

56. TURNING POWER RIGHT SIDE UP (JOHN 12:12-19) OCTOBER 27,
2013
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, ATCHISON, PASTOR LEE HENDON

IF A MARTIAN WERE TO SET FOOT ON EARTH HE WOULD QUICKLY DETERMINE THAT TRUTH BE KNOWN PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL IS THE *NATIONAL RELIGION* IN THE U.S.A. - COLLEGE & HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL ARE ITS SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES. ALL ARE VERY WELL ATTENDED IN STUNNING SANCTUARIES - GREAT WEALTH IS AMASSED & OFFERED TO THE FOOTBALL GODS - EMOTIONS RUN RAMPANT - ALLEGIANCE TO ONE'S TEAM SHAPES A PERSON & IDENTIFIES THEIR COMRADES OF THE FAITH - COMMIT-MENT & FAITH IN ONE'S TEAM LEADS THE BATTLE CRY. I HAVE BEEN THERE, DONE THAT - AS A YOUNG ADULT MY BLOOD RAN BLUE & SILVER FOR THE COWBOYS. NOTHING GOT IN THE WAY OF WORSHIPPING IN THEIR CATHEDRAL. WHETHER THEY WON OR LOST ON SUNDAYS WOULD MAKE OR BREAK MY ATTITUDE FOR THE WEEK. SURE I ATTENDED CHURCH BUT THE COWBOYS STIMULATED ME & INSPIRED ME TO NEW HEIGHTS. THEN I FINALLY CAUGHT ON TO THE *BLASPHEMY* OF IT ALL - THE WISDOM OF THIS WORLD IS BUT FOOLISHNESS TO GOD - THE POWER OF THIS WORLD IS BUT WEAKNESS TO GOD. WHAT IN THE WORLD WAS I THINKING & WHY WAS I WASTING SO MUCH TIME, EMOTION & MONEY ON SOMETHING THAT REALLY DID NOT MATTER!

THE CHIEFS ARE NOW 7 - 0; HOW ABOUT DEM CHIEFS!!! WE QUICKLY SHOUT OUT - "WE'RE #1; WE'RE #1!!!" THE CHIEFS STAND ALONE ON THE PILE OF PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL TEAMS AS THE ONLY UNDEFEATED TEAM IN THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE. IT IS FUN & DOES CAPTURE OUR IMAGINATIONS FOR THE SUPER BOWL IF ONLY FOR A MOMENT. ARROWHEAD STADIUM IS PACKED WITH RABID FANS EVERY GAME DAY - THE LOUDEST STADIUM IN ALL THE NFL. YES, A MARTIAN WOULD THINK FOOTBALL TO BE OUR NATIONAL RELIGION - NO MATTER OUR PROTESTING.

WE SIT HERE CALMLY & LISTEN TO THE GOSPEL STORY ABOUT JESUS - SELF-PROCLAIMED & CROWD FAVORITE AS THE VERY SON OF GOD. YOU CANNOT SENSE THE FOOTBALL CROWD TYPE FRENZY & RUSH OF POWER & PRIDE IN THESE VERSES UNLESS YOU TAKE OFF YOUR FOOTBALL GLASSES & PUT ON YOUR

GOD-LENS. JESUS WAS COMING TO TOWN - JERUSALEM - CAPITAL OF RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY IN PALESTINE. ALL SUPER BOWLS WERE PLAYED IN JERUSALEM. IF A MARTIAN WERE TO HAVE STEPPED INTO THAT SCENE AT THE MOMENT OF JOHN 12 - HE WLD, INDEED, HAVE THOUGHT JESUS TO HAVE BEEN THE RELIGIOUS HOPE & NATIONAL RELIGIOUS LEADER OF THE DAY. INDEED, HE WAS! THE JEWISH RELIGIOUS LEADERS FEARED & KNEW THAT TO BE TRUE.

