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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
March 28, 2021
Palm Sunday

Scripture Lessons: Zechariah 9:9-10, Philippians 2:5-11

Hymns: 160; 162; 161; 151:1,7

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Mark 11:1-10

Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples; ² and He said to them, "Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring *it*. ³ And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it,' and immediately he will send it here."

⁴ So they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it. ⁵ But some of those who stood there said to them, "What are you doing, loosing the colt?"

⁶ And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go. ⁷ Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it. ⁸ And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread *them* on the road. ⁹ Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying:

"Hosanna! 'Blessed *is* He who comes in the name of the Lord!'

¹⁰ Blessed *is* the kingdom of our father David

That comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

(NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth.
Amen.

In Christ Jesus, our Redeemer King, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: “Ride on, Ride on, in majesty!
 In lowly pomp ride on to die.
 O Christ, Thy triumphs now begin
 O'er captive death and conquered sin.”

(The Lutheran Hymnal 162:2)

We just sang those words in our hymn before the sermon. Did you catch what we might call an oxymoron in those words? We sing of Jesus' grand entry into Jerusalem, and we use the “*lowly*” to describe “*pomp*”. When you think of pomp you think the loud dramatic trumpet blast that introduces a king, or the president of the United States, or some other grand and powerful world leader. You don't think lowly. There is rarely anything “*lowly*” in a world leader. There was nothing lowly about President Trump, and there is no pretense of lowliness in President Biden, and yet we know and believe that our Redeemer King is far more powerful, far more glorious, and far more effective in governing this world than President Trump or Biden, Chairman Xi of China, or President Putin in Russia.

But Jesus, well the hymnwriter was very accurate in describing Jesus' entry into Jerusalem by coupling these two words, “*lowly*” and “*pomp*,” to describe His majesty. Looking at Jesus as He approaches Jerusalem to face His mission of salvation is a study in contrasts unlike any you will find in other men, especially other champions or heroes. Truly, Jesus fits those words in their purest and most powerful sense better than anyone. So, with this insight inspired by the Holy Spirit, let us consider --

THEME: The Majesty of Our Redeemer King!

I. Observe the Authority and Honor of a Great King.

Majesty, or majestic, these words bring us a sense of something or someone who is superior, far superior to those around them. When kings or even princes and princesses are addressed by a commoner,

it is with the title “Your Majesty.” But are they really superior? Are they all that majestic? Do they possess that kind of wisdom, power, and authority, along with the air of authority that people ought to be in awe of them? I know that even in America people are really taken in by royalty, but are they actually superior, or is it all a show and pretense?

With Jesus, we see in this event of His triumphant entry into Jerusalem that He actually possessed the qualities of majesty. It begins with Jesus and the disciples making the long uphill trek from Jericho to Jerusalem, and it was uphill all the way until one reached the summit of the Mount of Olives, right outside of Jerusalem. As they reached the villages of Bethphage and Bethany, Jesus sent two of His disciples on a mission; they were to enter one of these villages where they would find a foal of a donkey tied near its mother. They were to untie the foal and the donkey and bring them to Jesus.

How did He know that? Was it prearranged? He knew because Jesus possessed the majesty of the divine nature. It was time for Jesus to fulfill the words of the Prophet Zechariah which we read this morning as our Old Testament lesson. He called upon His omniscience to send these disciples ahead to acquire the animals needed to fulfill the words of the prophet, and to mark for all people the coming of the Messiah, as Jesus entered Jerusalem for this most significant of all Passover weeks.

We might think this not the greatest of miracles of our Lord, indeed we might read over this and not even think of it as a miracle. However, it **was** a use of His divine attributes, used in connection with His office as the Christ, as the Son of David who was to come into the world and establish His kingdom of which there would be no end!

There is another seemingly minor detail to this account that we should not pass over lightly for it is a demonstration of our Lord’s authority. Jesus had instructed these two disciples that if, or when, they were challenged concerning the unloosing and taking of the donkey and her foal, they were to simply reply, “*The Lord has need of it,*” with this assurance, “*Immediately he will send it here.*” (v. 3) And that is exactly what happened! Not only did the Lord

know that they were to be challenged, which the disciples could have anticipated, but the words of the Lord, without any further ado, without any further explanation, satisfied the owners. That is the commanding power and authority of Jesus' word. **That is true majesty!** It is all so simple and straightforward that we might miss it, but it is truly there. See the majesty of our Redeemer King as He comes to Jerusalem to fulfill His mission of salvation.

