

Part 4, Paper 171, On the Way ...Jerusalem, Midwayer Commission

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Jesus's journey, spiritual kingdom, disciples' confusion, true greatness, radical discipleship, counting the cost, earthly kingdom, suffering Messiah, Herod's threat, Bartimaeus's healing, Zacchaeus's repentance, parable of the pounds, stewardship, service over status, letting go

SPEAKERS

Sarah, John

S Sarah 00:00
Okay, so this deep dive, it's a big one. We're walking with Jesus to Jerusalem,

J John 00:06
big weeks before the crucifixion is final Passover, right?

S Sarah 00:10
And he kind of slips out of his base camp, right?

J John 00:13
Yeah, you wouldn't hit for smaller towns. You

S Sarah 00:15
wouldn't expect that, right? For somebody who everyone thinks is going to be king, yeah,

J John 00:19
it's not exactly the triumphant entrance you might expect. It's

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Sarah 00:23

like everybody else is focused on Jerusalem, right, where all the Passover stuff is gonna happen, right? But Jesus uses this time for these smaller towns, these more intimate teachings and encounters.

J

John 00:36

And it's these weeks that are so fascinating, because our source here, the Urantia Book, yeah, it gives us these amazing glimpses into them. Yes, really incredible, almost like we're walking right alongside fly on the wall. Perspective, Jesus

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Sarah 00:50

and the disciples, yeah, hearing their private conversations. Absolutely, man, were the disciples confused sometimes? Well, they were so sure a physical kingdom was about to happen.

J

John 01:01

I mean, you can practically feel the disconnect, right, right? Jesus is talking about a spiritual kingdom, transformation of the heart, yeah. But the disciples are thinking thrones and armies, Oh,

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Sarah 01:17

yeah. Like a very different kind of path, very different, which I think makes this interaction with Psalm a so interesting. Oh yeah, she's the mother of James and John, right? And she goes up to Jesus, who she believes is about to be king, right? And basically asks for the best positions for her sons.

J

John 01:34

I mean, can you imagine going up to someone you think is about to be king? Yeah? And saying, Hey, can my sons? Yeah, have the best seats in the house. So to speak, it's like the ultimate

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Sarah 01:44

it really is. Some of it is,

J

John 01:47

but it speaks to something I think, that's very human. You know, his desire for your loved ones to have influence, to be close to power, absolutely. But Jesus's response is so telling, yeah.

to have influence, to be close to power, absolutely. But Jesus's response is so telling, yeah,

S Sarah 01:59
he's very gentle about it, but he basically tells them, You don't know what you're asking. Yeah? He

J John 02:04
tries to redirect their focus from this worldly power to the true meaning of greatness.

S Sarah 02:10
It's like he's saying, Look, guys, yeah, you're focused on the wrong kind of power, exactly. And that message that true greatness comes from service, yeah, not from status.

J John 02:21
Service, not status.

S Sarah 02:23
It's so relevant even today. Oh, absolutely, I see it everywhere, right? It's constant driving to get ahead, to get ahead, to get the corner office, to get recognition,

J John 02:33
yeah, the title, yeah, the title, the bigger office, yeah, it never ends, right? But Jesus is challenging that whole notion, yeah, he is. He's not interested in creating this hierarchy of earthly power, right? He's calling for something much more radical, right, a complete shift in perspective, a reordering of our priorities. Yes,

S Sarah 02:54
and I think that's nowhere more apparent than in his counting the cost sermon.

J John 02:59
Oh, man, that's a powerful one. So picture this Jesus

S Sarah 03:00



Sarah 03:03

standing on a rock, yeah, addressing this massive crowd, huge crowd, and he lays it all out there. Yeah? The true cost of following him. He doesn't sugarcoat it. No, he does.



John 03:14

He's talking about a level of commitment, right, that most people just weren't ready for. And



Sarah 03:18

honestly, I don't think much has changed because he's talking about,



John 03:22

hey, what was he saying? Forsaking family, yeah, forsaking family possessions, comfort, security. Possessions comfort, even life itself, if necessary. Yeah, and that's not



Sarah 03:31

that's a hard teaching. It's not like checking a box on a Sunday morning, right? Yeah, this is a complete surrender to something bigger than yourself. It's a complete life changing. And I love how our source here really makes us it really does feel the weight of his words on the crowd. You could practically hear a pin drop, because remember, 1000s had been following him.



