

Palmarum
St. Matthew 21:1-9
April 14th, 2019
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
St. Michael and All Angels Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC
Augusta, GA
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Behold Your King

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.

Our Lord + Jesus Christ rides triumphantly into Jerusalem on a colt the foal of a donkey, amid the shouts and cheers of the crowd as He is welcomed as a king; a victorious king. But our Lord is unlike any other king that has ever walked the Earth. The subjects of an earthly king have to come him in all humility, he does not come to them. They have to pay homage to him; he does not even have to acknowledge their existence. They have to pay him tribute, and he takes whatever he desires from his people. The earthly king rules over his people and they are his subjects in every respect.

Not so with the Lord + Jesus. He comes to us, His subjects, through His incarnation into our flesh, because in our sinfulness we choose not to come to Him. He gives us all that He has, even His very own life as a ransom for our sinfulness. We do not need to seek Him; He seeks us out through His holy Word and Blessed Sacraments. We do not need to “find + Jesus;” He finds us where we are in whatever condition we are, on account of His great love for us and for His Father in Heaven. He sends us His Ministers to preach into our ears the good things that He has done for us and continues to do for us.

He even gives us faith and trust in Him and His promises through the work of the Holy Ghost through the means of grace, we do not need to drum up faith within ourselves. It is a gift of our Lord God. Even the works that faith produce come from Him, for His works and merits are credited to us on account of the faith that He gave us through His holy Word. He is righteous on account of His perfect fulfilling of the Law. And He is declared righteous by the heavenly Father on account of His innocent suffering and death on our behalf; He is justified on account of the cross of death that He bears. This righteousness is credited to us on account of our faith in Him; the faith that He gives us. His resurrection from the dead is the assurance for us that the heavenly Father accepted the sacrifice of our Lord and that He has declared His Only-Begotten Son righteous and justified. Therefore, through the faith that He gives us, we are declared righteous, that is, justified.

This is the type of King that we have. This is the kind of loving ruler we have in our Lord + Jesus Christ. We have a King Who gives us all things on account of His love for us. And whatever things we are unable to provide for ourselves, He obtains through His perfect life and innocent suffering and death

on the tree of the holy cross. Earthly kings do not behave this way at all, for being full of sin, as all mankind is, they take from their subjects all that they desire, until their subjects are taxed to death. Our Lord + Jesus Christ gives of Himself until we are rich and have every abundance. We have every daily need. We even have all that we need for our salvation from sin, death and the devil. Our King dies for us, so that we might have life and have it eternally.

Therefore, it is meet, right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to our Lord + Jesus for all that He has done for us. It is meet and right that we should carry our palms, and lay them before the feet of our Lord as He rides on in victory. Just like the crowds in the Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew did, as our Lord + Jesus rode victoriously into Jerusalem.

For the people of the Mediterranean region the branches of palm trees were a symbol of rejoicing. The Lord God even gave instruction in the Third Book of Moses, called Leviticus, that the people were to wave the branches of the palm tree in celebration during the seven-day Festival of Booths, or Tabernacles, the celebration of the end of the harvest and the commemoration of the wandering in the wilderness for forty years. Therefore, when we carry our palms in celebration and commemoration of our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, we are participating in a practice that goes at least all the way back to the time of Moses. A very ancient practice indeed!

Even more, palm trees were a symbol of immortality and life, on account of their long age and the fact that they were always green, much like an evergreen tree. For this reason, they viewed these trees as representing life and salvation. So then, when the crowds spread their palm branches before the Lord + Jesus and shouted, "*Hosanna!*", which literally means "Save now," their words and actions were united. They cried for salvation and spread the object of salvation before the Lord, for such was their hope that He would save them; that He would be their deliverer.

The crowds may have thought that the Lord + Jesus would be their deliverer from the hands of the Romans, but instead He came to be the deliverer from sin, death and the devil by His innocent suffering and death. He was the deliverer of the crowds, just not, perhaps, the kind of Savior that they envisioned. He is also our deliverer—our Savior—from sin, death and the devil. And so, we carry and wave our palm branches not just because they symbolize life and salvation, but because now our palm branches represent victory and triumph. They are truly meant as a symbol of rejoicing.

We rejoice today that our Lord has entered into Jerusalem, the holy city, the city of the kings—His ancestors—to claim His throne. His throne, however, is not a throne of gold, or silver, or cedar. His throne is the tree of the holy cross. He does not enter into Jerusalem to be a ruler, but He comes as a king to suffer and die for His people. He comes to Jerusalem, lowly, humbly, riding on a colt the foal of a donkey to suffer and die for you and your sins. He does not desire to exact punishment for your sins from you. He does not desire to nail you to a cross; to crucify you even though you deserve it. No, He comes to be crucified on the cross, so that your sins may be paid for. He comes to atone for your sins and the sins of the whole world.

This is the kind of King that we have. We have a King that suffers and dies in our place. We have a King the fulfills the Law of God of which we were and are unable to keep even one iota. Our King comes to give us all that we need, especially to give us faith through the work of the Holy Ghost so that we might cling to Him and His promises—that we might cling to His holy cross for our justification. We are made righteous—declared righteous—on account of our faith in His works and merits done for us on the tree of the holy cross.

We have forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation because He won them for us by His death on the cross; because He took His place as our King on the holy cross. From His cross He hands out

to us and all those who believe on Him the rewards He won for us. Our King has come to us lowly and humbly riding on the colt of a donkey, so that we might forgiveness from our sins, and have life and immortality, just like these palm branches represent. It is truly a day for rejoicing! It is a day to wave our palm branches in joy over what our Lord has done for us.

This week, however, our eyes will turn to the crucifixion of our Lord + Jesus for us on the cross. He suffers on the cross, because of what we have done; because of our sinfulness. The joy must turn to sorrow, for we need to be reminded that we only have joy, because of what our Lord + Jesus did for us. *“Behold your King!”* Your King has come into the world, and taken upon Himself your flesh, so that He might fulfill the Law for you, and suffer your punishment, in order that you might go free. Wave your palms and give thanks! For your King has come to be your deliverer and Savior, and He has come to win the victory over sin, death and the devil. *“Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord!”* *“Behold your King,”* for He is truly worthy of all glory, laud and honor. 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!