More than that, Jesus' majesty is recognized by the crowds. There were going to be crowds; it was after all, the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, leading up to the high festival of Passover at the end of the week. Everybody that was able, at least all males over twelve years of age in all of Judea and Galilee were expected to make their way to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover. That was a great many people, and they were all converging on Jerusalem that Sunday. A good number of people had been traveling along with Jesus. Others joined in behind; still others came out from Jerusalem towards this strange procession making this 6-to-8-mile trek to the gates of Jerusalem. Yes, what we are going to describe didn't go on for a few blocks, it went on for miles.

I suppose to many it appeared spontaneous, and from man's perspective, what else could it be called, but from the Lord's perspective, it was homage due a great King. It was homage offered to Jesus, the Christ, the Son of David, the King of Israel. It was homage **incited by God to honor His Son**, who came to win for us salvation.

It began with some of the disciples removing their outer garments, or cloaks, and laying them upon the foal of the donkey, an animal never before ridden by any man, and though an untrained animal one who willingly served his Lord. From there it grew. Others lay their coats on the road in front of the donkey in honor of Jesus that the animal not stir up dust, and dirty the Lord. Others cut palm branches from the surrounding trees to lay them before the Lord, all the people began to sing their praises to the Lord, "*Hosanna to the Son of David.*" (Matthew 21:9) "*Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'*" ¹⁰ "*Blessed is the kingdom of our father David That comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest.!*" (v. 9-10)

Originally “Hosanna,” was Hebrew for “Save now, we pray,” but it had become a form of praise, which was then used to acknowledge Jesus as that One who came in the name of the Lord, the One who came to save His people. The cheers grew. Other Jewish pilgrims asked, “Who is this?” and when told, “It is Jesus,” they joined in the praise and exaltation of the prophesied coming of the Son of David.

This infuriated Jesus’ enemies. *“And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, “Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.” But He answered and said to them, “I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.”* (Luke 19:39-40)

It was the will of God the Father that such praise and glory be presented to Jesus as the Lord and Savior, as our Redeemer King. Later in the temple a group of children took up the song of praise singing the same words to Jesus’ glory. Again, Jesus’ enemies protested! *“But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they were indignant ¹⁶ and 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 babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise’?”* (Matthew 21:15-16)

But this is a study in contrasts. We step back and look again at this wondrous scene and we --

II. See Power Robed in Lowliness.

In days of old a king was far more than a ruler who imposed His will on the people. The king was the defender of the people. Often the king was the Champion, the one who faced the enemy on behalf of the people, just as David as a shepherd boy, faced Goliath and became the people of Israel’s champion. So, Jesus made His grand entry into Jerusalem as our Champion, to rescue us from the oppression of death, and from the curse of sin. Jesus was to face the greatest and mightiest of foes in the devil, the cruellest of all evil foes. Jesus was the One whom God entrusted with the mission of salvation.

What do we see entering into Jerusalem? Is it the picture of the mighty warrior? Is it the powerful general leading his armies down the road to the gates of the city with all the people cheering? No, it is a humble lowly Rabbi who spent most of His adult life as a carpenter or builder. He isn't riding in a chariot as many kings have before Him. He isn't riding on a war horse, a mighty steed itself dressed in armor and prancing in an intimidating way. Not at all. He is riding a yearling donkey. Not even a mule; a donkey! Jesus' feet must have almost been touching the ground. And those attending Him, a band of poor fishermen, and others seen as no accounts from Galilee. Hardly a group inspiring fear or trepidation in any foe!

This is our Redeemer King! This is the **Champion** of our salvation! Don't let appearances fool you. The strength that Jesus possessed was far superior to that of the devil. It took all His strength and determination to set His face as flint, and go up to Jerusalem, and endure the curse of sin, and the wrath of God, and the sore abuse and pain that was inflicted on Him by His enemies. Jesus took the cup of suffering and faced crucifixion. He was obedient to His heavenly Father's will. *"He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."*
(Philippians 2:7)

You see, that was the power that won our salvation, the power of His humiliation. It was necessary for our salvation that Jesus be the lowly Champion He was, that He was willing to put Himself in the place where He endured the shame and the curse that we deserved. He bore it all, and by His passion Jesus took our sins away, and freed us from sin and death.

That, my friends in Christ, is the wonder of this scene we celebrate on Palm Sunday. And so today we join our voices in singing His Hosannas. We praise Him for He saved us in answer to our prayer "Save now, we pray!". In our hearts on this Sunday of Holy Week we urge our Redeemer King on to the victory of the cross, and the glory of His resurrection.

"Ride on, ride on, in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die.
Bow Thy meek head to mortal pain,

Then take, O Christ, Thy power and reign.”

(The Lutheran Hymnal 162:5)

AMEN.

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.