John 03:52

I know it's incredible, right? The crowds he drew were massive, but



Sarah 03:56

as they hear this and the reality of what he's saying sinks in. People start turning away. They



John 04:03

just weren't ready for it, right? They were expecting a conqueror, yeah, a king who would overthrow Roman rule,



Sarah 04:09

right? A very tangible Yes, earthly kingdom, an earthly kingdom. Instead, they got a call to radical discipleship, yes,

J John 04:18
a challenge to look inward, yeah, to examine their own hearts, right? And to align themselves with a different kind of power altogether, right?

S Sarah 04:25
It's a whole different ballgame. It really is. And you know,

J John 04:29
it's not just the crowds who missed the point, right? Even Jesus's closest disciples, yeah, you know the ones who are right there with him, witnessing the miracles, hearing him teach, yeah,

S Sarah 04:38
they're with him day in and day out. Right? Exactly. They still didn't always get it. They were still looking

J John 04:43
for that earthly kingdom, yeah?

S Sarah 04:44
Like, they couldn't see past right, their own expectations, their own preconceived notions, right? And this is where I think things get almost, I know it's like, because here's Jesus, right, talking about sacrifice, right? Talking about service, yeah, humility and what do some of the Disciples? Do they go out and arm themselves? I

J John 05:03
know it's like they're getting ready for a revolution. I know, like

S Sarah 05:05
it's straight out of an action movie or something. It really is. And

J John 05:09
our course here tells us that Simon Peter and Simon relative, okay, both incredibly loyal to

our source here tells us that Simon Peter and Simon Zealotes, okay, both incredibly loyal to Jesus, don't get me wrong, right? But they had secretly given the other disciples swords. What? Yeah, like, actual weapons. They were ready to go to war for him. They were ready to defend their idea of the Messiah. Wow, even if it meant using violence, it just

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Sarah 05:30

goes to show how easy it is to get so caught up in your own version of how things should be. Oh, absolutely, that you totally miss what's right in front of you. You

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John 05:38

miss the point entirely.

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Sarah 05:39

And it's in this atmosphere, right? With all this misunderstanding, and really, I think, misplaced anticipation, yeah, that Jesus reveals to his apostles, yeah, what's waiting for him in Jerusalem? And

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John 05:50

he lays it all out there. Does he sugarcoat it? He doesn't mince words. No. He tells them about the betrayal, the suffering, the death he's going to face. And

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Sarah 06:01

you would think that would be the moment. You'd think so,

J

John 06:03

right? Like, okay, now they'll finally understand, right?

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Sarah 06:06

But it doesn't really click, does

J

John 06:09

it? It doesn't compute for them, no, because a suffering Messiah, right, a king who dies on a cross, yeah, that does not compute with their understanding of who the Messiah is supposed to

S Sarah 06:20
be right? It goes against everything they thought they knew exactly. They're holding

J John 06:24
on to this hope, this belief that he will rise up,

S Sarah 06:29
overthrow the Romans, defeat

J John 06:30
their enemies, yeah, establish a kingdom on their terms, right?

S Sarah 06:35
Their version of the story, their version. It's almost like they can't hear the truth. It's

J John 06:39
like they're blinded by their own expectations. Yeah, so they can't see what's right in front of them, even when it's staring them right in the face exactly, and it's right in the middle of all of this, okay, all of this drama that some Pharisees approach Jesus. Okay. Now these Pharisees, they weren't always on the best of terms with Jesus, right? They usually weren't right, but they come to him with a warning. Okay, what do they say? They tell him that Herod, the same Herod who had John the Baptist, killed, oh no, is threatened by Jesus, oh boy, and is planning to have him killed too.

S Sarah 07:11
It's like a death sentence. It's

J John 07:12
a chilling reminder of the very real danger that Jesus is facing. So what does he do? Well, you'd think he might back down right, postpone his trip to Jerusalem. He'd be laying low for a while, exactly. But he doesn't it. Doesn't he doubles down. Wow. He sends a message back to Herod, saying, The Son of Man will be perfected in his mission on earth and prepared to ascend to the Father. He's like, I know what's coming, and I'm not afraid. It's incredible. He's operating on a

 Sarah 07:38
whole other level, right? Like he knows this is all part of a bigger plan, exactly,

 John 07:42
and it's in the midst of all of this drama and foreshadowing that we get this beautiful story of Jesus's compassion. Okay, tell me about it. So there's this blind beggar named Bartimaeus, okay? And he's heard stories about Jesus's healing power, right? So he starts shouting from the roadside Jesus. Jesus, have mercy on

 Sarah 08:02
me. You can just feel the desperation in his voice, but also

 John 08:07
this incredible faith that Jesus can help him.

