rules often to an equal status with scripture.

The reality is this in regard to worship:

**Man does not get to define what it look likes,
but God is the one who has set the pattern of worship**

Therefore we must get in line with His design.

19:40 He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

Jesus tells them that the worship of Him is going to happen whether it is people or rocks for that is the main purpose of all creation. His Words must have painted the most unique look on their face when He tells them the silencing of people’s worship would

just lead to the rocks doing the very same thing. ***In essence, Jesus is telling them – “I am the center of everything and that includes things in creation like rocks.***

Worship is such a big deal in our lives for most of our lives is defined by who or what we worship.

**When you and I lose Jesus as the sole object of our worship,
then we will naturally lose the objective/purpose of our lives
- which is glorifying Him.**

So, during the last week of Jesus' life, He embraced the joy of people's worship of Him.

Earlier in His ministry He would tell someone after a miracle to not go and tell anyone, but now, in the last week of His life – He lets the acknowledgement flow for all to see and experience.

3. Embraced His Community of Faith - Various

John 12:1 Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. **2** So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. (arrives sometime on Saturday)

Matthew 21:17 And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there. (After the Triumphal entry and turning over of the money changers)

Matthew 21:18 In the morning, as he was returning to the city, he became hungry. **19** And seeing a fig tree by the wayside, he went to it and found nothing on it but only leaves. And he said to it, “May no fruit ever come from you again!” And the fig tree withered at once.

First 3 Nights

During his last week here on earth, just days from the Cross Jesus spends that last week mainly in Bethany, for it was just a couple of miles outside of Jerusalem. It appears that on Saturday, Sunday and Monday evenings were spent in Bethany, likely at the home of Mary and Martha. That means that 3 of his last 6 days before He was arrested were spent just outside of Jerusalem in Bethany.

Bethany was a special place in the Gospels as revealed in these texts:

John 11:18 Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off,

John 1:28 These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

John 12:1 Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. 3 Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

Luke 24:50 And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. 51 While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.

Third and Fourth Nights

Incidentally, the fourth and fifth nights were spent on Mount Olivet – Tuesday and Wednesday. It was on the outskirts of

Luke 21:37 And every day he was teaching in the temple, *but at night he went out and lodged on the mount called Olivet.* 38 And early in the morning all the people came to him in the temple to hear him.

Q: What does this reveal about Jesus during the last week?

It reveals this – His last days were spent with His intimate community of faith. **As He approached the most stressful hour of His earthly life, the one where He would bear the sin of the world, Jesus did not withdraw from people, but He stayed engaged with others.**

He seems to have made sure that He engaged with others, stayed surrounded by faith friends. He did not finish His days living in isolation.

Think on this with me for a moment – He also knew that all of those people He was spending his last days with in his most dire hour would flee from Him in the Garden of Gethsemane when the pressure from the government and religious leaders would reach its highest apex.

Matthew 26:55 At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. 56 But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” *Then all the disciples left him and fled.*

Even with this knowledge, he stayed connected to His community of faith. Even beyond that, in a moment we will see that He spent most of that last week pouring His life into people through teaching the Scripture. The ones He was teaching in just a few days would be shouting in Pilate’s courtyard – “Crucify Him!”.

Q: How about you? Are you making sure you are connecting to other during your hard days? Or...Are you shutting yourself off, moving to a place of isolation from relationships?

For some of us, we can really struggle **LIVING LIFE BEYOND ACQUAINTANCES!**

The Life of Blaming Others

What you can find often with people who live isolated in faith is this: they will blame others for their life that is full of acquaintances and lack of deep friends, but if you were to dig deep enough, you would find that they in either subtle and blatant ways - push people away from them.

Honestly, within Christian Community, Biblical community is more than just hanging out, but it is better defined as being on mission together.

Example – The Perils of Individualism

3. Embraced the Purity of the Corporate Gathering – Matthew 21:12-17 ; Mark 11:15-19 ; Luke 19:45-48

It is interesting to note that three of the Gospel writers each tell of the same instance regarding Christ during the early part of His last week, actually on Palm Sunday. What is seen from Him has only been seen earlier in the Gospels one other time. It is a side of His passion that is not talked about too much, but it is one that reveals much about how Jesus saw the worship of God in first century Judaism.

*****Read this one only*****

Matthew 21:12 And Jesus entered the temple[b] and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. 13 He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers.” 14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. 15 But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they were indignant, 16 and they said to him, “Do you hear what these are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read, “‘Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise’?” 17 And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there.

Mark 11:15 And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-

changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. 16 And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. 17 And he was teaching them and saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers." 18 And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching. 19 And when evening came they went out of the city.

Luke 19:45 And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, 46 saying to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of robbers."

To Jesus, the corporate worship in the Temple was a really big deal and it appears from the Apostle John that this was not the first time Jesus got dealt with the hypocrisy and corruption concerning about worship in the Temple for early on in his Gospel he wrote...

John 2:13 The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. 15 And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. 16 And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." 17 His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

Jesus goes from enjoying the public worship from everyone to cleansing the temple from its impurity!

One of the things the church at large has not done a good with is the manner in which we present Jesus. Unfortunately, the Bible does not unveil Jesus as someone who is weak, rather it communicates someone who is really strong and of deep character.

