

Ad te levavi
St. Matthew 21:1-9
December 3rd, 2023
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
St. Michael and All Angels Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC
Augusta, GA
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Thy King Cometh unto Thee

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

“Tell ye the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.’”

Prayer in Pulpit before 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.

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

The past few Sundays we heard about our Lord’s return on the Last Day. He would come in all His majesty and glory with the clouds; with the blast of the trumpet; and be surrounded by the host of the heavenly band. Today, our Lord + Jesus comes to His people in a different way. Before His Ascension to sit on the right hand of God the Father and to come again on the Last Day to judge the quick and the dead, our Lord was born and lived among us poor, miserable sinners. The Lord comes to His people—to the city of Jerusalem—lowly and humble. He bears the marks of His humility by how He enters Jerusalem: riding on an ass, a colt the foal of an ass. He is not riding a horse or in a grand chariot. He enters on a humble beast.

But even in this humble scene we get a foretaste of things to come. For just as our Lord will come with much fanfare and glory on the Last Day, and the angels, and the whole host of heaven will be singing the Lord’s praise, we also see our Lord being praised while He enters Jerusalem. One may wonder why we get the Palm Sunday text on the First Sunday in Advent. Because in it we see our Lord + Jesus coming humbly to His people. This is how He will come in our flesh in a few short weeks when we celebrate His Nativity. Our Lord also comes to us humbly whenever two or three are gathered together in His Name and receive His sacramental gifts. He comes to bring us forgiveness of our sins through these simple means.

Our Lord comes to us humbly to fulfill the Law and to offer up His life as a ransom for ours. He comes humbly as a Baby boy, and He comes humbly to us in the means of grace. But He will not come humbly on the Last Day. When our Lord + Jesus comes again He will come with great majesty and glory. In the Gospel for today we get a foretaste of that wonderful, Last Day, when we will all be taken from our graves, and be given new and glorious bodies, and join with all the saints and angels of heaven in the eternal liturgy of the Lamb in His kingdom. The people of Jerusalem recognized their King, even if just for the moment. They worshiped hymn by putting down palm and olive tree branches; they set

their cloaks in the road before Him. They welcomed Him as a conquering hero.

Indeed, He would be a conquering hero. He would lay down His life in place of ours. He would endure the agony that we deserved. The earthly pilgrimage that our Lord begins with His Nativity, which we will celebrate in a few weeks, is begun so that our Lord + Jesus can be at this very moment, where He enters Jerusalem in order that He might once and for all destroy our enemies of sin, death, and the power of the devil. This is why our Lord comes. This is what Advent is supposed to prepare us for. This season prepares us for the coming of our Lord + Jesus.

Our Lord comes to us in three ways this Advent season. He comes in the flesh, as the incarnated Son of God. He comes to take upon Himself our flesh, so that He might redeem it from the powers of darkness and bring us into the glorious light of life. Our Lord + Jesus also comes to us in His Blessed Sacraments. He has promised that wherever two or three are gathered in His Name He is here with us. Our Lord is here with us today in His wonderful gifts and sacraments. He has come to show us the sacrifice that He made on the tree of the holy cross; that which paid the debt of our sin and won forgiveness for us all. And our Lord will come again on the Last Day to judge both the quick and the dead.

In today's Gospel reading we get a foretaste of that triumphal Last Day. Our Savior desires to be with us. He desires to be with us for all of eternity. He comes to us in His flesh, in His Sacraments, and He will come on the Last Day, all so that He might draw us to Himself, and take us to live with Him for all eternity in heaven. This is what we do whenever we gather here for worship. We are meeting our Lord + Jesus, and communing with Him, and hearing His Word, and resting secure in His Words and promises. The promise that we will be with Him forever and ever in heaven. Because our Lord + Jesus wants to be with us. He has come to us, and will continue to come to us, and will finally come to us on the Last Day and take us from this vale of tears to our eternal home in heaven.

For we are unable to save ourselves. We were trapped in darkness and the shadow of death. We could not pay for our own sins, for we kept piling on the debt day after day, hour after hour. Those who are imperfect cannot become perfect without the intervention of the Lord God. Our flesh deceives us too much. Our enemies—the devil and the world—will not let us have any peace. When they are not actively tempting us to partake of their temptations, they are accusing us of the sin they just tempted us into. Sin clings to us like a burr on a dress. We cannot wish it away. We cannot do enough good works to mitigate it. We are trapped and bound in our sins and trespasses.

Therefore, our Lord + Jesus sees our lost plight, and in His compassion leaves His throne, and comes down to dwell among us in humility. And this is the image of the Lord + Jesus that the Church's year presents to us at the very beginning of the year. We see our Lord coming to us meek and lowly, we see Him humble and meek despite the cheers of the crowd. He comes in order that He might win for us life and salvation. He comes to give us a picture of the grand celebration we will enjoy when we are called to our eternal home to live with our eternal Savior.

Behold, my dear friends, the Lord—our Lord—comes to us meek and lowly and sitting on an ass, the colt the foal of an ass. The King—our King—comes to us today to conquer sin and death and give us life and salvation. He comes to bring us out of darkness into His marvelous light. He comes to offer up His life as a ransom for ours, so that on the Last Day, we may be called to stand on His right hand and receive the inheritance of the kingdom.

For our Lord in His great compassion for us does not want to see us outside of the wedding hall. Therefore, He comes to us to gather us unto Him. He goes where we are unable to go, and He opens the doors that hinder our way, so that having opened to us the gates of heaven, we will be joined to Him and all the saints and angels for all eternity. And there we will wave our palm branches, and join

in the eternal song, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" And we will be with our Lord forever, and He will be with us in full there, even as He is with us by His means this day. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the 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!