 Sarah 08:11
And does Jesus ignore him? No, he stops. He stops for this one guy. He

 John 08:15
stops for this one guy, and he heals him. Wow. He restores his sight right there on the spot.

 08:20
What a moment. It's

 John 08:21
this incredible reminder that even as Jesus is walking towards his own suffering, he never loses sight of those who are hurting, right? He's still present. He's still present. He's still available to those who need him. That's so powerful. And speaking of unexpected encounters, oh, there's more. Oh, yeah, we meet Zacchaeus. Okay? Who is Zacchaeus? He's a wealthy tax collector, okay? And why is that a big deal? Well, in those days, tax collectors were not popular people. Why not? They were seen as collaborators with the Roman authorities, often accused of

exploiting their own people. So not exactly the good guys, not exactly. So you can imagine the shockwaves when Jesus chooses to stay at Zacchaeus house. Are you kidding me? Nope. This is, like, unheard of, right? It

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Sarah 09:03

flies in the face of social and religious norms. Wow. But Jesus sees something in Zacchaeus. What does he see? A longing for something more, a desire for change. I mean,

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John 09:14

that's what's so amazing about Jesus, right? I know it's like he

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Sarah 09:17

sees right through all the labels, yeah, all the preconceived notions. Yeah. He

J

John 09:22

doesn't wait for people to clean up their act exactly before he welcomes them in. He meets them right where they are. And Zacchaeus, he's like, the perfect example, Oh, totally. Because here's this guy who's gotten rich right off of a corrupt system. Yeah,

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Sarah 09:36

he's benefited from the very thing that's oppressing his people,

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John 09:38

right? And yet, the moment he encounters Jesus, yes, like, overcome with this, yeah. It's like, this instant repentance, right? He realizes the error of his ways, and he's immediately like, I need to make things right. Yeah? He vows to give away his wealth. Yeah. He's like, I'm gonna give back what I've taken and then some. And it's not

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Sarah 09:56

just about the money, right? No, it's about a complete change of heart. Yeah, absolutely. It makes you wonder what could happen, yeah, if we let ourselves be that open,

J

John 10:04

right? What if we approached our own shortcomings with that kind of honesty? Yeah, exactly.

And you know, it's right after this whole encounter with Zacchaeus, okay that Jesus shares the parable of the pounds.

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Sarah 10:15

Okay, and remind me again about that one. So

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John 10:17

in this parable, Jesus is talking about stewardship, okay, about being entrusted with certain gifts and opportunities, okay, and the responsibility to use them wisely.

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Sarah 10:28

It's like he's speaking directly to his disciples here, right? Oh, absolutely, because they're still so focused on this idea of earthly power and authority, right?

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John 10:35

They're still waiting for the kingdom to come in all its glory, right? Exactly. But Jesus is trying to shift their focus? Yeah, he's saying it's not about ruling over others.

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Sarah 10:46

It's about being faithful with what you've been given exactly even when you think you're destined for something bigger. It's

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John 10:52

about making the most of every opportunity right here, right now.

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Sarah 10:56

Yeah, that's such a good word, because it's so easy to get caught up. It really is in wanting more, in chasing after status and recognition. Oh,

J

John 11:06

I know it's like we're always looking for the next promotion, the bigger house, the fancier title, exactly. But Jesus is reminding us that true leadership, yeah, true greatness, it comes from serving others,

S Sarah 11:16
and not just when it's convenient or when we feel like it, right?

J John 11:20
No, it's about showing up consistently, yeah, even when it's hard, even when we rather be doing something else. Wow. So

S Sarah 11:26
here they are on the road to Jerusalem, the crowds, the disciples, even Jesus Himself. Yeah, they're all carrying their own expectations, their own hopes and fears. It's like they're all on the edge of something huge, right? And as we leave them there, yeah, on the cusp of these events that are about to change everything, it

J John 11:44
makes you think it really does about our own journeys. Yeah,

S Sarah 11:48
are we willing to let go of our own agenda, our own need for control and trust that, even in the midst of uncertainty, yeah, even in the midst of suffering, yeah, we're being guided toward something more,

J John 11:59
something truer, something more beautiful than we could ever imagine, something

S Sarah 12:03
worth sacrificing for. Absolutely it's a lot to think about. It really is thanks for diving into this with me. Always a pleasure. You.