A HUGE MOB THAT NO FOOTBALL STADIUM COULD CONTAIN WAS RUSHING OUT TO HAVE A PEP RALLY AROUND JESUS. THE TICKER TAPE PARADE HAD GATHERED. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT JERUSALEM SWELLED TO 2 MILLION OR SO ON PASSOVER. NOW THEY WERE RUSHING OUT TO MOB JESUS. THEY COULD NOT CONTAIN THEIR ENTHUSIASM & ZEAL OVER THE POSSIBILITIES OF JESUS AS GOD'S SON. EVERYTHING ELSE PALLED IN COMPARISON. IF THIS WERE TO CONTINUE ALL PEOPLE IN PALESTINE WOULD BE BELIEVERS & TEAM JUDAISM WOULD BE A TEAM OF THE PAST! GAME OVER!!! GIVE JESUS THE SUPER BOWL RING RIGHT NOW!!!

RAISING LAZARUS FROM A FOUR DAY SLUMBER WITH DEATH EVEN SURPASSED AN UNDEFEATED SEASON IN FOOTBALL. LAZARUS WAS ON THE SIDELINES FOR THE FANS TO SEE. THIS WAS NOT A TRICK PLAY - IT REVEALED THE GODLY POWER OF JESUS. THE SIGNALS WERE CLEAR - JESUS IS GOD'S SON! THE HOLY ONE OF GOD - THE MESSIAH!

SO THE OPPOSING TEAM TOOK TO TRICKERY & PLANNED TO GET RID OF THE EVIDENCE - LAZARUS WOULD HAVE TO GO - A DEAD BODY PROVED DEATH - A LIVE ONCE-DEAD BODY PROVED JESUS WAS WHO HE SAID HE WAS. THEY WOULD HAVE TO CLEAN UP THIS MESS BEFORE IT GOT EVEN MORE OUT OF HAND. THE MOB'S HOPES WERE RUNNING WAY TO HIGH - TIME FOR A JERUSALEM-REALITY-CHECK / GAME / MATCH. GAME OVER. THEY WOULD HAVE TO MOVE QUICKLY BECAUSE JESUS HAD GAINED A HUGE FOLLOWING & POWERFUL MOMENTUM. THEY WOULD HAVE TO TAKE DRASTIC MEASURES TO REVERSE JESUS' MOMENTUM FOR VICTORY. JESUS SCORED AT WILL & WAS HOLDING THEM TO A SHUTOUT. JESUS DID NOT PLAY BY THE MAN-MADE RULES OF POWER & PRIDE. I AM NOT PICKING ON THE CHIEFS OR PROFES-SIONAL FOOTBALL - WHAT THE HECK, I LOVE FOOTBALL. I AM EMPHASIZING THAT WOE ARE WE FOR NOT GETTING EVEN

MORE EXCITED ABOUT THIS JESUS OF OURS!

YES, TIMES WERE GOOD FOR OUR LORD JESUS. HIS POPULARITY HAD NEVER BEEN HIGHER. HIS MOTHER WOULD HAVE BEEN SO PROUD. YOU KNOW HOW MOTHERS CAN BE. THE MOB OF PEOPLE WANTED TO MAKE JESUS THEIR KING! WE WILL DO GOOD TO GET A GLIMPSE OF HOW JESUS DEALT WITH PRIDE & POWER. HIS ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM SHOWED HOW HE WAS CONTINUOUSLY TURNING PRIDE & POWER RIGHT SIDE UP.

MY MINISTRY SPANS THE COURSE OF 40+ YEARS & IT APPEARS TO ME THAT WE HAVE BEEN SO CONDITIONED & SHAPED BY THE WAYS OF THE WORLD THAT WE AUTOMATICALLY PLAY BY THEIR PLAY BOOK OF AGGRESSION, HOSTILITY, ANGER & COMPETITIVE SPIRIT. WHEN OUR PRIDE & POWER ARE PUT TO THE TEST OR CHALLENGED WE RESORT TO THEIR PLAY BOOK. YEARS OF COMPETITIVE SPORTS, SCHOOL GRADES, JOB HUNTING & ON & ON UNTIL DOMINANCE HAS BECOME OUR MODUM OPERATUM FOR PRIDE & POWER - ONE UP-ONE DOWN; I WIN-YOU LOOSE. JESUS MODELED A DIFFERENT WAY FOR US. OFTEN TIMES I DESPAIR & WONDER IF ANYONE REALLY WANTS TO PLAY - LIVE - FOR TEAM JESUS? WILL OUR CHURCH - WILL YOU AS CHRIST FOLLOWERS - YIELD TO JESUS' DEMONSTRATION OF POWER & PRIDE?