When you take a close look at Jesus in the money-changers text as well as other places, you see a Man's Man. He was not some soft-spoken longhaired aloof hippy type. Here are some concrete examples that reveal otherwise:

- Drives out the commerce and robbery in the temple. **Mark 11:16** And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. This is not someone who is going *"Please don't do that for I don't like that"*. **John 2:15** And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. ***Awesome – He knows how to make a whip!***
- He did not buy into what the culture had established. For example: Women, Samaritans, Romans, Lepers, the dead, tax collectors, and the Sabbath. He challenged the falsehood of the religious authority for their blatant hypocrisy. ***Timid men do not confront the establishment of the day, they go along with it!***
- He was a Man on a mission and He never strayed from it. He never tried to get out of it. He was horribly beaten, forced to carry His own cross, nailed to a cross ; hung there for 6 hours. Weak minded people can't endure that! He embraced it all.

- Stood for righteousness – Real men stand for this.
- Mom's brought their kids to Him and after he turns over the tables, in the temple the children are saying in **Matthew 21:16** "Hosanna to the Son of David".

Real men emanate strength that comes from holiness.

I will say that if we don't...

**Possess inner holiness as a man or woman,
then we have not reached
Biblical manhood or womanhood.**

This text affirms that the purity of the corporate gathering matters to Jesus.

Q: Does it to us?

4. Embraced the Ministry of the Word – Luke 19:47-48

Luke 19:47 And he was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him, **48** but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words.

When you look at all four of the Gospels, they reveal that Jesus spent most of his last week teaching the scripture.

**Scripture held a high place for Jesus
for the Scriptures speak of Him.**

Examples of His Priority with the Scripture in the last week

- **Matthew 21-25** all teaching and all happen within the last week of His life.
- **John 12:20-John 17** Teaching and prayer
- **Luke 20-21** Teaching and unique encounters with teaching moments
- **Mark 11:20-13:37** - Teaching

Day of His Resurrection

- **Two on Emmaus Road - Luke 24:13-35**

Luke 24:25 And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! **26** Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" **27** And beginning with Moses and

all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

- **Disciples on Evening of Resurrection – Luke 24:44-47**

Luke 24:44 Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance for[c] the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

Ex. The Village that Lived by the Bible

5. Embraced the Brokenness of the City –

Matthew 23:37-39 & Luke 13:34-35 ; 19:41-44

Matthew 23:37 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! 38 See, your house is left to you desolate. 39 For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

Luke 13:34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! 35 Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’”

Luke 19:41 And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, 42 saying, “Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side 44 and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

Theology of the City

1. Know the Present and History of the City – Matthew 23:37a ; Luke 19:34a

2. Love and Compassion for the City – Matthew 23:37b & Luke 19:42

Matthew 23:37b How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings,

Luke 19:42 saying, “Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace!

3. Great Detriment to the City – Matthew 23:37c ; Luke 13:34c

23:37c and you were not willing!

13:34c and you were not willing!

Sin and rebellion is still the problem in our lives and in the world!

The great detriment in the cities of the world is people are not willing to come to Christ.

Jerusalem’s real issue always was that its inhabitants were not willing to walk with God and this was evidenced often in their rejection of Him. It is the unfortunate story of the Old Testament.

Jesus wanted to gather them together close to Him “as a hen gathers her brood under her wings”, but they just never really wanted that kind of nearness to God.

Q: How about you and I? Do we want to be drawn in and protected and loved?

4. Ignorance of the City – Luke 19:42

Luke 19:42 saying, “Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.

The great ignorance of the city is that they have no idea about what would really bring peace. The cities look everywhere else for their hope.

Why do cities have the issues that they do?

Just like Jerusalem, when you reject the love and plan of God, the only natural thing that will occur will be things like: Crime, murder, adultery, theft, gossip, slander, wrath, lying, cheating, etc.

When God's standard is rejected, then one of two things happen in a nation:

- 1. False gods are created**
- 2. Self becomes the standard and "Me-centeredness will dominate".**

Here is Jesus approaching the city for one of the last several times and it was still resisting His rightful authority. He was willing to make peace, but it was going to have to be on His terms, not theirs.

Luke 13:34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!

Jesus Weeps over the City

He weeps for two reasons:

1. Don't Know What Makes Peace – Luke 19:42

Luke 19:42 saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes."

2. Never Saw Him for Who He Was – Luke 19:44c

19:44c because you did not know the time of your visitation."

They never knew they were the special generation to whom the Messiah came in the flesh. They never saw it or understood that He was near.

6. Embraced the Cup the Father Gave Him – John 18:11

John 18:1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. 2 Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. 3 So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons. 4 Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, “Whom do you seek?” 5 They answered him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “I am he.” Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. 6 When Jesus said to them, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground. 7 So he asked them again, “Whom do you seek?” And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.” 8 Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go.” 9 This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: “Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one.” 10 Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) 11 So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?”

The cross reveals two very unique things:

1. The kind of world we have and what is needed to bring restored.

2. The kind of God we have and what He did so we can be restored from sin.

Ex. English Law and Sinners Finding Refuge