

Ad te levavi
St. Matthew 21:1-9
December 2nd, 2018
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Your King Is Coming

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

I get asked from time to time about whether a certain Gospel reading comes more than once in a year. Such was the case about last week's Gospel reading about the Ten Virgins. The answer to that question was, "No." Although I do refer to the more well-known Gospels during my sermons if I believe it will emphasize my point. There are Gospel readings that are the same on for different festivals, and the parable of the Ten Lepers is used both as a Sunday Gospel and for the Day of Thanksgiving. However, there is only one Gospel reading that gets used on more than one Sunday. And that is the Gospel from the Evangelist St. Matthew recording our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. We have this Gospel both today and on Palm Sunday.

But, the emphasis for the Gospel is different on both of these Sundays. On Palm Sunday the focus of the Gospel is centered on the Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem to offer up His life as a sacrifice for us to atone for our sins and the sins of the whole world. Today on the First Sunday in Advent—Ad te levavi—the focus is on the fulfillment of the prophets who foretold that our Lord and King would come to us triumphantly and lowly.

That is after all what Advent means. It means "to come." Our Lord + Jesus Christ comes to us in three different manners during the season of Advent. He came to us when He left His throne in Heaven and came down to us to bear our flesh and become a man, Who was born as a baby in Bethlehem. Which for the Israelites was only a short walking distance away from Jerusalem. The place where our Gospel reading takes place today. He came to put on our flesh, so that as a man Who is also God He might fulfill the Law of God for us, and suffer our punishment on the cross and that we might be free from the bondage of sin and death.

Now He comes to us in His Word and Sacraments. He promised His Apostles that He would send His Comforter—His Holy Ghost—to lead us into the way of truth. So that, wherever His Spirit is, there the Christ is also. He comes to us in the preaching of the Word, where He warns us through the Law to heed His commandments and not do anything contrary to them. And He comes to us when His ministers fill our ears with His promises of forgiveness, life and salvation. His Holy Ghost breaks our hearts of stone through the Law and gives us a heart of flesh; a heart filled with compassion and mercy. His Holy Ghost then fills our ears with the reality that through faith we have the promises that our Lord + Jesus won for us on the cross when we hear the Gospel.

Our Lord + Jesus comes to us in our Holy Baptism and whenever we remember our Holy Baptism. He comes to bury us with Him in His grave, so that just as He arose on Easter morning, we too arise each day as a new creation in Him, clothed with His righteousness. And daily we continue to drown the Old Adam in us whenever we confess our sins to Him; recognizing our fallen, sinful state and looking not in us for our salvation, but to Him and His works and merits in faith. He then fills us with His Holy Ghost, so that we might live holy lives unto Him.

He comes to us when we confess our sins to Him through the ears of the pastor and the minister proclaims into our ears that our sins are forgiven. He comes because our ears once again hear His promise that we have been forgiven on account of what He has done, and not on what account of anything we have done. We are reminded through the Absolution that through the cross our sins have been forgiven, and we are able to cling to this reality through faith; the Holy Ghost working through the words to open our ears to hear the promise of forgiveness.

Our Lord + Jesus comes to us in His Body and Blood given in bread and wine. He puts forgiveness, life and salvation on our tongues, so that in giving Himself to us we might have the gifts He won for us on the tree of the holy cross. He also sends His Holy Ghost to us through this bread and wine, that we might be strengthened in our faith toward Him and in fervent love for one another. This meal feeds our sin-sick souls so that we are healed of our disease of sin, and given food to satiate us in our journey through this life and into our eternal home in Heaven.

Our Lord comes to us also whenever two or three (or more) gather together in His Name, as we are doing this day. For we are able to comfort one another with the Gospel, forgive one another's sins, and bear with each other when we fail. To bear with one another means to not nitpick one another's sins. For, just as we do not like when people constantly harass us about our failings to keep the Law of God, we do not harass other people, but show mercy and patience with one another, so that we may all grow closer to the Lord and build up each other's faith in our Lord + Jesus Christ. When we encourage one another in the faith, the Holy Ghost comes to soften our hard hearts and give us love and compassion for one another. All this is how our Lord + Jesus comes to us now through His means of grace.

The Lord + Jesus will also come on the Last Day. He will come at the blast of the trumpet. He will come like lightening flashing from the west to the east. He will come with angels and archangels, and all the company of Heaven will rejoice that all those who still labor in this life will now find rest from their labors and join with the saints in Heaven for all eternity to enjoy the eternal liturgy of the Lamb in His Kingdom; the eternal wedding feast of the Lamb of God and His Bride, the Church. In this Advent season we focus on these three ways our Lord + Jesus comes to us: at His birth, in His means of grace, and on the Last Day when we will judge both the quick and the dead. The unbelievers will face the eternal wrath of the Lord, and believers on Christ will receive the crown of Heaven. We will see all these themes come forth from the Gospel readings during Advent.

The Gospel reading from the Evangelist St. Matthew is no different. Here our Lord + Jesus Christ comes to His people. He is received as He deserves to be received with praise and adoration. The King prophesied by the prophets has come to redeem His people from their sins, and sacrifice Himself for them. This Gospel reading is a foreshadowing of Heaven; it is a picture of what will take place in Heaven for all eternity. We will receive Him with joy and honor. We will proclaim Who He is and what He has done for us. He is the Son of David, Who has come to reign over us for all eternity. He is the King Who comes to conquer sin, death and the devil. He is the King Who gives to us—His people—an eternal Kingdom with Him, the angels and all the saints who have gone before us.

This Gospel reading really has all three ways our Lord + Jesus Christ comes to His people. He comes as a man, Who fulfilled the Law for us, and is about to offer up His life as a ransom for us His

people. In His triumphal entry into Jerusalem He comes to prepare the way for the Holy Ghost, Who works through the means of grace to create and sustain faith in all those who would cling to the promises that He wins on the holy cross. And, He comes triumphantly to give us a picture of how He will come on the Last Day, when all those who believe on Him will bow before Him and worship Him with shouts of what He has done for them.

Therefore, let us bow before the Lord and prepare His way by confessing our sins, and putting off our Old Adam, and cling not to what we have done, or have not done, but instead cling in faith to all that He has done for us. Let us lift up our souls in faith to Him for He has rescued us from sin, death and the devil. He has placed us into the Church to receive His gifts. He feeds us and nourishes us with His promises and He will call us to our eternal home on the Last Day, when He comes in triumph to bring all those who called on His Name in faith in this life to rest in Him for all eternity. *“Behold, your King is coming to you.” “Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord.”* In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!