THERE WERE OVER 200,000 PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THAT DEMONSTRATION ON THE FIRST PALM SUNDAY - MORE THAN ANY FOOTBALL STADIUM COULD HOLD. BUT JESUS WOULD NOT MOUNT THEIR WAR HORSE AS KING, WOULD NOT RAISE THE SWORD OF WAR TO CHAMPION JEWISH NATIONALISM - NOR WILL HE OURS - THOUGH WE OFTEN THINK HE WILL. THE PRESSURE TO CONFORM MUST HAVE BEEN OVERWHELMING - THE CHANTING CROWDS, THE PHYSICAL & EMOTIONAL FORCE OF 200K+ PEOPLE, THEIR HOMAGE THRU THE SPREADING OF GARMENTS & TREE BRANCHES - A WEAKER MAN WOULD HAVE GIVEN IN TO THE PEOPLE'S DEMANDS. WE SEE IN JESUS COMPLETE, CONTROLLED, FOCUSED POWER - AS SHAPED & DEFINED BY THE SON OF GOD.

JESUS TURNED THE MOB'S IDEAS ABOUT POWER INTO A DEMONSTRATION ON HOW TO HANDLE & USE IT. POWER WAS TO TAKE NOT THE SHAPE OF A BRUTAL, AWESOME CHARIOT OF DOMINANCE, FOR JESUS RODE ON THE COLT OF AN ASS - A SIGN OF HUMILITY, SERVITUDE & PEACE. ON TEAM JESUS, HUMILITY & SERVITUDE ARE NOT ACTS OF A COWARD, NOT A SIGN OF

WEAK-NESS. JESUS SHOWED THEM/US THAT HUMILITY, SERVICE & PEACE ARE THE GREATEST EXPRESSIONS OF POWER. HUMILITY, SERVICE & PEACE SHOW, "I AM STRONG ENOUGH TO EXALT THE WELFARE OF OTHERS ABOVE MYSELF." EVEN TO THE POINT OF THE CROSS. PSALM SUNDAY, GAME DAY, WAS THE EVER SO BRIEF TRIUMPH OF HUMILITY & PEACE. WHICH HAS PERSEVERED? WORLDLY POWER OR JESUS POWER?

JESUS KNOWS THE HEARTS OF PEOPLE & KNOWS THAT PRIDE, HOSTILITY, FORCE MAKE FOR WAR NOT FOR PEACE. IF WE WOULD CHAMPION PEACE WE MUST LIVE LIVES OF HUMILITY & SERVICE, LOVE & PEACE. JESUS HAS NEVER LOST A GAME. TEAM JESUS IS OUT TO CHANGE THE WORLD - JESUS IS OUR QUARTER-BACK - HE HAS NEVER LOST A GAME BY MAKING US ALL WINNERS!

NORMALLY WHEN YOU JOIN A TEAM YOU WANT TO PLAY TO WIN EVERY GAME BY DEFEATING, KILLING, DESTROYING EVERY OTHER TEAM. ON TEAM JESUS ALL THE RULES HAVE CHANGED. THE TEAM THAT WINS THE MOST IS THE ONE WHO LOVES THE MOST & BRINGS PEACE. THERE ARE NO WINNERS OR LOSERS - ALL ARE WINNERS. AWWW, YOU CAN'T PLAY FOOTBALL THAT WAY - CAN'T LIVE LIFE THAT WAY - GOTTA KEEP SCORE & BEAT EVERYONE ELSE! OUT FOR BLOOD! HMPH! GO TEAM! WE ARE # 1 !!! REALLY? JESUS GAVE HIS LIFE SO WE WOULD LIVE IT ALL DIFFERENTLY. WE WOULD CHEER FOR EACH OTHER RATHER THAN KILL & DEFEAT EACH OTHER.