

Ad te levavi  
St. Matthew 21:1-9  
November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
All Saints Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC  
Myrtle Beach, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## Your King Is Coming to You

*In Nomine Iesu!*

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

### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank Thee, we bless and praise Thee forever, that Thou didst send Thy Son to rule over us poor sinners, who for our transgressions did justly deserve to remain in the bondage of sin and Satan, and didst give us in Him a meek and righteous King, Who by His death became our Savior from sin and eternal death: We beseech Thee so to enlighten, govern and direct us by Thy Holy Spirit, that we may ever remain faithful to this righteous King and Savior, and not, after the manner of the world, be offended with His humble form and despised Word, but, firmly believing in Him, obtain eternal salvation; through the same, Thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one true God, world without end. Amen.

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

At first observation, this Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew seems out of place for Advent, which leads into the season of Christmas. This pericope rightly belongs in the Lenten season just before Holy Week, as it is—this text is the Gospel appointed for Palmarum, the Sunday of the Palms. Therefore, it seems odd to us, at first glance, that we would receive at the beginning of the Church's year, on the First Sunday in Advent, a Gospel that belongs in another season. This is the only Sunday Gospel reading that is repeated during the Church's year, and it is with good cause that this text is repeated for us here on the first day of the new Church year. For this Gospel really encompasses two themes: the first theme, which is prevalent on the Second Sunday in Passiontide and the First Day of Holy Week—Palmarum—directs our focus to the triumphal entry of our Lord into Jerusalem to offer up His life as a ransom for us. The second theme presented for us today on Ad te levavi—the First Sunday in Advent—directs our focus on the coming of our Lord in the flesh.

This theme is after all what encapsulates the season of Advent and prepares us for the season of Christmas. Our Lord + Jesus has come to us in the flesh. We will observe during this season of Advent three ways in which our Lord + Jesus comes to us: He came to us at His birth in Bethlehem as He was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary, having been conceived of the Holy Ghost, as we confess in the Creed. He comes to us now in His Word and Sacraments—the means by which He gives to us grace. And He will come again on the Last Day to judge both the quick and the dead. These three ways our Lord + Jesus comes us incorporate the past, the present and the future. He comes to His people at all times and in all places. Your King is coming to you. Indeed, your King has come to you in His birth, continues to come to you through the means of grace, and will come to you again on the Last

Day. He comes to His people because He loves His creation. Even though we have forsaken Him by our sinful acts, He still comes to us to redeem us from sin, death and the power of the devil.

Our Lord + Jesus came to the Earth to suffer and die for us poor, miserable sinners. He came to win for us forgiveness, life and salvation. He came to fulfill the Law of God for us and suffer our punishment on the tree of the holy cross. This is the whole purpose of the coming of our Lord + Jesus. He comes to rescue His people through His death. Therefore, on the very first day of the Church's new year we as the Body of Christ, are taken to the day when He enters into Jerusalem triumphantly to suffer and die at the hands of evil men. The Church's year begins by taking us to the cross. For this is the purpose of our Lord's coming to us in the first place.

Too many churches and Christians get too caught up in the cute little baby + Jesus lying in the manger. They reflect too much on babies and all the cute things babies do. Certainly, remembering that our Lord + Jesus is fully man and to be fully man He had to be born—born of a virgin—is a very important detail that should not be passed over. But to dwell on the manger without reflecting on the purpose of that birth leaves out the most important part of the Lord's plan of redemption for us. He was born for dying. Our King comes to us to lay down His life for His subjects.

Usually it is the other way around. The subjects lay down their life for their king, so that the king remains unharmed. Our King does not act like other earthly kings. He comes as a servant. The Prince of Life comes to suffer at the hands of the prince of death. The Light of the world comes to face off with the powers of darkness—sin, death and the devil. Our King comes to do what we are unable to do by ourselves. He comes to fulfill all righteousness by His innocent suffering and death, and gift that righteousness, life and salvation to us. He comes to win forgiveness of sins for us poor, miserable sinners. This is why it is appropriate for the Church to take us on the first day of her new year to the time leading up to our Lord's crucifixion and death. For our King is coming to us lowly, and sitting upon a donkey and the colt of donkey, in order that He might offer up His life as a ransom for our life.

For this wonderful gift the Church on her first day of the new year lifts up her voice in praise and thanksgiving for all that our Lord + Jesus has done for us, and even for all that He continues to do, and will do for us in the future. We join our voices to the voices of the large crowd who welcomed Him into Jerusalem. We sing our Hosannas! We are truly blessed by the One Who comes in blessedness in the Name of the Lord. Our Hosannas are lifted to the highest heavens. For our King is coming! He has come to us in the flesh at His birth. He comes to us today through the preaching of the Gospel and when we receive His Blessed Sacrament of His Body and Blood offered to us in bread and wine for the forgiveness of our sins.

And joy of joys, He will come again to us on the Last Day to take us from this vale of tears to our eternal home in Heaven. There we will no longer face the hurt and sorrow of this world. We will no longer feel the guilt and shame of breaking the Law of God. We will no longer be cursed by sin and death. There will live for all eternity in joy and gladness. For He has triumphantly entered into our flesh, and triumphantly entered into Jerusalem to rescue us from the threatening perils of our sins and save us by His mighty hand of deliverance.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us join with those whose hands hold palm and olive branches and proclaim with them that our King is coming to us. Indeed, He has come to redeem us poor sinners so that we might be with Him and all the saints and angels for all eternity. Let us receive Him today in His Word as we hear His Gospel promises proclaimed to us in the Liturgy and from the pulpit and give thanks that He has come to seek us poor sinners and save us from all our sin and misery. Let us give thanks that He has suffered the misery of our sins on the tree of the holy cross so that we might live with Him forever in joy and gladness. And let us give thanks that we get a foretaste of that heavenly banquet which we will enjoy for all eternity when we receive our King in His Body and Blood given in

bread and wine. Our King is coming to us to wash us clean and pure from our sins by His shed Blood on the cross. This Blood which we drink and in which we were washed at our Holy Baptisms. He comes to us to lowly and gently to take away all of our sins.

My dear friends, there is no better joy which we can have than to join our voices to the heavenly band—the crowd who waves their palms in joy over having been redeemed. For our King has come to us. He has redeemed us and saved us. We cling to Him in faith and He gives to us the crown of eternal life. May we never lose heart in this dark world filled with sin and death. For the Light of the world has come to remove the darkness and take away the power and sting of death, so that we might live with Him for all eternity. This is what the Church celebrates on the first day of her new year, and on every day of her year until our King comes to us again on the Last Day to take us to our home in Heaven. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Awaken us, Lord God, that we may be ready when Thy Son cometh to receive Him with gladness and serve Thee with a pure heart, through the same Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

**The Votum:**

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

*Soli Deo Gloria!*